Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 12 May 1981

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

TRAFFIC

Reduction of Road Carnage: Petition

MR CRANE (Moore) [2.18 p.m.]: I have a petition which reads—

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AT THE PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

We, the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia shall continue to support the effective measures being used by the Road Traffic Authority to reduce the carnage on our roads.

Further that they will introduce necessary legislation . . . .

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: It seems to me that the member is in fact reading the petition verbatim; surely a precis would be more in order.

The SPEAKER: I draw the member's attention to the comments I made some time ago in respect of the introduction of petitions. As this petition is similar in wording to many petitions introduced on this subject, I ask the member to precis the petition.

Mr CRANE: This petition concerns the reduction of the blood alcohol limit from 0.08 to 0.05. The petition bears 45 signatures and conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 41.)

ELECTORAL

Boundaries: Petition

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [2.19 p.m.]: I have a petition; one which reflects the very grave concern of the people of the City of Bunbury about the distorted electoral laws of this State and since this petition has not been presented to this House previously. I seek your indulgence to read it, Sir. I present the petition in the following terms—

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

We the undersigned residents of the City of Bunbury hereby express our disapproval of the State Electoral boundaries within the City of Bunbury.

We believe such boundaries are haphazard and are not related to any of the defined criteria in the Electoral Act.

We further believe that they are undemocratic in that election results based on those boundaries are not representative of the political views of the people of Bunbury in that although more than 50% of the electors within the City of Bunbury boundaries vote for one party both members of the Legislative Assembly elected to represent Bunbury are members of another party.

We therefore call on both Houses of the State Parliament of Western Australia to so amend the Electoral Act as to require the Electoral Commissioners to ensure that boundaries are not drawn in a haphazard manner which ignores the democratic principal of giving each elector an equal opportunity to elect the candidate of his choice.

Your Petitioners' therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House will give this matter earnest consideration and your Petitioners' as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 300 signatures and conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 42.)

ELECTORAL

Boundaries: Petition

MR CARR (Geraldton) [2.21 p.m.]: I have a petition, from the people of the City of Bunbury, which is couched in terms identical with the petition presented by the member for Ascot, in that it disapproves of the State electoral boundaries. The petition bears 390 signatures and
I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 43.)

ELECTORAL

Boundaries: Petition

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.22 p.m.]: I have a petition signed by 325 citizens of the City of Bunbury which is expressed in similar terms to those petitions presented by the two preceding members, protesting at the rigged electoral boundaries in that area. The petition conforms with Standing Orders, and I have certified accordingly.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 44.)

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Art Gallery Amendment Bill.
   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Grayden (Minister for Cultural Affairs), and read a first time.

2. Western Australian Institute of Technology Amendment Bill.
   Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Grayden (Minister for Education), and read a first time.

GENERAL INSURANCE BROKERS AND AGENTS BILL

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Hassell (Chief Secretary), and transmitted to the Council.

CITY OF PERTH PARKING FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [2.28 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The amendments contained in this Bill have been brought forward at the request of the Perth City Council which is responsible for the administration of the City of Perth Parking Facilities Act.

They are designed to tidy up some of the anomalies and difficulties being encountered in the administration of parking in the city.

One of the more important amendments relates to a device which is being used to circumvent the provisions of the Act.

There are known instances of a parcel of land, a building, or a part of a building being taken over by a parking operator and subdivided into areas suitable for parking and then made available to motorists by a lease arrangement or by the payment of a monthly fee.

This practice does not come within the Act’s definition of a car park and thus the operator avoids the payment of the annual licence fee. To that extent it gives him an edge over his competitors and has been the subject of considerable criticism by the proprietors of licensed car parks.

At the present time the yearly fee is $13.50 per bay and the income from this is paid to the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust by the Perth City Council to assist in meeting the cost of providing the red, blue, and West Perth “Clipper” services. The balance is met from the parking fund.

In some cases zoning requirements are being ignored, and also quite importantly, the use of the device is hindering the effective control of parking within the city as is intended by the legislation. To close this loophole it is proposed to re-define a parking station and a parking facility. However, where an unlicensed establishment is at present operating lawfully, the proprietor, subject to an application being made within a reasonable time and payment of the prescribed fee, will be granted an ordinary licence for the number of bays being operated as at the date of the introduction of this legislation.

The Bill provides also for the protection of the existing rights of tenants of offices who, in the main, pay for their parking bays with their rent.

The present penalty of $200 or one month’s imprisonment for unlawfully operating a car park has proved to be inadequate as a deterrent. It is therefore proposed that where the offence is a continuing one the operator be subject to a further penalty of $100 per day for every day during which the offence has continued. The provision relating to imprisonment has been deleted.

Council also has sought authority to include a commercial component in the ground floor
frontage of council car parks. The premises are to be used either for council purposes or sold. This will enable the use of valuable street level frontages to greatest advantage and at the same time provide a more pleasing facade.

All money received from these premises is to be paid into the parking fund and may be used only in relation to a parking station or parking facility.

The inclusion of a commercial component will require the approval of the Minister and such approval is to be published in the Government Gazette and tabled before both Houses of Parliament where it will be subject to disallowance.

The legislation also will give the council power to impose restrictions and conditions in respect of any land sold under its provisions. However, such restrictions and conditions will be subject to approval of the Minister also who will have the power to vary them at the request of council.

The land may be sold at auction to the highest bidder or disposed of by tender. Any deviation from these conditions would require the approval of the Governor.

The Act provides for three classes of car park licences: an ordinary licence, a temporary licence, and a special licence. A temporary licence authorises the use as a car park of land or a building which is intended for use or development for a purpose other than that of a parking station. Since the licence is meant to be of short duration it overrides zoning requirements and can be issued for any site.

The council believes that because of the criteria used in issuing a temporary licence there should be a statutory limitation on its duration and has asked that the Act be amended to prescribe a maximum term of two years with no power to extend or renew beyond that period.

The Bill limits the maximum period for which the council can issue a temporary licence to two years but provides that when an application is received for a total period of more than two years the council shall refer it to the Minister with or without a recommendation.

The Minister may approve such further extension as he thinks fit in the circumstances. The daily penalty of $100 per day would apply also to the unlawful operation of a temporary car park.

Where the holder of a parking licence is convicted of contravening or failing to comply with the conditions of the licence, the Act allows the council to revoke his licence.

Council is of the opinion that the power to revoke a licence should rest with a disinterested third party and has suggested that it be transferred to the court. Accordingly the Bill has been drafted to give effect to this suggestion.

The maximum fine which can be imposed by a Court of Petty Sessions in respect of a breach of the regulations made under the Act is $40. This sum was fixed in 1956 and is no longer sufficient deterrent to prevent some persons from offending regularly. The Bill will increase the maximum penalty for the breach of a by-law to $200.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

MARINE AND HARBOURS BILL
Second Reading
MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [2.35 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to strengthen the administration and development of maritime and port affairs in Western Australia. From colonial times, administration of the State’s marine and port affairs rested with an office which developed into the organisation now known as the Harbour and Light Department.

In more recent times the business of marine and ports administration has undergone major changes. The department has outgrown its existing organisational structure and the legislative provisions have not kept pace with the demands placed on a modern maritime administration.

As a result of this inherent fragmentation of legislative and administrative powers among the State’s several service organisations, the Harbour and Light Department has been inhibited in the discharge of its responsibilities.

In an endeavour to improve the effectiveness of the total transport areas, an initiative was taken by the Government in 1977 to transfer the marine and port affairs function of Government to the more appropriate ministerial portfolio of Transport.

Since that time investigations have been carried out by the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee and a study undertaken by a management consultant which focused attention upon the necessity to establish an appropriate maritime authority to facilitate more effective management and greater accountability in the State’s maritime affairs.
The Treasury and the Public Service Board also support this view.

The significant change in administration provided for in this Bill is the establishment of a department of marine and harbours as an authority with complete responsibility for all of its functions and the obligation to pursue defined marine and port objectives. The new authority will be established under the Public Service Act as a Public Service department.

It will be created by restructuring and strengthening the Harbour and Light Department to improve its performance in the areas of port development and promotion, port facilities planning and research, administration of shipping and navigation affairs, and financial accountability.

A function of the authority will be to provide co-ordinated advice to the Minister on all matters affecting marine and port affairs.

It will also be the principal adviser to the Minister on port and shipping matters encompassed by the Marine and Ports Council of Australia.

At present there are seven Government maritime agencies responsible directly to the Minister for Transport. They are the Harbour and Light Department which is the state marine authority and operates the Ports of Carnarvon, Port Walcott, Broome, Derby, and Wyndham—and the Port Authorities for Fremantle, Port Hedland, Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany, and Esperance.

The department of marine and harbours will provide a focal point for the several authorities in communications with the Minister and promote the common commercial interests of Western Australian ports.

However, the legislation will not interfere with the autonomy of the ports but is designed to facilitate a greater co-ordination of port-related activities and a more effective means of evaluating capital investment.

Advice to a port authority on port promotion and development and capital expenditure will be given only at the specific request of that authority.

The Bill creates a body corporate in the name of the Minister for Transport and imposes the normal contractual rights and obligations which will enable the Minister to provide both port and marine facilities necessary to pursue the State's maritime objectives.

Land and port facilities operated by the respective port authorities are vested in those organisations under the authority of the Acts under which they are constituted. This Bill will enable the vesting by proclamation in the Minister for Transport of all the port, harbour and marine land facilities, structures, plant, and equipment which is outside the control of those port authorities, and including fishing boat harbours, commercial and recreational boating facilities, etc.

This will place under the responsibility of the one Minister all of the land and assets of the State relevant to ports and will enable the effective control, management and operation of the State's port and marine affairs.

Provision has been made also for the acquisition in accordance with the procedures set out in the Public Works Act of additional lands which may subsequently be required for the purposes of the Bill.

The Bill protects the interests of any lessees who currently hold leases of land or property which is to be transferred to the control of the Minister for Transport.

A function of the authority will be to construct, maintain, and operate ports, fishing boat harbours, and boating facilities both commercial and recreational. To give effect to this the Minister is authorised to enter into contracts or other arrangements with private enterprise or with Government departments for the execution of this work in part or in whole.

The vesting in the Minister for Transport of all port assets not presently vested in the port authorities will enable the establishment of records of account necessary to disclose the extent of the State's investment in port and marine facilities. By this means real costs of capital investment, operation, and maintenance will be clearly revealed and recorded in the financial statements of the department.

This, together with the department's ability to establish its true operating costs and to reflect all or part of that cost in service charges, will enable financial accountability to be achieved. Totally effective financial accountability has not been possible in the past because of the fragmentation of the financial administration in the port and marine area.

The Bill also provides for a number of other matters which I should mention briefly.

A general manager is to be appointed as a permanent head of the department; the permanent head is required to present an annual report for tabling in both Houses of Parliament; the Minister is given the authority to delegate his
authority to the general manager or to other officers.

Agents may be appointed to act on behalf of the department; the Minister is given power to lease land, buildings or other facilities in the port area; and, there are the usual regulation-making powers.

The provisions of this Bill are additional to and will not affect the functions presently performed by the Harbour and Light Department under other Statutes. These functions and the legislation currently administered by that department will become the responsibility of the department of marine and harbours.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Melver.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION SUPPLEMENTATION FUND AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O’CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [2.43 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill has three main purposes. Firstly, it will bring the main Act into line with the workers’ compensation legislation 1981. Secondly, it will enable an employer whose insurer is dissolved or is unable to provide the indemnity required by that employer’s policy, and who has paid or reimbursed a claimant, to claim on the fund. Advice has been received that some employers have made payments to claimants in instances where their insurer has not been able to meet the claim. This amendment will permit such employers to apply to the fund for reimbursement.

Thirdly, it will limit the retrospectivity of claims. The Act in its present form has no limit on the retrospectivity of claims. It would not be feasible economically to have unlimited retrospectivity as it would considerably increase the amount of levy required to finance the fund. This amendment therefore limits the retrospectivity to 1 January 1979.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr B. T. Burke.

ACTS AMENDMENT (ELECTORAL PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 May.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [2.45 p.m.]: I do not think the Parliament will be surprised to learn the Opposition opposes this Bill as strongly and forcibly as it possibly can. In fact, I am surprised members opposite are still sitting there, smiling so blatantly and feeling proud of what they have done. I can understand they would be proud because last week there were some traumas on the part of individual members who could see their seats disappearing or becoming harder to hold; they were frightened the Government was not going to fall over backwards to ensure they would be given an easy run at the next election.

After what has been published in the Press and broadcast over the radio and television news, I wonder that the Government wants to go on with this Bill. This legislation is the product of a Government which is without principle, honour, decency, or shame. It is one of the worst pieces of legislation I have ever seen come into this House.

It has been formulated by desperate men—

Mr B. T. Burke: With feet of clay.

Mr O’Connor: Listen to your leader; we are trying to.

Mr DAVIES: —grasping at any tactic to preserve their hold on Government. We have seen just how low a Government is prepared to go.

We have said many times in this House on many different occasions that this is an undemocratic Parliament. Having made that statement repeatedly both inside and outside the House; having seen groups peacefully demonstrating at the opening of Parliament; having received through the mail—as I am sure have Government members—protests about the way Parliament is formulated; the Opposition would have thought the Government on this occasion would make an attempt to eliminate some of the undemocratic principles on which this Parliament is elected. However, the Government has made no attempt whatever to do this and the legislation will again forestall the introduction of a democratic Parliament into Western Australia.

This legislation aims to rig the Parliament: I am sure all members have seen that claim printed on bumper stickers over the years. The legislation aims to take advantage of the Government’s numbers to continue to produce a tainted Parliament. It is corrupt legislation in every form which is a testament to the political corruption of the Court Government. The Government’s corruption is manifest in this piece of legislation which makes no attempt to install a democratic Parliament in Western Australia.

“Corrupt” is a hard and a nasty word to use, and I do not use it without some misgivings.
Mr Harman: Where is the architect of all this corruption?

Mr DAVIES: The following is a dictionary definition of the word "corrupt"—

Dishonest, without integrity; depraved, perverted; wicked; evil; tainted.

All of those words are reasonable descriptions of this legislation. I am sure any member of the Government with any decency has no pride whatever in being required to support a Bill of this nature in a supposedly enlightened western country in this day and age.

Mr Harman: The deputy architect has just returned.

Mr DAVIES: I have summed up the principal faults of the legislation under three main headings. I will define them and break them down in due course. I am quite certain speakers from the Opposition side this afternoon will give members details of their objections to the legislation.

The principal fault in the legislation is, firstly, that it is designed to shore up the shaky Liberal seats, the shaky Government seats. By doing that, it will keep the Government in office. I will relate shortly the areas where it is designed to do just that.

The second principal fault of the legislation is that it fails to satisfy the basic principles of democratic representation or to move Western Australia closer towards satisfying those principles. I have enunciated that in this House previously. We would have hoped that on this occasion the Government might have had the decency to try to move towards satisfying some of those democratic principles; but it does nothing whatsoever.

Mr Pearce: Just sitting there looking shamefaced; and well they might be.

Mr DAVIES: Thirdly, the Bill provides for more members of Parliament. Where can we find any justification in this State for more members of Parliament? Already we are one of the most overgoverned countries in the world; and we hope to extend that, and to increase our record in that regard. There is no justification for the Government’s requirements within this Bill to increase the number of members of the Legislative Assembly and of the Legislative Council.

Western Australia has never been a democracy. It is a fundamental principle of any democracy that every citizen has an equal vote, and an equal right to run the community’s affairs. That does not happen in Western Australia. It has never happened. It will not happen after the passage of this legislation. It will only entrench that undemocratic principle, as has been the case with all other moves in this direction.

Western Australia’s electoral system is geared so that some citizens will have a much louder voice than others. If the will of the majority prevails after an election, that is by coincidence rather than by the fact that we have a democratically-elected Parliament. It is a quirk of fate rather than because the system is fair, honest, equitable, or democratic. The system is none of those things. Would not members have thought that the Government would make some attempt, with this Bill, to try to introduce some of those principles into the legislation so that citizens in this State would have an equal right and an equal vote?

It is not democratic. It is not fair. It is not honest. It is not equitable. It is the electoral zones established under the legislation which thwart the democratic processes.

We will not be able to claim honestly that we have a democracy in Western Australia. We cannot make that claim now; and certainly we will not be able to do so when this legislation has gone through. We will not be able to do so until every elector has equal representation, and the value of each elector’s vote is the same throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Now, that is not just the view of the Australian Labor Party. I have brought this to the notice of the House on other occasions. Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights; and we use the declaration at our convenience at times. Sometimes I am left with the distinct impression that the Australian Government might have been happier if it had never been a signatory to that declaration. However, it is a signatory; and while it is a signatory, we would expect any Government to do everything in its power to uphold the requirements of the declaration. In regard to voting, the declaration states—

The will of the people... shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage...

As members know, unless all States agree, the Australian Government cannot become a signatory to any declaration of the United Nations. Because of that, we know that the Australian Government and this Government agreed to the statements in the declaration. However, we make no attempt to bring into our
Legislation the requirements which will fulfil the

We are expected to abide by that declaration,
but we do not. If some people decided to take the
State Government before the United Nations for
action in this regard, they would be called
"subversive", "reds", "economic saboteurs", and
all the other names that the Premier saves for
those people who do anything that he does not
like, or that does not fit in with his legislation. It
may be physically impossible to take the matter
before the United Nations; I do not know.
However, the fact remains that, on a previous
occasion when we saw that disgraceful business in
regard to Noonkanbah, the persons who sought to
seek some redress from the international body
were blackguarded.

Of course, it is not only the United Nations, but
the United States of America which believes in
voting systems that give equal weight to every
vote. In the United States, undemocratic voting
systems are illegal. As I have said on an earlier
occasion, there have been problems in meeting
that principle; but they have made some serious
attempt. Various State Governments have been
taken before the Supreme Court of the United
States in relation to that declaration.

It is not only the United Nations; it is not only
the United States. Perhaps we can go higher, or
perhaps lower, to obtain another quote. This
quote is from a former President of the South
Australian Branch of the Liberal Party, who is
quoted as saying—

The essential feature of any fair electoral
system must be that any party or coalition
which obtains 50 per cent plus one of the
two-party preferred vote should be able to
form a Government.

In Western Australia, weighted voting ensures
that a Government can be elected with
substantially less than 50 per cent of the vote. Is
that anything to be proud of? Is the Government
trying to say that it does not support a
gerrymander when it supports a system which can
ensure that a Government is elected with
substantially less than 50 per cent of the vote?

If one asked a school child with average
intelligence who knew anything about voting, he
would expect that if 50 per cent plus one of the
members of any voting organisation voted for one
person or one candidate, that person or candidate
would be elected. However, that does not apply in
this State. Substantially less than 50 per cent of
the electorate can elect a Government.

I am sure we have all done a great deal of
reading in the past few weeks on this topic.
Arguments have been advanced over the years in
favour of weighted country electorates. The basis
of these arguments usually boil down to the
following—

(1) distance from the capital;
(2) distance between centres within an
electorate;
(3) communication problems; and
(4) economic contribution.

But all those matters ignore the principal
requirement of a member of Parliament—the
principal role, the principal duty of a member of
Parliament. The principal role of a member of
Parliament is to determine who shall form the
Government, and that is fairly basic; to determine
what the Government's policies shall be, and we
cannot cavil at that; and to make the State's
laws—to do what we are doing now. That is what
electors expect when they elect a person to
Parliament. We do play the role of unqualified
social workers; members of Parliament do open
a lot of fetes, give a little bit of advice and do all
kinds of things including a bit of marriage
guidance and assisting with pension and telephone
applications, bad pavement problems, barking
dogs, and crowing roosters. All those things we
have to deal with over the years, but they do not
form part of the principal role of a member of
Parliament.

The principal role of a member of Parliament is
to decide on policies, to see who shall form a
Government, and to make laws—that seems to be
the thing that is most forgotten, because we are
not here to run messages for the electorate,
although as much as we do it and are happy about
doing it at times, this work is incidental to the
role of a member of Parliament, which is often
forgotten when we are considering the country
electorates. Let us consider some of the
geraphical disabilities.

If a citizen or a group of citizens suffer
disabilities, whether it is geographical, social,
medical or whatever, they are entitled to expect
some support in overcoming those disabilities. I
do not deny they are stuck with them and we
should do nothing about them; they are entitled
to some kind of support. But the kind of support
they should be offered is not the kind of support
that gives their representation in Parliament a
disproportionate value over that of other citizens
of the State—yet that seems to be the present way
of overcoming it. They say that if a person lives
there and his vote is worth twice that of someone
else's vote and I am representing him, all those
things about distance and communication that are
complained about have no bearing
whatsoever—but that is not right.
As I said, there is no doubt that some people deserve assistance because of the situation in which they live, and we are full of sympathy for them; but the Government should not water down the democratic rights of another group of people and by doing so say the others can feel that much better. Those people are no closer to their member of Parliament, the city, or Parliament House itself. That is no way of overcoming their difficulties.

We can overcome these difficulties in other ways. We can make better facilities available for members. We recognise the remoteness and accept that something should be done to help them be closer in touch with their electorates when they want to be in touch. Some of the things that can be done are providing better travelling allowances, and that is not beyond including aircraft charter. The Federal members of Parliament have that right and I do not think it is abused. Members do not have time to abuse travel privileges; they can use them only when they have to. They cannot abuse them and use them for pleasure. So, members of Parliament should be given better travel rights, including aircraft charter.

The Government could give members higher postage allowances. If members want to send a newsletter to each and every one of their electors on a regular basis they should be able to do so. If the Government believes members should keep in touch with their electorates and there are difficulties involved because of distance, let the Government do something about it; let the Government decide members have a right to more than one electorate office. If the member for Kimberley should have his electorate office in far-distant Derby, why should he not have another electorate office in the southern part of his electorate because of the many thousands of kilometres in between these areas? So let the Government have a look at providing additional electorate offices. That would be money far better spent than providing extra members of Parliament.

Let the Government look at the right to additional staff. I know it is very difficult to supervise an office and to travel and meet all sections of an electorate, yet there is work that must be done in the office time and time again. Members may find it hard to get out of the office, but if they have additional staff they can spend more time travelling in their electorates, particularly if they have extra travelling allowances.

Of course, we still have the telephone: Alexander Graham Bell's magnificent invention is still with us, and until the Federal Government sells the service, as it seems hell-bent on doing, it is still an efficient means of communication. So let members have reverse charge phone calls to their electorate offices and, indeed, let them have free mailing facilities.

If Government members are to talk about the disabilities of distance, there are ways in which those disabilities can be overcome. I remind members opposite that the role of a member of Parliament is to form a Government, formulate policies, and to make laws. His role is not to be trotting around the electorate acting as an overpaid social worker.

Mr Pearce: Unqualified too.

Mr Crane: Some of you might think that.

Mr Pearce: Listen to that idiotic interjection.

Mr Herzfeld: Have you done the sums?

Mr DAVIES: Yes, we have done our sums.

Mr B. T. Burke: Do not waste your time with him.

Mr DAVIES: Let us look at the undemocratic nature of these proposals. I have used the word "undemocratic" many times because it is most applicable to this type of legislation. I wonder what kind of research was done into the existing electoral statistics and just how the Government came to introduce this type of Bill. If members have a look at the basic electoral statistics they will see just how undemocratic the existing principle is, without making it worse still.

The figures I will quote are those which were applicable at 16 March this year and they are the latest enrolment figures available to me. I have been working on them for some time. The representation in the Legislative Assembly under the existing law shows that 65.4 per cent of electors live in the metropolitan zone. I remind members that the metropolitan zone is not the same as the metropolitan area. However, people in this zone elect 49 per cent of members of the Legislative Assembly. In round figures, two-thirds of the electors in this State live in the metropolitan zone, but they elect less than half the members of the Legislative Assembly.

It can be seen that 34.6 per cent of the electors in this State live in non-metropolitan zones, but they choose 51 per cent of members of the Legislative Assembly. So just over three-tenths of the electors in this State live outside the metropolitan zone, but they do not elect three-tenths of members of the Legislative Assembly—they elect 51 per cent of the representatives. That is how undemocratic the
existing position is, and this Bill does nothing to change that.

I should like to quote some more figures. A total of 466,435 electors in the metropolitan area elect 27 members of the Legislative Assembly and 246,317 electors in the non-metropolitan zones elect 28 members of that place. Is there any justice in that? Is that democracy at work? As I have said already, the Government's proposals make negligible improvements to the existing position.

This is how we read the position: The metropolitan electors will have 68.6 per cent of enrolments, but will have only 52.6 per cent of the MLA's; that is, approximately seven-tenths of the people in this State will be represented in Parliament by just over half the MLA's. Non-metropolitan electors will have 31.4 per cent of enrolments, but they will elect 47.4 per cent of the MLA's. Members can see the changes proposed by the Government do not alter the existing position significantly.

I shall reduce those percentages to figures, for the benefit of members: 488,927 electors will be represented in Parliament by 30 MLA's and 223,825 electors will be represented by 27 MLA's. Where is the justice in that? Where is one-vote-one-value? Where are the principles of the United Nations? Why are we not following the precedent set by the Liberal Party in South Australia? Do we believe the system used in the United States of America is corrupt, because it provides one-vote-one-value? Why has no attempt been made to introduce that principle into our legislation in Western Australia?

The undemocratic representation is no better when one looks at the Legislative Council. Under existing laws, metropolitan Legislative Councillors make up only 37.5 per cent of the total, whereas non-metropolitan councillors amount to 62.5 per cent. Under the proposed law, metropolitan MLC's will be 41.2 per cent of the total and non-metropolitan MLC's will be 58.5 per cent.

For the benefit of members, I shall reduce those percentages to figures. A total of 488,922 metropolitan electors will have 14 votes in the Legislative Council; that is, approximately half a million electors will have 14 votes. However, a total of 223,825 non-metropolitan electors will have 20 votes; that is, approximately a quarter of a million electors will have 20 votes compared with almost half a million electors having 14 votes. Where is the justice in that situation?

Does not the Government believe we should try to have some degree of equality in our voting system? Why has no serious attempt been made to do that?

When members look at the quotas for the seats as they exist and compare them with the proposed situation, they will find the same undemocratic position applies. Under the present law, the metropolitan quota is 17,275 electors and the agricultural, mining, and pastoral quota is 9,153 electors. Under the proposals contained in the Bill before us, the metropolitan quota will be 16,297 electors and the agricultural, mining and pastoral quota is 8,572 electors.

Members can see it is proposed that there should be virtually no reduction in the weighting of non-metropolitan votes. The difference in the quota is approximately 1,000 fewer in the metropolitan area and it is in the region of 600 fewer in country areas; but the ratio still remains similar and under the proposed changes a non-metropolitan vote will still be worth almost twice as much as the vote of a metropolitan elector. Where is the justice in that?

Why has not the Government attempted in some way to justify the stand it is taking? I am sure members would be interested to know the effect on quotas of a system of one-vote-one-value. If we applied such a system to the metropolitan area, the quota for the 55 Legislative Assembly seats would be 12,959. The average enrolment for the enlarged Legislative Assembly with 57 electorates would be 12,504 electors if we adopted the principle of one-vote-one-value. It can be seen the average enrolment to which I have just referred would be approximately the same as that proposed for the Kimberley electorate.

One wonders why this legislation is before Parliament. There is a great mystery surrounding it. Later in my speech I shall refer to some of the remarks made by the Chief Secretary in his second reading speech on the Bill. If I might give him some gratuitous advice, I suggest he sack his speech writer, because he has no appreciation of what the Bill is doing as far as the Government's enunciated policy is concerned. However, I shall turn to that matter shortly.

I said previously that one wonders why this Bill is before Parliament. Of course, there can be no doubt that its purpose is to shore up the shaky seats in the Government. As a result of the last State election, all the Labor seats can be considered not to be safe; but there are many shaky Government seats and the Government is aware of that. It is not without some wit. The Government would have been looking closely at the position and it has set about seeing how it can
shore up its dwindling electoral support. The Government seems to be going from bad to worse.

Mr Pearce: It was 9 per cent behind in the last poll.

Mr Davies: Goodness knows what the Premier would be doing if he did not have his colleague in the Federal Government to blame for some of the problems at the present time. The Premier seems to have forgotten the militant trade unionists, the situation at Noonkanbah, and section 34B of the Police Act. He cannot really continue to blame the Whitlam Government for his Government’s and the Federal Government’s mistakes. Therefore, the Premier has to do something to shore up the shaky seats and ensure that his party continues in government. The proposals in the Bill have nothing to do with population growth or movement. It is an attempt to fiddle the electoral laws so that the Government remains in office.

Mr Pearce: That is dead right!

Mr Davies: The Government is very adept at doing that, because it has had plenty of experience in that regard. Four of the five proposed changes to boundaries will help Liberal members in marginal seats. The sitting Government members in three of the Government’s four most marginal seats are certainly helped by these changes. They must be sleeping peacefully now, knowing that, at the next election, they will not really have to do a job, because the Government will do it for them. It will secure the boundaries are changed in such a way as to make their seats safe.

Let us examine the impact of the proposals. Rockingham has been moved into the metropolitan area, because its high enrolment would have made a major redistribution necessary. It had a country quota, but there are far too many people in that area to justify it. People in the Rockingham area have been voting for the Labor Party, and some of its quota would have needed to be shed, thus moving part of the electorate into the adjoining seat of Murray.

Mr Shalders: That is not right.

Mr Davies: I am sure the member for Murray is relieved to find he will not get any of the Rockingham electorate. Alternatively, part of the Rockingham electorate would have to be apportioned to Dale. I am sure the member for Dale, the Minister for Transport, who was within about 3.3 per cent of losing his seat at the last election, would breathe a sigh of relief—

Mr B. T. Burke: He would not know what was happening.

Mr Davies: —because he has been singularly unsuccessful in his portfolios and the only way he can be saved from defeat at the next election is by the Government adjusting the boundaries so that he will be re-elected. That is the reason Rockingham will be changed into a metropolitan seat. It will have a quota of something like 17,000 voters instead of that for a country seat, which is something like 8,500 to 9,000 voters. That is why the member for Rockingham will have his electorate classed as a metropolitan seat. However, Mr Speaker, your seat in the metropolis of Kalamunda—the areas of Gooseberry Hill and the like—is regarded as being in the sticks as far as this Government is concerned. Your electorate will still be in the country although physically it is much closer to Perth than the electorate of the member for Rockingham. This point seems to have received no consideration whatsoever by the Government, but as we know, the Kalamunda electorate is a fairly safe seat for the Liberals and no need exists in the Government’s mind to make any adjustment to it.

We know why the change to the Rockingham seat will be made, and I will not reiterate my remarks. For the same reasons, however, one would think the area of Armadale should be added to the metropolitan area. We never ascertained who drew the line to set the boundary which went straight through the main street of Armadale. Mr Speaker, you will recall we asked in a number of ways on a number of occasions who the architect was. I think it is generally accepted that it was a research officer of the Liberal Party, either Jeremy Buxton, Noel Crichton-Browne or a few others of the same ilk who are adept with fiddling with such things on behalf of the Government.

Mr McLver: Did you mention W. W. Mitchell?

Mr Davies: I daresay he had a cursory glance at the map before the legislation was introduced. We were never told who drew those boundaries, and I am quite certain on this occasion we will not be told who drew the boundaries. We know a part of Armadale which voted Labor at the last election will be moved conveniently out of the seat of Dale to protect the Minister for Transport.

Mr Pearce: They will get the first decent representation they have had for 20 years.

Mr Davies: I am quite certain they will receive good representation. An area almost vacant, the area of Ballajura, will be changed from a country area to that of a metropolitan seat. I was at Ballajura only a week ago tomorrow. If members went to that area they
would find it is a suburb growing rapidly, and would realise that probably it will be an area that well and truly will vote Labor. When one considers the type of development occurring there one could reasonably expect that the people would vote Labor. I am quite certain the member for Mundaring was delighted when he realised that the area would not be in his seat, because the seat of Mundaring will remain a country electorate. The area is a part which he will be happy to shed. The Labor Party needed only about a 3 per cent or 4 per cent swing to win the seat of Mundaring.

Mr Herzfeld: There is no community of interest between Mundaring and Ballajura.

Mr Davies: At present the Ballajura area has only about 300 people living in it, but as I said, if members took the trouble to visit the area they would see much development and realise that the area probably will finish up in much the same way as other northern suburbs have developed and as suburbs such as Gosnells, Kelmscott and others in the south have developed.

Mr Herzfeld: What about the community of interest?

Mr Davies: Does the member for Mundaring believe the people of Wittenoom have a community of interest with the people of, say, Derby? I will refer shortly to the matter of community of interest.

I would have thought that before the Government altered the Act in any way it would go around the State to determine the requirements in regard to community of interest and ensure that parts of the State placed in particular electorates have some similarity, and can be related easily one to the other. The Government seems to have ignored that principle completely because we find time and time again no community of interest between areas placed in certain electorates, and ones that will be placed in there.

I will comment on the change in relation to the Kimberley-Pilbara boundary. It has been recast by the Government blatantly drawing lines on a map. I remind members that this Government does not mind drawing lines on maps. It drew the boundary line to which I have just referred. Government members cannot apportion or place the total blame on electoral commissioners, the State Electoral Department, the Chief Justice or the Lands Department. Who they will blame I do not know; however, they should accept the blame because they sat down and drew the lines. The Chief Secretary stood up in this House recently and said “We do not draw lines on maps.” However, the Government did just that, and in this case drew one in such a way to ensure the Labor part of the Pilbara electorate—the part that has shown a record over the years of supporting the Labor Party—will be placed in the Kimberley electorate to make the Pilbara seat more safe for the Government. The Government was within 1.6 per cent of losing the Pilbara seat at the last election.

Mr Bryce: In the political sense the member for Pilbara is the receiver of stolen goods. He has sat back and accepted what will happen.

Mr Davies: The areas of Newman, Tom Price, and Paraburadoo will be placed in the Kimberley electorate, and there is no rhyme or reason for that. The line drawn across the map will add hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of country to the already huge Kimberley electorate. No community of interest can be seen between the towns of Newman, Tom Price, and Paraburadoo, and the towns of Derby, Broome, Kununurra and other such places. There is no community of interest whatsoever between those places. In fact, one cannot reach them directly; one has to travel to Port Hedland and then out to them. At least when one goes to the Kimberley one can keep going straight up the coast.

I thought I heard the Minister say it would be far easier for the member for Kimberley to get around the proposed part of his electorate than it is for the member for Pilbara to continue the service he provides. That assessment is completely wrong and shows the House how little the Minister knows. The airline schedules show that it is more difficult for the member for Kimberley to get around the part proposed for his electorate than it is for the member for Pilbara to service that area. If the Government wanted to do something decent for that area and wanted to acknowledge that times have changed since the early 1920s when these seats were written into the Act—after all, 60 years later it is not unreasonable to reconsider the Act to determine whether what applied in 1922 is still applicable today—then this legislation is the chance for it to do just that so that a genuine assessment of the representation of the area is made.

As I have suggested many times, if we are to have additional members, the Pilbara seat should be divided into two electorates—two country seats. I would accept such a proposal but the Government has not elected to put it forward. It has gone against the principles it has enunciated in regard to distance, communications and remoteness. By drawing that line on the map the Government has abrogated its responsibility in regard to all the things it said it wanted to
overcome. No-one should forget that it was not an electoral commissioner, the Chief Electoral Officer, or the Under Secretary for Lands, who drew the line on the map. It was none of those people; the Government drew the line just as it drew lines for the metropolitan area. The Government cannot deny that it drew the line because that fact is shown in the Bill.

The extension of the metropolitan boundary to encompass the northern corridor will not shore up the seat of any Liberal member but merely consolidate an existing safe position. The extension is certainly long overdue. I think it is about time the area was taken in as part of the metropolitan area. I have not had the opportunity to examine that area physically but I know much of the area is undergoing development and needs attention in regard to electoral boundaries. Of course, it will have the effect of forcing the electorate of Moore to take in some rural votes. This will have the domino effect and I am sure I do not have to explain the domino effect to members because at the time of the Vietnam War we all knew the domino effect. We know now how we were being forced into the Vietnam War.

Mr Bryce: They should be ashamed of their record on that.

Mr DAVIES: We never trusted them, but now we know we have no cause to trust them.

Mr H. D. Evans: Why are Government members so quiet?

Mr DAVIES: They were told not to interject. However, we will stir them up before the debate has finished.

Mr Pearce: We will lay down the whole business and they shall be ashamed of it. We will see how many speak in their own defence.

Mr Bryce: What naughty little schoolboys.

Mr DAVIES: The domino effect will come into being.

Several members interjected.

Mr DAVIES: As I have said, the seat of Moore will have to take in some more rural votes and that will have a domino effect. What will be the likely outcome of that? I am sure that if one had a look at it one would know. The likely outcome will be that the seat of Mt. Marshall or the seat of Merredin will disappear.

Mr Stephens: Or both!

Mr DAVIES: That could easily happen and nothing will please the Government more than to have the National Party members no longer in the Parliament. They would be delighted.

Mr O'Connor: The commissioners will decide this.

Mr DAVIES: I had wondered how long it would be before someone said that they did not do it, but the commissioners did. The commissioners have been forced into a position where they have to apply a number of circumstances and taking the factors within which they have to work, it is apparent what the outcome will be. It does not matter whether the commissioners are doing it or whether the Deputy Premier or I was doing it; a starting point and the parameters within which to work having been given, the likely result is apparent.

Whilst we understand the metropolitan zone in the north is to take some of the votes in the Whitford area and the electorate of Moore will take in more rural votes, it will have the outcome of taking two seats out; or two seats will disappear.

The Liberal Party’s scramble for advantage when the matters were first brought before the party room demonstrates how self-interest was behind these proposals. Some of the members were not satisfied with the rort worked out by the Cabinet and the Liberal Party hierarchy and they sought further changes. They wished to go one step further because they were considering self-interest.

We know some of the disagreement which took place and we know some of the proposed changes. We also know of the midnight Cabinet meeting and that the Minister for Local Government said that we were making it sound as though it were cloak-and-dagger stuff. Self-preservation in the extreme sense was involved because the Cabinet and the Liberal Party hierarchy were in trouble in the party room and they had to do something about it.

Who were the members concerned? They were the members for Gascoyne, Murchison-Eyre, and Pilbara as well as the member for North Province, and the prospective Kimberley candidate, Mr Bill Withers. They were all trying to protect their cosy positions; not one was interested in attempting to apply democratic principle to his electorate.

They were all attempting to keep their seats untouched because they felt they were right and they would win them. They wished to protect them, and make certain that no changes were made to the boundaries of their electorates.

They did not consider the vast differences in some of the electorates and what would come about with representation foisted onto some other member who had a huge number of electors in a vast area.
Let us now consider the contradictions to the Government's case. Government members were not even interested in attempting to do something about the imbalance between the metropolitan and country areas. There has been virtually no change in the representation. The Assembly seats are to be increased from 49 per cent of the total to 52.6 per cent of the total. Council seats are to be increased from 37.5 per cent to 41.2 per cent of the total.

Government members had the audacity to say that because the population has increased we need extra members of Parliament. If that is the case then we should have had a succession of additional members of Parliament over the years since the turn of the century; that is, if there is any validity in that argument. I submit there is no validity in that argument.

From the year 1899 to the year 1965 there was no increase in the number of Assembly seats. There were 50 Legislative Assembly seats in 1899 and the position remained unchanged until 1965 when an addition of one seat was made. In 1977 the number of seats increased from 51 to 55 and now for the 1983 election it is proposed to increase the number of seats from 55 to 57.

Surely the population has not grown that fast in the last six years! I quoted population increases to the House the other night and there is no justification whatsoever for this increase on a population basis. There is no justification to increase the number of seats in Parliament as has been proposed.

We went along for 65 years without increasing the number of seats especially at a time when communication might have been bad, when it was difficult to get around one's electorate, and when mails were not very quick or frequent, so why is there this need now? We went for all that time without increasing the numbers, right up to 1965. However, in 1965 when communications started to improve and when travel was easier and mails were more regular and frequent, we decided we needed one extra member. We then decided later that we needed two extra members and I can find no justification for those increases. Now, it has been decided that we need another two members for the Legislative Assembly and another two members for the Legislative Council.

I believe the increases to be completely unacceptable. What is the criterion of population growth being applied? If Government members say that this increase is because of population growth then there was no explanation for this in the Minister's second reading speech. How can Government members continue to bring in this type of legislation and say we need extra members because of population growth when there is no relationship between the increase in population and the proposed number of members? How can we afford this increase? What does the Government believe the proper ratio between the number of members of Parliament and electors should be?

I have spoken about the one-vote-one-value principle and how it would work. What is the Government aiming for and what is it attempting to do? Will that question be answered?

What is the ratio, and if Government members believe we should automatically increase the number of members of Parliament as the population increases, why does it not draft legislation to make increases automatic when population growth occurs? Why does it not say that if there is an increase in population of, say, 100,000, or some such figure, then there is a need for one, two, or three extra members of Parliament? The Government does not believe it; it does it as a matter of whim—possibly as a matter of convenience to meet its own ends.

There is no justification whatsoever to use a population basis for the inclusion of additional members of Parliament. That has nothing at all to do with the increase; indeed, just the opposite. Additional seats are proposed for some blatant political gerrymandering—nothing more nor less.

I will tell members the reason that we do not need more members of Parliament. The ratio between members and electors currently is one member for every 8,193 electors. The Government proposals will reduce that to one member for every 7,832 electors—a negligible change. The existing ratio is not high by any means. I am quite certain that Federal members of Parliament represent a far larger number of electors than do State members of Parliament in the Legislative Assembly and in the Legislative Council of Western Australia. I think one would find that we are the most overgoverned country in the world if one considered our Federal members of Parliament, our State members of Parliament, and our local government councillors.

While the ratio of members to electors will not be reduced significantly, it will cost the State in excess of $300,000 a year for the additional four members, and that figure does not take into account the 3.6 per cent increase which was included in the papers tabled today by the Premier.

Mr Jamieson: That does not take into account adding more seats to this Chamber.
Mr DAVIES: It does not take any of those things into account. I believe that is an unnecessary expenditure and the Government could better spend the money elsewhere such as on education, law enforcement, and many of those other things where money is badly needed. Not only will this money be spent in one year, but it will be spent every year for ever and a day.

Mr Wilson: Whilst the Government is cutting drastically on most things,

Mr DAVIES: As the member for Dianella said, at the same time the Government is cutting drastically on most things, and I refer members to an article which appeared in the Press this morning where the Ministers have been told to cut back on spending in their departments. We know that such calls for cutbacks happen regularly, but on this occasion the direction is earlier and more severe than usual. I would think the Minister introducing this Bill would like dearly to have the extra $300,000 to spend on the Police Force, the Department for Community Welfare, or on some of the other areas within his administration. He will not receive the same value from two additional members of Parliament in this place and two in another place that he would receive if he could spend that amount of money in the way he wanted to.

Just as the Premier likes all the money to come from Canberra but with the State making the decision as to how it should be spent, I am sure the Minister would like to make the decision on how this money should be spent. What we would like is a fairer distribution of the money amongst the electorate. This Bill does nothing to achieve that fairer distribution.

We do not need extra members of Parliament; we cannot afford them. We are overgoverned already. The number of electors which each member represents will be reduced only marginally by the provisions of this legislation. Certainly this is not the time to spend money on additional members. If we are to do anything in this regard, let us have an overall look at the electoral system, and let us see how the representation of members of Parliament can be spread more evenly over the electorate of the State.

Time and time again we have heard talk about the representation of country electors. I have pointed out already the reason I believe it is unfair for country people to have additional representation. There is no justification whatever for a weighting of the country vote of 2:1.

I am quite sure Government members will have great delight in rushing out into the electorate to tell the country people that we do not care about them, that we do not want them to have members of Parliament, and we want to cut down on their 2:1 vote value. At the same time, let those members of Parliament who want to do a “Paul Revere” all around the State tell the country people how it is possible for them to have much better representation than they will get under this legislation; they, and everyone else, can have much better and fairer representation than the Government is proposing.

Better representation for the whole State can be obtained without watering down the rights of the metropolitan electors. Even if we accept the principle that some kind of weighting is desirable and fair, the weighting that exists at the present time is outrageous—nothing more nor less than outrageous. The 2:1 ratio in favour of country electors will be changed scarcely at all. One would have thought that by now the Government would realise this is not acceptable to the majority of electors in Western Australia.

Let us look at the proposed line between the metropolitan zone and the country zone. That is nothing more nor less than a sick joke. Suburbs of Perth—and suburbs which are in close proximity to the city—such as Gooseberry Hill and parts of Armadale are considered to be part of the country zone; yet Rockingham—which some people consider to be in the country—is now to be in the metropolitan area. Different Acts of Parliament specify different boundaries between the metropolitan area and the country, and one wonders why the Government has not accepted one of these demarcations. For instance, the Police Department and the Road Traffic Authority use one boundary, and the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority uses another. Possibly the boundary used by the MRPA would be the best choice, because this is being updated constantly. As members would know, there is an MRPA map in Parliament House which shows the zones and areas. As areas change in character, so the boundary is amended.

I think that the MRPA boundary would give us an adequate delineation of the metropolitan zone. However, the proposal put forward by the Government includes places such as Kalamunda, Gooseberry Hill and similar areas which we regard as suburbs of Perth, in the country zone. This means that voters in these areas have a vote worth twice that of electors who reside in the metropolitan zone. Will any member suggest to me that the majority of the workers who live in Gooseberry Hill and Kalamunda do not come to the city to work? Surely that should be a guideline as to how we could define the
metropolitan area. I suppose some of the residents of these areas travel east to work, but certainly the suburbs could not be considered rural in nature.

In my opinion the people drawing up the new boundaries could have taken out some of the curves and used more straight lines.

It is interesting to note that when one makes a telephone call to Rockingham, it is necessary to use STD. However, a telephone call to Kalamunda, Lesmurdie, or Gooseberry Hill is a local call. This would be an alternative method of deciding the metropolitan zone.

We have never had explained to us the reason for the boundaries being as they are. There is neither rhyme nor reason to the proposal. All we know is that a magical line has been drawn on the map by some tactician or statistician at the Liberal Party headquarters in Colin Street. Certainly these lines on the map will be to the advantage of the Liberal Party.

Mr T. H. Jones: I bet they cannot justify their actions. They have not even attempted to.

Mr DAVIES: Then, of course, as the Government has said, the people need extra representation because of the distances involved. But look at what the Government proposes to do in the Kimberley. What it proposes to do is contrary to everything it has claimed in the past it stands for. The Government's proposal in respect of the Kimberley will only worsen the position in respect of distance and representation. How can the Government say on one hand that it believes an electorate should be smaller so that it can be given better representation—because apparently members are able to get to know each and every one of their electors in a small electorate—and then say on the other hand in respect of the Kimberley electorate "We believe it should be larger still"?

The Government says "In the Pilbara we believe electors should be reduced from 15 000 to 9 000, but in the Kimberley we believe they should be increased from 6 000 to about 12 000." That is contrary to what this Government has always said, and it has never attempted to argue its way out of that situation because it cannot do so. If the Government believes what it has said it would never have brought to this House the proposal in respect of the Kimberley electorate. Why has the Kimberley been expanded in this manner? Some of the what I will call Perth suburban seats, such as the seat of the Speaker, the member for Mundaring, and a few others, will have fewer people in them than the seats of Kimberley and Pilbara; and Bunbury, Albany, and Mandurah will have more representation in this Parliament than the people of the Pilbara and the people of Kimberley.

What the Government is proposing to do runs contrary to everything it has said in the past. Let us consider the present Pilbara seat, with between 15 000 and 16 000 electors. What is the Government going to do with it? One would have thought the Government would apportion the electors of that area fairly amongst existing seats. If the Government looked back at what happened 60 years ago and tried to bring the situation up to date, it is not unreasonable to suppose it might have said "It is time, after 60 years, to look at the statutory seats of the north." But, no, the Government has not done that; it has said "We have a right to adjust them as they exist and as we want them to exist. Therefore, how can we whack up the numbers of electors we need; where is the community of interest; where shall we draw the boundary?"

The Government might have gone to the seat of Murchison-Eyre, which has only 1 941 electors.

Mr Coyne: It has 2 941.

Mr DAVIES: The member must have been busy enrolling people. I am quoting the March figures. So the Murchison-Eyre seat has a present enrolment of 2 016, which has increased from 1 941 in mid-March; it is zooming ahead and blossoming.

Mr Coyne: Burgeoning!

Mr DAVIES: Look at that; the seat has an extra 60 or 70 people on the roll, and I will bet not many of them are not Aborigines. Here is a member with 2 000 electors, and he has one of the four statutory seats. Let us look at the seat of Gascoyne, which has 3 783 electors; let us look at the seat of Kimberley as it will be after this Bill is passed when it will have 12 000 electors; and let us look at the proposed Pilbara seat which will have 9 000 electors. Who is getting the lion's share of the electors of the north? It is the member for Kimberley.

Is that fair or just? As the Government is able to draw lines on maps and has the power to do it, would not one have thought the Government would attempt to draw boundaries properly so that the population of the north would be reasonably divided between the four seats? That is the least we would have expected the Government to do. However, it has blatantly put the lion's share of the electors in the Kimberley seat without any justification.

Sir Charles Court: I think the explanation for that has been given by the Minister.
Mr DAVIES: Then the Premier is denser than I thought he was, because no explanation has been given that would be acceptable to a sixth grade school child. It must make many people shudder to know that the Premier is part of this blatant gerrymander. I know in the party room he was supposed to have been against it, but he has been overruled and it does him no credit at all to agree with this situation in which no genuine attempt has been made to divide the electors of the north equitably amongst the four seats. Instead of that we have 2,000 in one seat, 3,700 in another, and 9,000 in a third. Each of those is a Liberal seat, and the Government hopes to cling to them. On the other hand, the existing Labor seat gets 12,000 electors. Where is the justification for that? The proposed Kimberley seat will have nearly as many electors as the total of the other three seats. If a proper enrolment were carried out in the area I am certain the number of electors in the Kimberley would double. However, no justification has been given or any attempt made to do anything to ease the position.

The disabilities suffered by the people in the huge seat of Kimberley—no matter who the member might be—are certainly no less than the disabilities suffered by the electors of Pilbara, Murchison-Eyre, or Gascoyne. Indeed, most of the electors in the proposed new Kimberley seat would be far worse off for representation, communication, and contact with their member than would be the electors in the Gascoyne and Pilbara, because in the latter cases the main centres are around towns which give the members easy access to their electors.

However, the member for Kimberley will have to travel to Port Hedland, which he must do if he wants to get to Paraburdoo. If he visits Paraburdoo he will have to fly back to Port Hedland. He cannot fly from Paraburdoo to Derby, Broome, or Kununurra. On the other hand the member for Pilbara is able to have easy access to Wittenoom, Paraburdoo, Mt. Newman, Tom Price, and other areas. Yet the Minister has the gall to say it will be easier under the proposed new boundaries for the member for Kimberley—whenever he might be—to get around. The Minister just does not know the situation as it exists. Having had a cozy, suburban electorate for a few years, he thinks all electorates are the same. He has not been around the State and does not know what is involved.

As I say, the Government's suggestion that it wants to cut down on electorates and to make it easier for members to get in touch with their electors is just not true. It shows the Government cannot even be true to its own warped principles. Even if the Government's principles were good, it would not carry them out. The Government is not doing what it says it stands for. This is a matter of convenience, a matter of shoring up the Government, and a matter of ensuring that shaky Liberal seats remain in Government hands at the next election. It is nothing more and nothing less than that. Consideration has been given only to the prospect of survival, and that is the only reason the Government has brought the Bill in its present form to the Parliament.

If the Government was dinkum in what it is saying and dinkumly in favour of weighted voting, none of these discrepancies, absurdities, or contradictions would exist. The Government would have set about doing what it has always claimed it wanted to do. It has told the electorate at large that is what it is here to do, but its only move has been directed towards political advantage. The Government should be ashamed of that.

There is not the slightest doubt the line was drawn through the Pilbara to ensure the member for Pilbara continued to hold that seat at the next election. It is no good Government members saying “It is not our fault; the commissioners draw the line” because the commissioners do not do that. As I have already said several times during my remarks, the Government draws the line on the map in this instance, just as it draws the line on the map to mark the metropolitan zone. It does it for its own convenience and political advantage.

As I have already said, the electorates of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre were not changed, simply because the members were playing up. The Government did not want a confrontation in the House, because it knew how tight things would be in order to get this legislation through. The boundaries were not changed, and the rationale behind that sort of thinking was “If we do not change them we will probably continue to hold those seats at the next election.” The Government should be ashamed of itself.

I spoke earlier about the Minister's second reading speech and said that if I were the Minister I would sack my speech writer. Indeed, his speech writer obviously has not read the Liberal Party's manifesto or policy because he has made a number of contradictory statements and has not tried to write into the notes the philosophy of the Liberal Party, bad as it might be. We know the second reading speech was written in a hurry; we know the Bill was reprinted and changes were made. However, the Minister's speech was dishonest and misleading, to say the very least; I
am surprised that a Minister of any Government would say some of the things he said in his speech.

No serious attempt was made to justify the Government's move; the speech was a statement of fact of what was in the Bill, together with some contradictions. In the very first paragraph, the Minister said—

... the Government has considered whether the electoral boundaries of this State should be subject to re-examination and redistribution in the light of population growth and population movements.

I have already explained how population growth and movements were the last consideration of this Government. The only changes made were changes of convenience for the Liberal Party. Yet the Minister had the gall to say the Government had had a close look at the boundaries to ascertain whether population growth meant the boundaries would need to be altered.

In the second paragraph, the Minister said—

The matter has been considered by a committee of the Cabinet...

The Cabinet committee's concern was clearly not one of population but one of protecting their parliamentary colleagues. No attempt was made to examine population growth to ascertain how the boundaries might be changed in a fair and equitable manner in the electoral system of this State.

The Minister continued—

It has been necessary to consider a number of policy issues...

What were the policy issues? What matters were raised in the Government's last election policy which demanded attention on this occasion? No attempt was made to explain that matter. I cannot see what policy issues are involved. Perhaps Government members want to talk about their long-standing policy of trying to maintain the 2:1 majority vote as between country and metropolitan voters; they have done that very nicely. However, there has been no significant move towards any sort of rationalisation. What policy issues were involved? There were none. These were just high-sounding phrases and words. One would think these were men sitting back and examining the matter in a fair and unbiased manner.

Mr Cowan: Why write the policy into the speech when it is contained in the Bill?

Mr Davies: The honourable member is quite right. The Minister's second reading speech continued—

Within the close population of the metropolitan area it has been accepted, and it is now still accepted, that a parliamentary representative has the capacity to deal with and effectively represent far more constituents than can a member who represents an outlying or country area.

By whom is that accepted? Who says any metropolitan member can do a far better job than a country member, and can more effectively represent his electorate? That is simply a bland statement without any supporting evidence. One would think it was a statement of fact, but no evidence was presented to back it up and we were left wondering. I wonder whether the Minister will do us the courtesy of telling us who said that, and on what basis he felt obliged to write that point into his speech.

The Minister's second reading speech continued—

In the agricultural, pastoral, and mining areas of the State, as defined in the legislation, our legislation has always given recognition to the factors of distance and communications as well as to population numbers.

Distance and communications play second fiddle to the Government's desire to remain in office; it is nothing but electoral expediency. Neither the Minister's speech nor the Bill contain any evidence to suggest the Government has seriously examined these matters. This point is proved by the manner in which Kimberley is to be almost doubled in size and numbers. We should then consider what the Government has done to electorates like Darling Range, Rockingham, and others. It simply does not add up. The Government has not consistently applied the philosophies and quotations it has mouthed so often in this House.

The Minister continued—

The legislation now presented to the House moves cautiously in the direction of recognition of the relative growth in the population of the metropolitan area—

Cautiously! It hardly moves at all; it hardly shudders, let alone moves. Yet the Minister had the gall to stand in this House and give the impression the Government was moving towards a more democratic franchise. The Government is doing nothing of the sort.

The Minister continued—

The Government is firmly of the view that in light of the continuing basic economic
The economic importance of the country areas is incontestable. However, as I have said, members of Parliament represent people, not economic interests. The role of a member of Parliament is to decide who shall form a Government, and what the policies of that Government shall be, and bring the laws of the land into effect. Political representation is not related in any way to economic interests. Yet the Minister—once again, using high-sounding phrases—gave us to understand the importance of the country areas lay in their economic interests. We do not argue that point in any way but we do argue with the continued weighting of votes which acts so detrimentally.

The Minister continued—

...the increased number of members of this Parliament provides a basis upon which future appropriate redistributions can be made.

What is the basis for redistribution inherent in this Bill? There is no basis whatsoever. It is a redistribution of convenience. It is a redistribution of whims—nothing more nor less—no more than whim, to say the kindest thing about it. Then the Minister says—

The Government believes the time has not arrived for equal electorates. . . .

When will the time for equal electorates arrive? Can he tell us that? Can he tell us what is a fair ratio between members of Parliament and electors? Can he tell us when the time for equal electorates will arrive? What is the Government's thinking? Does the Minister hope to stay in this House long enough to bring down legislation that will provide for equal representation?

Mr Hassell: Do you say that the time for equal electorates has arrived now?

Mr DAVIES: I have told the Minister what we can do, and how he can overcome all these difficulties.

Mr Hassell: Is that what you say?

Mr DAVIES: Precisely.

Mr Jamieson: It arrived federally at the time of Federation.
distribution! It is not even putting into effect what it says it stands for; bad as that might be.

In relation to Gascoyne, the Minister said the following—

The Gascoyne is another constituency of which it might be said that the population is relatively small, and consideration has been given to movements of its boundaries to the north and to the south.

In the end those proposals have been rejected because to make adjustments in that way would achieve nothing but an arbitrary increase in constituency numbers of people, without regard for other factors.

That is unbelievable. There is no regard for electors in the proposed Kimberley electorate; but because the Government did not want to alter Gascoyne, because the Honorary Minister complained about proposed alterations to his seat, the Government dismissed it blandly by saying—

.... to make adjustments in that way would achieve nothing but an arbitrary increase in constituency numbers of people, without regard for other factors.

What other factors were considered? There was no mention of the other factors—none whatsoever. That is the reason we did not try to increase the number of electors, or the Government did not try to increase the number of electors in Gascoyne. Probably the Government was held to ransom by those members. Certainly the Government was held to ransom by the member for Murchison-Eyre; so we have the disgusting position of one electorate being doubled in size; one electorate being reduced by one-third; and the other two electorates remaining the same. No serious attempt is being made to draw lines on maps which will apportion equitably one-third; and the other two electorates remaining doubled in size; one electorate being reduced.

That is unbelievable. There is no regard for other factors.

What other factors were considered? There was no mention of the other factors—none whatsoever. That is the reason we did not try to increase the number of electors, or the Government did not try to increase the number of electors in Gascoyne. Probably the Government was held to ransom by those members. Certainly the Government was held to ransom by the member for Murchison-Eyre; so we have the disgusting position of one electorate being doubled in size; one electorate being reduced by one-third; and the other two electorates remaining the same. No serious attempt is being made to draw lines on maps which will apportion equitably the electors in the area of the four seats. There is no justification for what the Government has done.

Of course, the answer could be that Kimberley is held by the Labor Party; and Gascoyne, Murchison-Eyre, and Pilbara are held by the Liberal Party. I wonder if that could be the answer? Perhaps I am being cynical in thinking that that is the case.

So we read on through the Minister's second reading speech. I point to the lack of information, the lack of logic, and the lack of reasoning in it. That applies particularly to the four statutory seats. If the Government wished, it could increase the enrolment in all of them.

Let me tell the House of the research carried out by the Legislative Research Service of the Federal Parliament. It showed that at the 1977 State election, 46.7 per cent only of the eligible population in the Kimberley electorate was enrolled to vote. What is the Government doing about enrolling people in Kimberley? Nothing! Nothing whatsoever! Less than half the people in the electorate were on the roll. That is based on the 1976 census figures, as compared with the enrolment at present.

Mr Jamieson: That is hardly a fair statement, saying they are doing nothing. They are. They have made it harder for them to vote.

Mr DAVIES: That is right. The Government is going backwards. It is racing backwards to make certain that it is harder for people to be enrolled.

We know that the amendments to the Electoral Act last time were made precisely for that reason.

I might say that the enrolment figure in Pilbara was 56.3 per cent only; and for Western Australia as a whole the enrolment figure was 91.7 per cent only. There is a great margin for the encouragement of enrolments. There is a great area of activity open to the Government to ensure that people are encouraged to be placed on the roll. It is a scandal that in the existing Kimberley seat, fewer than half the eligible electors were on the roll.

That information must be known to the Government. It has been known to us for some considerable time. Knowing that, the Government is prepared to increase the electorate by 6000 votes. Where is the justification for that? If every person in the electorate were on the roll, the Kimberley electorate would have something like 18,000 voters, under the proposed changes. What would the Government be doing then? Because it is a Labor-held seat, and it will continue to be a Labor-held seat, the Government would say "Bad luck!" It would not do anything to protect the representation the people received under those conditions. It would completely and totally ignore the fact that it believes there should be a 2:1 advantage for country people in regard to representation.

What does the Government think about the seat of Kimberley? It has said it could not do anything about the seat of Murchison-Eyre because that would upset the present member and it has said that it could not do anything about the seat of Gascoyne because that would upset the present member. In his speech the Minister said—

.... we remained faced with the situation in the Pilbara where a substantial and growing population spread over a large area makes it extremely difficult for a member of this
House to give the area the service and the representation to which it is entitled.

What an indictment of the current member for Pilbara for the Minister to say he is not doing his job, which in effect is what he was saying. If it is difficult for the member to service the Pilbara electorate under the present boundaries, how much more difficult is it going to be for the member for Kimberley to represent the proposed new seat of Kimberley? Surely every fair-minded person would acknowledge it is going to be far more difficult because of the physical difficulties associated with getting around that electorate owing to restricted aircraft routes. Yet no consideration whatsoever is being given to this matter.

The Government says it cannot allow the seat of Pilbara to remain as it is but that it can double the size of the seat of Kimberley. If that argument applies to the seat of Pilbara as it exists at the present moment, it applies to the seat of Kimberley also, which is much harder to get around. This has always been the case and always will be the case. However, the Government seems to be completely unmoved by that fact.

Towards the end of his speech, the Minister made what I believe to be the quote of the year. I do not know whether he knew what he was saying, and I can see the member for Murchison-Eyre knows what I am going to quote because I can see he is almost laughing now. The Minister said—

The electoral system in Western Australia is one of the most fair which is known to exist.

Mr Hassell: That is the best part of your speech.

Mr Davies: Surely to goodness our electoral system is notorious for its unfairness. If that is an example of the extent of the Minister’s knowledge, he should resign immediately.

Mr Bryce: When you tell lies, tell big ones.

Mr Davies: I suppose we can expect to see that quote on bumper stickers. Perhaps people will start to believe it. As the member for Ascot has said, if one tells lies and tells them often enough, someone might believe them. If that is the extent of the Minister’s knowledge or the extent of the knowledge of the person who wrote the speech for him, they are both sadly lacking in electoral education. I almost collapsed when I heard the Minister say those words because a person with even the remotest knowledge of our Electoral Act and the situation which exists in this State would never be prepared to stand in his place and make that comment. Towards the end of his speech the Minister said—

Any Government of any party which embarks on a course leading to a redistribution cannot guarantee for itself a conclusion which embodies any electoral advantage.

The Government might not be able to guarantee it but it could make a very good attempt to ensure that it embodies electoral advantage, which is precisely what this Bill does. Surely the Minister is not asking us to believe that he is not of the opinion this Bill will give the Government some electoral advantage.

That is exactly what the Government has done. It is what it set out to do and it is what it is going to accomplish unless some of the members on the other side of the House, on reflection, are filled with remorse and decide not to support the Government. It is very easy to gain electoral advantage and the Government has shown us, not only on this occasion but on other occasions also, that is prepared to fiddle with the electoral laws to give it electoral advantage. The Minister fools no-one when he says he cannot automatically ensure electoral advantage for the Government. The Government adds a little here, takes a little there, draws a line on a map somewhere else, and apportions electorates against everything the Government has said it stands for, yet it says it cannot guarantee its electoral advantage. That may be true, but it does not happen in fact.

The other thing which bugged me was when the Minister issued a Press statement last week—and I can almost see him holding up his hands, with his sweet white face, standing there innocently—saying “It is not our fault; it is the electoral commissioners: we do not do these things”. That is all nonsense. If we allow the electoral commissioners to draw the metropolitan zone or if we had the metropolitan zone determined by other than the Liberal Party hierarchy there might be some truth in what the Minister says; but the three electoral commissioners, no matter how honestly and fairly they might attempt to justify the boundaries within the ambit in which they have to work, are handicapped by being given the parameters by the Government in the first place. The fact that the Government defines what the metropolitan zone is to be immediately defines what the boundaries of the seats are going to be.

The commissioners work fairly and honestly. They do the things they are charged to do, but they are handicapped from the start. The results they give us do not mean they are fair results, because it is beyond their power in many instances to guarantee that. They have to work
within the brief of the Act given to them by Parliament—and we are the ones who give them the Act—this Parliament; this Legislative Assembly. The legislation goes through the Legislative Assembly because the Government has the numbers. The Government is not concerned with justice; it is not concerned with a fair definition; it is not concerned with maintaining its oft-espoused policy in regard to country and metropolitan voting.

It can, in the same Bill, bring down completely contrary points of view—which it has done in this case without attempting to explain itself. To suggest it is out of its hands and that it does not draw lines on maps is ridiculous. The Government draws the most vital line on the map—the line which defines the metropolitan zone.

Mr Bertram: A crooked one.

Mr DAVIES: It draws the lines for the four statutory seats in the north of the State and indicates how they are to be distributed. It is no good the Minister saying, as he did in his second reading speech, that it is out of the Government's hands and that the Government has nothing to do with the way the boundaries are drawn up. The Government has everything to do with it. It is ensuring, Mr Speaker, that you remain a country representative in this House when you should more properly be in the metropolitan area. I am quite certain that would not please you, because you understand the quota for metropolitan electorates is nearly twice that of country electorates.

I will return to the point with which I commenced my remarks. We have seen no honour, decency, democracy, principle or sense of shame in this Government in bringing forward this legislation and in what it is doing to this legislation and in what it is doing to this electorate. Certainly we can carry on for many more years without increasing the number of members. Indeed, we can carry on for another few years without any more, particularly in view of improved communications generally and the improved ability of members to travel around their electorates. Certainly we can carry on for many more years without increasing the number of members in this House.

We cannot afford the $300 000 at least per year to maintain four extra members of Parliament. That amount is completely unacceptable in these days of the "razor gang" and extreme financial stringency. No justification has been shown for the proposed change.

What good will the additional members of Parliament be doing? What contribution will they make to the advancement of this State? What will they earn for this State? They will earn nothing. They will cost the State money. I suppose it is a matter of some regret that members of Parliament are generally not that productive. I have spoken before about the Executive arm of the Government with Cabinet running the State, and how inept the Parliament is. We will only
continue that situation with the proposal to have two more members in this House. We do not need them and we cannot afford them. They will be of no benefit, yet the Government insists on proceeding with the change.

The contradictions in the proposals to which I have drawn attention demonstrate the Government cannot honestly implement the principles to which it said it would adhere. We are being asked to accept legislation in which the Government has gone completely contrary to its professed principles.

The Minister's second reading remarks contained arguments not supported in any way and demonstrably false. The bland statements were untrue—dishonest. However, the Minister is prepared to let the matter rest and not attempt to justify the statements he made.

I will answer the cynics who say that if a Labor Government were in power it would bring down legislation to enshrine the continuation of a Labor Government; it would bring forward gerrymanders to the advantage of the Labor Party. In other words, it is said we would to the same things this Government is doing.

The ALP would legislate to provide a system of one-vote-one-value. When a Government legislates in that way there can be no way it can effect a gerrymander. Under the present system of electoral commissioners drawing boundaries but on the basis of one-vote-one-value it would be quite impossible for any Government to gerrymander the electoral system in order to keep itself in office. The system of one-vote-one-value is the only truly democratic way.

The proposals before us show that the battle for one-vote-one-value is far from won in Western Australia. In South Australia it took 30 years to establish a democratic electoral system—always over the opposition of the Liberal Party. If it takes that long or longer for the Labor Party in this State to achieve one-vote-one-value, we will achieve it. We will continue to press for a fair, just, and equitable electoral system. We will not rest until democracy is established in this State.

I am sure members have noticed various groups attempting to enlighten the community in regard to the undemocratic system we have; however, only one Liberal Party member was given the job of attempting to answer the arguments. and he did not do so effectively. Whether it takes 30 years or more to ensure an equitable and democratic system of elections in this State, the Labor Party will achieve that system.

This legislation is a perversion of political decency. It is the work of a Government of political degenerates. It is the work of men who believe they were born to rule and will continue to rule. It does not matter how debase, cowardly, or unfair they will have to be, they have decided they will rule. They will forgo their principles in order to enshrine themselves in office. They have wanted their notion that they were born to rule to become a reality. By this corrupt legislation they intend to achieve that end.

It comes from a politically and electorally corrupt Government, nothing more nor less. No Government with any decency would bring in legislation of this kind. All those who have drawn up this legislation—and quite a few seem to have had a finger in the pie—and all those who have acquiesced to its presentation are guilty. Their corruption is individual and collective, and they should hang their heads in shame.

As I said, there is no honour, no decency, no democracy, no principle, and no sense of shame in regard to the presentation of this Bill. It is another black day in the history of this State. It does nothing to reform our electoral system nor does it assist in the struggle for democracy. It is for those reasons that every member on this side of the House and, indeed, a great proportion of the electorate—whose feelings have been made known to me—oppose this corrupt piece of legislation as strongly as possible.

MR TONKIN (Morley) [4.41 p.m.]: If ever there was a corrupt Government, it is this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Morley to resume his seat. I think that all members in this House ought to be aware that a member was suspended for referring to the Government in such terms. Indeed, if my memory serves me correctly, it was the member for Morley himself who was dealt with by the House for having described members of the Government in that way. I expect the gloves to be off in a debate like this, but certainly I hope members of the House will have regard for its decorum and that they will stay within the bounds of the standards that are expected normally in a parliamentary debate. The member for Morley.

Mr TONKIN: I suggest that a far greater matter than decorum is truth, and it is about time we started to speak the truth in this House.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr TONKIN: If this Government brings here disgraceful legislation of this kind, then it should be told what it is.

Mr Bryce: In no uncertain terms.
Mr TONKIN: This Bill is an extraordinarily cynical grab for power; it is a cynical attempt to hold on to power no matter what happens. This Government says that it cannot pay the salaries of nurses, and yet it is prepared to add to the number of members of Parliament. Years ago when six extra seats were created, we opposed the legislation because the State could not afford it; and yet once again we find that a Government which cannot afford to pay nurses and is allowing people to die rather than admit them to hospitals, will be able to find extra money for the salaries of politicians, for secretaries for the politicians, for electorate offices, and for extensions to this place.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Bill was introduced by the Minister in a three-minute speech. Three minutes is all it took from that fop of a Minister.

Mr TONKIN: This Government talks of representation of interest.

Mr B. T. Burke: Representation of wealth!

Mr TONKIN: Those are nice-sounding words, and they have some validity perhaps. However, we do not agree that that is what the Bill is all about. If the Government is interested in equality of representation, how can it say that the seat of Kimberley should have more electors than does the seat of Kalamunda?

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister is very quiet.

Mr TONKIN: Just 12 miles away from the city is the electorate of Kalamunda. Apparently the electors of Kalamunda have a great problem of access to their member; it is difficult for them to get to see him! Therefore, he must have an electorate which is smaller—as far as the number of voters is concerned—than the electorate of Kimberley. If ever anything shows that the Government’s claim that it is concerned about the equality of representation is a lie, this is it.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr TONKIN: Why cannot we have the State divided into 55 numerically equal electorates? The Government’s answer to that question is that there would be 12,500 electors for each member to look after, and that would be too many in country areas. Just let us consider how many electors there are in the electorate of Kimberley, the most remote and difficult electorate in this State to service. Kimberley has precisely that 12,500 electors.

If the seat of Kimberley has 12,500 electors, why cannot the electorates of Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring, have the same number of electors? The reason is that all these seats are held by the Liberal Party, and the seat of Kimberley is held by a member of the Australian Labor Party.

We know what rotten and filthy tricks were used by the Liberal Party in the 1977 election to prevent the election to this Parliament of Mr Ernie Bridge. We know that a judge of the Supreme Court had to say that the Liberal Party had cheated and that Mr Ridge had cheated. That judge ordered another election. The Liberal Party would stoop to anything to stop Mr Ernie Bridge from being elected, but now he is elected, they want to make it more difficult for him. The Government is not penalising Mr Ernie Bridge; it is penalising the 12,500 people in the Kimberley by increasing its area.

So this Government, which professes to believe in equality of interest, is providing for the seat of Kalamunda—which is within 12 miles of the General Post Office—to embrace fewer electors than the seat of Kimberley.

This is a lying Government; a cheating Government; and the legislation is a scandal. It has done nothing but bring shame on Western Australia, and shame upon this House. You reminded me, Mr Speaker, that I have been suspended from this place on two occasions for saying such things. However, they were the proudest moments of my life. I believed in what I was saying. When a party takes action such as the Liberal Party has taken in this legislation, it has sunk so low I would rather not breathe the same air as its members.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr TONKIN: I have never been able to understand how members of the Liberal Party can accept the victor’s crown as a result of deceit and treachery. How can the member for Mundaring say “I have won my seat fairly and squarely” when he knows that, although his electorate is just a few miles from the city, it is classed as a country electorate? This was done so that he could win his seat.

Mr Herzfeld: I took it off your member and you know it.

Mr TONKIN: Of course the member took it from our member; but our member had not rigged the boundary.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order! I ask the member for Mundaring and the member for Gosnells to desist from interjecting. The member for Morley.
Mr TONKIN: Of course the member for Mundaring took it from our member. Our member was not a dishonest thief. At no time did our member draw a line on the map to try to win the seat.

Mr Herzfeld: If the boundary had not changed I would have beaten him by more.

Mr Bryce: You political pup!

Mr TONKIN: If the member for Mundaring is a man of honour and integrity, he would be prepared to accept that the electorate of Mundaring is a short distance from Perth. He ought to be prepared to vote against this legislation and to see that Mundaring is brought into the metropolitan area. Then he can win the seat fairly and squarely.

Mr Herzfeld: Do you reckon the Toodyay Shire is in the metropolitan area?

Mr TONKIN: I am saying that the town of Mundaring is, and that the line drawn on the map is a crooked line in order to save the seat of Mundaring for the Liberal Party. If the member for Mundaring had any honour, any decency, any principle, he would not support this legislation. It is like a league footballer going to play against a team of children. He takes all the high marks and then says what a wonderful footballer he is. No decent footballer would accept such a proposition; every decent normal Australian wants to win honestly.

If the member for Mundaring thinks it is fair and square for the member for Kimberley—in the most remote part of this State—to have more people to look after than he, then he has a twisted and warped sense of fair play.

Mr H. D. Evans: He seems to have shut up, doesn't he?

Mr TONKIN: What member opposite could say that the seat of Rockingham is a metropolitan seat? In fact, it is much further away than Kalamunda, Mundaring, and parts of Armadale. Clearly, if Rockingham is a metropolitan seat, then so are the seats of Mundaring, Darling Range, Kalamunda, and Dale.

Why then was Rockingham brought into the metropolitan area? It was because if it stayed outside the metropolitan area it would become two Labor seats, so it was brought in to make sure that did not happen.

Why has the seat of Mundaring not been brought into the metropolitan area? It is because it would become half a Liberal seat. The only reason it has not is that it is held by a Liberal member.

Mr Wilson: It is represented by a halfwit.

Mr TONKIN: The only reason Dale has not been brought into the metropolitan area is that it is held by the Minister for Transport. How can the Minister for Transport, in all conscience, call himself a member of Parliament and accept the victor's crown in a crooked fight of this nature? If he were a man of principle and honour he would vote against this legislation. It is obvious that legislation which says Dale is a country electorate but Rockingham is a metropolitan seat is crooked legislation.

In respect of the seat of Kalamunda, it has been said the Speaker of this House is a man of principle, who once stood up in his place and voted against electoral legislation. If the Speaker is a man of principle he would not agree that Kalamunda should be a country seat; he would agree, as everyone in Kalamunda and the metropolitan area agrees, that Kalamunda is part of the metropolitan area. The residents of Kalamunda commute daily to work in Perth. To suggest Kalamunda needs to be an electorate smaller in number than metropolitan electorates because otherwise, electors could not obtain access to their member is a lie.

If the Speaker wants to have the respect of members on this side of the House, I call upon him to resign his Speakership and his position in the Liberal Party and to vote with the Opposition against this unprincipled legislation. If he does not, I say the Speaker is a man without principle or honour.

I say the same of the Minister for Transport. If he continues to remain a member of the Liberal Party and accepts this gift because, in the eyes of the Premier, he is a potential future leader of the Liberal Party and a future Premier of this State—apparently, they will do anything to keep this talented man in Parliament—he is without honour or principle. He should resign his portfolio and should resign from the Liberal Party. He should say "I believe in weighted votes, but there is no way I am going to say the electorate of Dale should have fewer electors than the electorate of Kimberley."

Mr Pearce: The Minister has lost the battle for Armadale and has fled into the hills.

Mr TONKIN: I say the same thing of the member for Darling Range. If he maintains it is more difficult to represent his seat, and that his constituents find it more difficult to get to him than do constituents in metropolitan electorates; if he maintains it is as difficult for him to represent that hills area only a few miles from Perth as it is for the member for Kimberley, it is a lie.
Mr Jamieson: He even voted for electoral reform at one time.

Mr TONKIN: We have opposite us very ordinary men and one woman; they are very ordinary people indeed. They have been seduced and corrupted by power. Power corrupts, and if we ever saw a corrupt set of people, it is these members opposite, who have sat there and drawn a line on a map—

Point of Order

Sir CHARLES COURT: I think we have been fairly generous in our attitude towards the honourable member—

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: Generous! You have been generous in racing to rig the political boundaries, you old fug.

Mr Pearce: The gentleman thief.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I ask for a withdrawal of those allegations of corruption against members who sit on this side.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of the House that at the outset of the member for Morley's speech I spoke to him of the use of the term "corrupt" in relation to members who sit opposite him; I concur with the point of order taken by the Premier and ask the member for Morley to withdraw.

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: I take a point of order, Mr Speaker. On previous occasions, you have held that terms such as that must be directed against a specific member. In particular, you have not upheld points of order taken by me against the Premier when the Premier has used similar unparliamentary language against the ALP or the Opposition, generally. You have said on those occasions that similar intemperate terms such as hypocrisy and the like must be directed towards a specific member before they become unparliamentary on the grounds of calling opprobrium upon a single member. I ask you to reconsider your ruling in the light of similar rulings you have given in this place.

The SPEAKER: Order! Notwithstanding the point made by the member for Gosnells, I adhere to my ruling and ask the member for Morley to withdraw.

Mr TONKIN: Mr Speaker, you refused to resign from the Liberal Party, yet you have the impudence to stand there and demand that I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morley will resume his seat. I ask him to withdraw without qualification. If he does not, I shall have to take action.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling

Mr PEARCE: I move—

That the House dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

I have quoted precedents from the past where terms such as "corrupt" and "hypocrisy" have been used. They have been used from the Government's side against the Opposition, as well as from this side. It has always been the position of Speakers that such allegations addressed generally are not unparliamentary. In fact, the Standing Order under which members are required to withdraw requires that a member must imply some dishonest or dishonourable motivation on the part of a specific member. It has always been part of the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate in this place for allegations addressed against corporate parties to be allowed much more licence than allegations against an individual member.

Mr Tonkin: I am prepared to be specific.

Mr PEARCE: No doubt the honourable member will get an opportunity, in a moment. Mr Speaker, if you were to cast your mind back to the occasion on which the member for Morley was previously suspended, the actual term he used was "This is a corrupt Government led by a corrupt leader." Probably, he was quite right. He was suspended on his use of the words "led by a corrupt leader" because that was a specific imputation against a member of this House.

In this case, I think you are wrong in ruling that the term "a corrupt Government" directed against the Government generally is unparliamentary. It is not in accordance with existing precedents and it defies our Standing Orders.

Perhaps one can understand your desire that the debate not get out of hand, though with such a piece of legislation as this it could hardly be expected members of the Opposition, who see the chance of winning government fairly being removed from them would not be a little upset at the irresponsible and dishonourable behaviour on the part of the Government. So, it is not entirely unexpected that words such as "corruption" would be kicked around in this debate.

However, as long as they are not addressed against specific members, I put it to the House that the Speaker has no right to rule such words are unparliamentary.
Mr B. T. BURKE: I second the motion to dissent from your ruling, Mr Speaker, and in so doing draw the attention of the House to the fact that when the member for Morley was taken to task, it was not the first time he had used the word “corruption” during this debate.

Those of us who were here from the outset of his contribution will remember and will recall that in fact Mr Speaker referred to the time when the member previously used that word in a similar context. At that time the Speaker rose to his feet and pointed out to the member for Morley and the House the way in which he believed the Parliament should regard the use of that term. But there was no move by the Premier on that occasion to seek a withdrawal, and members on this side of the House are quite properly in command of themselves if they think that because the Premier does not choose to seek a withdrawal on one occasion he either believes the term is parliamentary or he is prepared to accept it as a legitimate criticism of himself and the Government.

Mr Barnett: Also, it is true.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It would seem to me that, apart from those very valid objections raised by the member for Gosnells in moving this dissent motion, this debate occupies a peculiar situation within the affairs of this Parliament. It seems to me that because of that situation, something which might previously have been called unparliamentary might not on this occasion be so.

Personally, I very strongly believe that the term used by the member for Morley in the context in which he used it, the debate in which we are engaged, was not only quite parliamentary but also absolutely warranted, taking into account the performance of the Government.

It is very clear that the Government members have set themselves about following a very carefully laid down tactic in this debate. They have been remarkably silent and on only one or two occasions have we seen that vow of silence broken, and then by indiscreet interjections such as those made by the member for Mundaring, to whom very few people pay any attention at all.

In that situation and in the context of this debate—bearing in mind the phrase that has been objected to on this occasion was previously used without a withdrawal being sought—it is quite clear this selective sort of labelling as unparliamentary the utterances of members on this side of the House is something the House should not tolerate if it views itself with any respect at all. I have no hesitation in seconding the motion and in doing so I say that the term used by the member for Morley was warranted and deserved.

Sir CHARLES COURT: It is quite obvious that the member for Morley is endeavouring to hit the headlines—

Mr Tonkin: Trying to tell the truth.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and at the same time endeavouring to get himself suspended from the service of this House for a bit more publicity which he considers to be an accolade. I would regard that as a very serious blot on my parliamentary career. I remind members opposite as they try to walk the tightrope between fact and fiction that the reason the withdrawal from the member for Morley was not sought in the first place was that Mr Speaker, on his own initiative, very properly took the matter into his own hands—as he is entitled to do—and warned the member. In fact, he warned the House. That should have been enough for the member to desist. The member tried to abuse the privileges of this House and tried to use the loosest and most scandalous type of language.

Mr Tonkin: What sort of scandal is this legislation? You have abused this place plenty of times.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He did this and still wanted to get away with it under the protection of the privileges of the House. It is a disgrace that he should seek deliberately to do that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: With respect. I point out to the member that on this occasion when he used this offensive term he used it in a slightly different context. I know he was trying to tread a tightrope and trying to get away with it by accusing everyone of being dishonest and things of that kind. There is the law of libel which we know makes it very difficult to establish a case when a person makes a general accusation as against a specific one.

Mr Tonkin: If you want to be treated as—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Sir CHARLES COURT: There is a limit to the degree of license as to what anyone is permitted to do in this place and I believe the member has abused not only the privileges of this House but also the extent to which license can be stretched.

Mr Tonkin: If you want to be treated with honour—

Sir CHARLES COURT: If we look at the words used by the member we will see that he
went further than he normally does. When he first used the term and was interrupted by you earlier today, it was a different matter—quite apart from the fact I do not think it is right and proper to make a general accusation against the Government, because there are people who can be identified as being part of the Government when a person makes that sort of accusation. However, on this occasion the member was more specific, and in any case, whether such a term is used against the Government, a person, or against all Government members. I still take exception to it and so I disagree entirely with the motion presently before us. Mr Speaker, I believe your ruling is the only one that could be made in the circumstances.

Mr H. D. Evans: The Premier showed his effrontery by saying that the member for Morley was deliberately seeking expulsion from this place. By what criteria and by what values does the Premier come to that judgment? It is nothing but cheek of the highest order. How can the Premier come to that judgment? Mr Speaker, I believe your ruling is the only one that could be made in the circumstances. The Premier was saying the member was endeavouring to maintain his continuity of remark and remain in this place to do so, but this is in complete contradiction to the former accusation the Premier made in trying as he so frequently does by abuse to impugn the character of the member for Morley. The member for Morley is known for his sincerity of purpose in this regard and I can well understand him being outraged at the contents of this Bill, as is everyone else on this side of the House.

So, coming back to the specific point of the decision you, Mr Speaker, have made, we have here a general accusation that is made of an entire Government. There is nothing sacrosanct about Governments when they act as this one has. The member for Gonsells has very accurately indicated his own personal experience of what has transpired and which can be quoted as an adequate precedent. It is for that reason there can be and must be disagreement with the decision you have made, distasteful though it must be after such a determination has been brought down.

The Speaker: Before I call the member for Stirling, I would like to say that during the course of debate on the motion to dissent from my ruling I have had the opportunity to look at a number of cases that have occurred before. Whilst I can see that on a particular occasion the member for Morley was suspended, it was after he had made an accusation of corruption against a particular member—in this case the Premier. He was named and ultimately suspended from the service of the House. I have here at least two other cases where other Speakers have required members to withdraw similar words.

On 6 April 1976 the then Deputy Premier—I presume Mr (now Sir Desmond) O'Neil—drew the Speaker's attention to a particular case where the member for Morley referred to "corrupt laws devised by a corrupt Parliament".

Mr Tonkin: If you accept those words are corrupt—

The Speaker: Order! On that occasion the member for Morley withdrew those words. I believe there is ample precedence for the ruling I have given.

Mr Stephens: The National Party realises the predicament you are in, Mr Speaker. We have always found that your judgments are impartial and have never, with one exception, voted in support of any dissent motion against one of your rulings, and it is not our intention to do so on this occasion. How far one goes in a debate of this nature is a subjective judgment. We appreciate the difficulty you are in. Obviously with a Bill of this kind emotions are very high.

Mr H. D. Evans: You are a leader without a party.

Mr Stephens: The Premier spoke about abuse of privilege and I do not think anyone should abuse the privileges of this House. However, it is also important the Premier recognises that people should not abuse the privilege of power, and having used the term "abuse of the privilege of this House" he should think quite frequently about the abuse of the privilege of power which we see going on from time to time.

We may talk about this particular situation being corrupt, and it may be that it is twisted. It is a subjective judgment as to where corruption finishes and twisting starts.

Mr Harman: All the corruption is on the other side.

Mr Stephens: Mr Speaker, I take cognizance of your remarks made immediately before rising. However, I was hoping that rather than pursue this matter you might have been prepared to reconsider and ask the member for Morley to desist from making any further comments in that line rather than proceed with the action you have taken.

Mr Davies: I am sure that if the member for Morley were seeking headlines, as the Premier so
wrongly accused him of doing, the member can thank the Premier for the invaluable assistance given in obtaining a headline. It was miserable to say the least for the Premier to say that was what the member was doing.

Feelings on this side of the House are very high indeed. I was grateful for the fact Government members did not decide to interject when I was speaking. The interjections made were very minor ones, but I point out that on several occasions I did say the Government was corrupt. I said members opposite individually and collectively were corrupt and no-one raised a murmur about that. Yet because I have a fairly heavy cold which kept my tone down and did not shout as the member for Morley did to let the Parliament know how he felt, it seems what I said was acceptable but that the member for Morley did something quite wrong. It is strange that we can go outside the House and say the Government is corrupt and no-one takes exception.

Mr Bertram: They agree.

Mr DAVIES: I do not know whether that would be actionable, yet inside the House when we say the Government is corrupt, we are not allowed to persist. The Standing Orders of the House have not been abused because of the situation which exists. Feelings are running very high in regard to this Bill. We wonder what other words we can use except “corrupt”. Must we say the the legislation is not very nice, or words to that effect? It becomes ridiculous when we cannot use a word in the English language which adequately and accurately describes our feelings.

I have used that word and no-one has taken exception to it. The member for Morley used the same word and the Government seeks to have him suspended and attributes to him a motive which does not exist at all. Indeed, I am quite certain the member for Morley would have liked to be the lead speaker and said loudly and longly how we felt about this legislation.

If the Government is prepared to allow me to say those words without any objection being taken—and I said them on a number of occasions—it should be prepared to hear them from the member for Morley, particularly when we consider that had he used those words outside the House they would not have been objectionable, and the words accurately describe how he feels.

Mr Bertram: I agree.

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Mr TONKIN: I have come to this place to attempt to tell the truth as I see it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morley will resume his seat. It is with regret that I name the member for Morley.

Suspension of Member

Sir CHARLES COURT: I move—
That the member for Morley be suspended from the service of the House.

Motion put and a division called for.
Bells rung and the House divided.

Remarks during Division

Mr Pearce: We are getting pretty sensitive tonight, aren't we?
Mr Davies: They ought to be.
Mr Pearce: It is a conspiracy of silence tonight. They are just going to sit back and say nothing. Brer Rabbits, the lot of them.
Mr Barnett: Brer rats!
Mr Pearce: Why doesn't the Premier go home tonight and not soil his ears with this messy debate?
Mr Davies: He has arranged to be here and he had to wait until everyone was present.

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 30
Mr Blaikie Mr McPharlin
Mr Clarko Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan Mr Old
Mr Coyne Mr Rushon
Mrs Craig Mr Sibson
Mr Crane Mr Sodeman
Dr Dadour Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden Mr Stephens
Mr Grewar Mr Trethewan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herfield Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Lawrence Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 20
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McKer
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke Mr Pearce
Mr Carr Mr Taylor
Mr Davies Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Motion thus passed.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Morley to retire from the Chamber.

Mr TONKIN: I can assure you, Sir, we will not be silenced!

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear! What a paragon of virtue you are! You go to church! You go to cocktail parties!

The SPEAKER: Order!

[The member for Morley left the Chamber.]

Debate Resumed

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [5.22 p.m.]: I oppose this Bill, as I oppose the purpose of the parent Act on the Statute book. This Bill has been brought to this place to fine tune a gerrymander which was introduced by the corrupt forefathers of the people sitting opposite. With this particular piece of legislation, members opposite are perpetuating the most corrupt electoral system in Australia.

Mr Parker: In the world.

Mr BRYCE: No other State in the country can hold a candle to this particular Parliament when we examine the nature, manner, and the means by which elected representatives are sent to this place. The members who are responsible for bringing this Bill here are the perpetrators of an astonishing, treacherous act as far as our Constitution is concerned. Members opposite ought to be so shamed as they can never look at their electors again. The members for Vasse, Whitford, Karrinyup, and all their friends who sit alongside them—the Ministers who preen themselves on the front benches—portray themselves as respectable, decent, and responsible members of Parliament.

Mr Blaikie: Hear, hear!

Mr BRYCE: Some members opposite, like the Premier, go to church. They all front up at cocktail parties and present themselves as decent, responsible, and respectable elected representatives of the people; but they come to this place with a piece of legislation they know to be dishonest, crooked, and distasteful. Members opposite know this Bill is intended to distort and corrupt the system through which members are elected to this place. How can members opposite look at themselves in the mirror?

The facet of this particular legislation which concerns me most is the cowardly way this Government seeks to hide behind the integrity of the Chief Justice. This weasel of a Chief Secretary—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!
Mr BRYCE: This weasel of a Chief Secretary—

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr HASSELL: Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I ask that you direct the member to withdraw the offensive remark he has just made on the grounds that it is unparliamentary and improper.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The way in which the word was used—it was obviously directed at the Chief Secretary as an insult—leads me to the opinion that it is unparliamentary. I ask the member for Ascot to withdraw the remark.

Mr BRYCE: I withdraw the remark.

Debate Resumed

Mr BRYCE: The Chief Secretary, in the most disgraceful and cowardly fashion, has sought to shift the blame and responsibility for what will be the next set of electoral boundaries in this State onto the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General of this State. This is the most unforgivable part of this cowardly act on the part of the Government.

With this Bill which fine tunes a century-old gerrymander, the Government has set about the task of drawing up crooked, deliberately contrived, and distorted parameters which distinguish between one electoral area of this State and another. In other words, the Government is saying to the Chief Justice “Here is a set of parameters which are rigged and crooked and which we willfully, knowingly, and deliberately draw in a corrupt and rigged fashion for the express purpose of forcing you, together with the Chief Electoral Officer and the Surveyor General, to bring a crooked result back to the people.”

Mr Bertram: Precisely!

Mr BRYCE: That is the most despicable part of this legislation. A total of three men are involved. They are the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General. They are men of great standing in our community, whose integrity is beyond reproach. Nobody questions their integrity, but the Chief Secretary, together with his ministerial colleagues, is placing the Chief Justice in an impossible position. The Government is insisting that the Chief Justice become the executioner of democracy in Western Australia. That is a despicable instruction.

What would be the position of the Chief Justice if he were, as a matter of moral conviction, to say “I simply will not have a bar of this 19th century corruption so far as electoral boundaries are concerned”? He is in an impossible position, because under the obligations he faces by virtue of the Statutes of this place, he has no option but to resign.

The Chief Secretary knows that, when he squeals and yelps, it is not the dishonesty of this Government nor that of himself and his colleagues which will be held to book; it will ultimately be the work of the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General. The Chief Secretary knows he is being cowardly. He is hiding behind the integrity and public high standing of three of the most remarkable citizens in this State. He wants to be able to say that he, the Chief Secretary, and his ministerial colleagues were not responsible for this little piece of dirty work at the crossroads.

The expectations of the Chief Secretary leave a great deal to be desired. He is a disgrace. Any suggestion that the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General, as an electoral commission, are independent is purely illusory. It just is not true.

The track record of the Government leaves a great deal to be desired. This is not the first instance in which a Minister of such low standards as the Chief Secretary has brought legislation like this before Parliament. It is not the first time this has occurred, and as long as the Chief Secretary remains in this place, we can anticipate it will not be the last time.

Members should look at what the Chief Secretary and his colleagues did in 1975 and again in 1979. Members should look at the way in which they have deliberately set themselves about the task of thwarting the will of the people and knowingly and deliberately introducing laws to change—to tinker with and substantially alter on other occasions—the system by which members are elected to this place, perverting politics and perverting this Parliament, then having the gumption—the unbridled gall—to stand up publicly and say “People should obey the laws that Parliament enacts.”

How long will it be that this Minister, and his colleagues, can exist by virtue of the fact that the people in this State simply do not know, and probably will never find out, how crooked they are and how double their standards are?

Mr Barnett: A bunch of thugs.

Mr Bertram: Precisely.

Mr BRYCE: In 1975 this Government brought to this place a similar piece of legislation. Government members sat in their places,
shamefaced and silent, as they are now, without the answers or the moral courage to defend their position. It is apparent they will still sit in their places and try to tough it out tonight because the Premier has sent around the instruction “No interjections”.

One wonders how the Premier had the gall to demand a withdrawal from the member for Morley when he said the Premier’s Government was corrupt: How else could one define a Government which does something such as this?

I invite members to check the Oxford Dictionary to find the definition of “corruption”. Why is the Government so sensitive when it is faced with these truths?

Mr Bertram: Its members do not have consciences, I expect.

Mr BRYCE: I will quote a few interpretations of the word “corrupt”.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the member for Ascot to resume his seat. It seems to me that the member is embarking upon a matter which bears no relativity to the question before the Chair. I suggest that if he wished to make a speech along such lines he could have done so during the course of the debate on the motion to dissent from the line he is now embarking upon.

Mr BRYCE: May I suggest with the greatest of respect, Sir, that three or four of the explanations of the meaning of the word “corrupt” will have a great bearing on the debate: not only now but in the long hours ahead while this particular Bill is under consideration.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is what it is all about surely.

Mr Sibson: What are you trying to justify?

Mr BRYCE: What are we trying to justify? Perhaps the member for Bunbury should have gone to school for a longer period.

Mr Parker: That would not have made very much difference.

Mr BRYCE: Let us just consider some of the meanings of the word “corrupt”: to render unsound or impure by the contamination of putrid matter; to affect, to taint or to render sordid; to adulterate—what a wonderful list of alternative sayings we will finish up with!—to destroy or to pervert the integrity or fidelity of a person in his charge of duty; to induce to act dishonestly or unfaithfully; dishonest; pervert; to pervert the text or sense of a law by altering it for evil ends—who can doubt that this is what the Government intends—it is an unbridled intention—to destroy and pervert the system by electing members to this place for an evil and dishonest end. What a miserable hide.

I expect Government members will probably order the licensing of dictionaries next. The examples continue: To spoil in quality some thing or material; to break up the constitution or existing form; to dissolve or destroy, and finally it suggests that corrupt means a moral decay.

Who can argue that the amending Bill which has been brought to this place is not designed for those ends? Of course it is designed that way. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Morley have already pointed out that anyone who can sit in this place and say that he is doing the honest, faithful, respectable and decent thing by drawing the lines on the electoral map that have been drawn by this Cabinet and this Minister—he has to accept responsibility for it because it was some of the grubby backroom boys of the Liberal Party and some of the gangsters in the research department who have drawn the lines on this map—has committed unconscionable acts. How can Government members say that this action is decent, respectable and honest when they are placing 12,000 electors into the constituency of Kimberley when they have stood in this place on previous occasions and argued that 12,000 constituents are far too many for a country member to represent?

How can they sit here and accept that situation, knowing that you, Mr Speaker, will represent substantially fewer electors than the member for Kimberley as will the member for Moore, and a whole range of others whose constituencies fringe the metropolitan area? How can they argue that that is not a form of corruption as expressed in the terms used by the Oxford Dictionary?

They know that this Bill was brought to this place by a group of Cabinet Ministers, supported by their menial mendicants on the back bench who never question the logic of the Cabinet. They do so, knowing that their action is corrupt. What right have those Ministers to expect ordinary Western Australians to obey the laws when they deal in such humbuggery themselves? That is precisely what they are doing; it is more or less a double standard and it is totally unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, we saw in this House the same Government attempt to totally distort the electoral roll of the State. It is a disgrace and was another dishonesty that was pulled in an endeavour to preserve its own political hide.

In 1979 the brother or sister Bill to this Bill was brought into this place in an attempt to prevent certain citizens in Western Australia from being
able to cast a vote. I read today a result of a survey conducted in that vast constituency of Kimberley in which less than 50 per cent of the people who are entitled to be on the roll are currently on the roll.

Mr Bertram: Shame!

Mr BRYCE: So what is the real reason for agreeing to this little piece of corruption where there will be 12,000 electors in the new seat of Kimberley and where a vast number more people should be on that roll?

Can members imagine the size and the distortion in that electorate?

I will illustrate the position in this regard. In 1979 this Government brought a Bill to this place in order to destroy deliberately the decency of the Electoral Act. The Government wished to make it impossible for black citizens to be on the electoral roll. It also wished to make life difficult for 18-year-olds and for migrants in that it would be difficult for them to be on the electoral roll in Western Australia.

Until a few years ago there was always a very small difference between the number of Western Australians on the State electoral roll and on the Federal roll. The difference was approximately 8,000, but today the difference is 42,000 and the number is increasing.

It is no accident that a Minister, such as the Chief Secretary, should bring to this place a piece of legislation which is similar to the legislation used in the United States which requires that a person proves his literacy before he may vote. This legislation was designed intentionally and wilfully to prevent people from participating in the electoral processes of this State.

The legislation was not democratic and it was designed to prevent people from voting.

Mr Jamieson: It is a wonder they have not introduced a poll tax.

Mr BRYCE: Yes, fixed at a sufficient level to ensure that only the richest and most elite sections of the community can afford to pay the poll tax.

Mr Parker: They would have only one booth—in Peppermint Grove.

Mr BRYCE: This gerrymander contains all the seeds of its own destruction. The gerrymander has been perpetrated by the members of this Government's Cabinet. There has been a scramble amongst Government members. There has been a scramble between Government backbenchers who have noted where the line goes and have noted that their own seats are not so safe after all.

How will we prevail upon the member for Murchison-Eyre for the right and proper thing to be done as far as the remote seats are concerned? Now, what do we have to do to make things better for the member for Pilbara?

What an unsavoury state of affairs we have come to accept from these members who, with their grubby little hands, have taken up pen and put to paper the marks on a map of Western Australia; they have placed corrupt lines, for corrupt purposes and corrupt use.

Once again this action is unforgivable because these members of Parliament see themselves as paragons of virtue and like to think of themselves as decent, honest and respectable citizens and representatives in Parliament of a democracy. They know what they have done is deliberate and wilful.

I suggest, Mr Speaker, that when the members sitting opposite, the members of Cabinet in particular, made the decision to do this, to bring this sort of legislation to this Chamber, they made the corporate criminals and the Al Capones of this world look respectable.

The Al Capones and the corporate criminals of this world do not pretend. They do not pretend to be decent upright citizens because they know they are about a seamy business. They know that their purpose in life is to pull stunts, one after another.

However, the members sitting opposite pretend that their purpose in life is to do the right and proper thing; yet, they bring in this sort of legislation, in 1981, and wish to do something which would have been a disgrace in many European Parliaments at the turn of this century.

The members opposite intend, by virtue of this legislation, to bring the whole system of government into disrepute.

Without engaging in a Committee-style comment I would like to illustrate a short list of the guilty men, for the benefit of the record so that these men will go through the rest of their political careers in the knowledge that they were guilty of perpetuating this dishonest act, and to show that other members knowingly benefited from those actions. The members who will benefit from their actions are the receivers of stolen goods.

The principal perpetrator of this act of course was the Premier. The Minister, with the Liberal Party gangsters in the back room, were in a huddle to work out just exactly where the line should go; to make it as corrupt as it possibly could be and to ensure that the outcome was as intended.
Let us look at the short list of the guilty men who will benefit from this act of theft against democracy: the member for Dale, the member for Murray, the member for Mundaring, the member for Moore—

Mr O'Connor: And the members for Rockingham and Kimberley.

Mr BRYCE: —the member for Murchison-Eyre, the member for Gascoyne, and the member for Pilbara.

Mr Barnett: Don't include me with that lot.

Leave to Continue Speech

Mr BRYCE: I move—

That I be given leave to continue my remarks at a later stage of the sitting.

Motion put and passed.

Debate thus adjourned until a later stage of the sitting.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Liquefied Petroleum Gas Subsidy Amendment Bill.

2. Transport Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ACTS AMENDMENT (ELECTORAL PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [7.31 p.m.]: Prior to the tea suspension I was expressing my concern about the amendment to the Electoral Districts Act which this Government proposes to use to finely tune the gerrymander which it has inherited and further developed to thwart the will of the people of Western Australia. I should like to say at this stage that the members of this Cabinet, and the back-benchers who support them, deserve to be denounced as the traitors to democratic principles which they are. Not one of them could dare to lay claim to the title “democrat”. In fact, what has concerned me in recent years has been the fact that Ministers of this Government, and members on the back bench who support it, seem no longer to care about being referred to as “democrats”.

I have some rather basic questions I believe we ought to put to some of the guilty men opposite who stand to benefit very positively and directly from this little piece of dirty work called the amendment to the Electoral Districts Act.

Prior to the tea suspension I indicated the aspect which has concerned me most about this piece of legislation is that the perpetrators of the Bill itself know what they are doing. They know that the measure is a conscious attempt to frustrate the political will of all Western Australians. They know that they will get away with it, because they know the public at large have no idea what goes on inside this place; that is the nature of our society. They know that this action is morally and politically reprehensible. But, unlike the decent and respectable men they think they are, they are determined to proceed with this act of deception—an act of political thuggery. Not one member opposite could look at himself in the mirror and say “Today I have done a good day’s work. I have done the decent, right, honest, and respectable thing.”

When those men who stand to gain—men such as the members for Mundaring, Dale, Gascoyne, and Pilbara—go home this evening, they will not be able to look at themselves in the mirror and say “I have done the fair, right, faithful, decent, and honest thing.”

Mr Jamieson: Yes they will. They have no consciences.

Mr Old: Get off your white horse!

Mr BRYCE: I am worried the member for Welshpool may be 100 per cent correct.

Mr Pearce: He certainly is.

Mr BRYCE: The other aspect of this Bill which concerns me greatly is the way in which the Government quite deliberately seeks to hide behind the reputation and the integrity of the Chief Justice and his two colleagues who will form the electoral commission.

It has become quite apparent that the Chief Secretary, in particular, and the Premier alongside him, are prepared to spread the odium which results from any bunch of corrupt politicians putting their heads together to draw crooked lines on a map to wilfully and knowingly thwart the will of the people. They seek to get away with this act by hiding behind the integrity of the Chief Justice of Western Australia. On more than one occasion, in this place and publicly, they have said that they will not bear the
responsible for the 24 boundaries which comprise the rural and agricultural sector or the 27 boundaries which comprise the metropolitan area.

What we need to inform the public about is the fact that they have served up to the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Surveyor General a very crooked and deliberately rigged set of foundations upon which to draw boundaries. How can those three honourable men come up with anything but a crooked result? It ill behoves the Chief Secretary to pretend for one minute that he, as a Minister, and his Cabinet colleagues are not fundamentally, basically, and utterly responsible for the boundaries which will be brought in when the whole situation has been redrawn.

I suggested earlier that it was an act of cowardice for Ministers of the Crown to seek to hide behind these worthy citizens. We have seen the Chief Secretary run for cover on more than one occasion when things get hot in his portfolios. He distances himself from the Police Force by insisting that the Commissioner of Police is not answerable to him and when the going gets tough he, as the Chief Secretary responsible for the electoral laws of this State, and his colleagues rig, distort, and twist the basic democratic principles upon which members are elected to this House. Once again he distances himself from that rather nasty set of decisions by seeking to hide behind the unquestioned integrity and high standing of the Chief Justice and his two colleagues to whom I have referred.

Let me refer to the guilty individuals. The prime guilt rests at the feet of the men who commit the crime; that is, the Cabinet, essentially the Premier, and the Chief Secretary. I have already given a reference in despatches to those gangsters in the Liberal Party's research rooms who obviously fiddled with the line to work out how it best suits the political advantage of the Liberal Party. But the men in this place who stand to benefit quite obviously and positively from these changes in the boundaries are members like the member for Dale.

I wonder if I could ask the member for Dale a question through you, Sir. Does the member for Dale believe sincerely that the manipulation of the boundary between the metropolitan area and the country districts is fair and democratic?

Mr Bertram: He is preoccupied.

Mr BRYCE: I shall repeat the question to the member for Dale in case the conversation in which he is presently engaged with the member for Vasse is purely phoney and a means by which he might avoid answering it. Does the member for Dale have the gumption to say in this place—to go on record—that he believes the manipulation of the boundary between the metropolitan and rural areas of this State in the vicinity of his constituency is a fair and democratic decision?

Mr Rushton: I don't think there is a manipulation and I think the country people are entitled to representation.

Mr BRYCE: Does the member for Dale believe it is fair and democratic?

Mr Rushton: What I can see of it, yes.

Mr BRYCE: That is all I really expected.

Mr Davies: It is more than you expected.

Mr BRYCE: Future generations will judge this Minister for what he really is. He is a Minister who has been on the run in the southern suburbs of Perth for the last three elections. His popularity and standing in the community have been waning gradually and surely. His majorities have been whittled away at every election. He is about to be despatched to the dustbin of history. So what does this Government do? It introduces an amendment to the Electoral Districts Act to try to save his bacon.

Mr Rushton: I would win an election on the old boundaries, you need not worry about that.

Mr BRYCE: Despite the interjection of the member for Dale, all I can say is the Government obviously does not share his confidence that he could win on the existing boundaries. If it did, it would have left those boundaries precisely where they are. It has shifted the boundaries to help save the bacon of the member for Dale.

Can the member for Mundaring indicate that he believes the designation of the metropolitan sections of his area as country districts is fair and democratic?

Mr Herzfeld: By your question you have indicated that you don't even know where my electorate is.

Mr BRYCE: Sections of the constituency of the member for Mundaring are closer to the metropolitan GPO than sections of the Wanneroo Shire which have been put into the city.

Mr Herzfeld: What does that have to do with it?

Mr BRYCE: The member asks by way of interjection what that has to do with it. He knows he continues to sit in this place simply because the Government manipulates and distorts the boundary by drawing an artificial line of demarcation between those citizens of this city...
who live in the metropolitan area and those who do not.

Mr Herzfeld: You come up with the right candidate and the policies the people accept and you will have just as much chance of winning as I have.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Mundaring is as guilty as the member for Dale.

Mr Herzfeld: Absolute rubbish!

Mr BRYCE: They will both be knowingly receiving stolen goods from democratic principles and they sit back in this Chamber quite happy to accept the situation. This is the aspect we find galling. These paragons of virtue sitting opposite—the upholders of law and order—will bend, twist, break rules and conventions, and bring rigged political systems to this Chamber in order to preserve their own bacon. It is reprehensible in the extreme, if I may borrow a well known phrase used by the grandfather of this House.

I should like to make a brief reference to the situation of the members for Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne by comparison with the electorate of Kimberley. It seems that only a few days ago during the course of debate there was an endless stream of Government Ministers and members pouring in and out of the office of the member for Murchison-Eyre, trying to convince him that he had a responsibility to the Liberal Party to support this legislation. There were counter proposals which may have resulted in the drawing of this crooked line in a slightly different fashion in those particular seats.

I ask the member for Murchison-Eyre: If the Government is to place 12,000 constituents in the far-flung constituency of Kimberley, does he believe it is fair and democratic for it to restrict the numbers in his own constituency to 2,000?

Mr Coyne: I would be happy to have a few from Kalgoorlie.

Mr Pearce: So we heard. Why weren't you successful?

Mr Sodeman: Talking about sitting on people, what about the members who sat on the member for Yilgarn-Dundas? He was sat on when he tried to do something and has never done it since.

Mr Pearce: You are the main recipient of what is going on in the north. In the first place you have no right to be here.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosnells will desist from interjecting.

Several members interjected.
the Government would go to such dishonest lengths to save his bacon.

When the Government decided it was time to equalise the numbers in those four statutory seats—one of those seats to an extraordinary degree was out of kilter with 17,000 constituents on the roll and a potential roll of probably 35,000 constituents—instead of doing the decent thing and establishing some form of equality in those remote seats we saw it do the most reprehensible thing it could. It has moved a poultice from the seat of Pilbara to the vast seat of Kimberley and left the Honorary Minister for Housing, the member for Gascoyne, without any additional constituents.

It would seem the only consolation the member for Gascoyne and the member for Murchison-Eyre receive for not obtaining additional constituents is that they are members of the Liberal Party. We now have in the far north region of our fair State the most distorted political gerrymander in the nation. The integrity of Cabinet members and back-benchers who participated in this action leaves a great deal to be desired.

I would like to draw my remarks to a conclusion by saying I object in the strongest possible terms to the treatment which this Government has meted out to the people I represent—metropolitan citizens. We do not expect to hear the member for Scarborough, the member for Mt. Lawley or the member for Clontarf in this debate. We have seen the member for Clontarf run for cover in respect of how the Government has carved up one of the major educational institutions in his constituency. We do not expect him to stand in this place and raise his voice in defence of the basic democratic rights of his constituents. I object to the Government's saying that the people I represent are worth 1,000 per cent less than the constituents represented by the member for Murchison-Eyre.

I object to the assumption in this piece of legislation that the people I represent are regarded as second or third-class citizens in terms of the voting power they may exercise under the auspices of the Act. The Premier has not long to go in the political arena of our fair State, and he should give some consideration to the legacy that he will leave when he departs. Let us look at the things he achieved in respect of this basic area of Government responsibility. While his Government has been in office we have seen six additional members of Parliament appointed; and will see another four appointed, a total of six in this place and four in another. At least two additional Cabinet members have been appointed. They all have been appointed by a Premier who says the Government cannot afford to pay the salaries of nurses. It is not just a gain of four extra members of Parliament by way of this legislation: let us not forget his efforts in 1975 when he created an additional six members.

Now we will have 10 extra members of Parliament because he found it necessary to create four new positions as he went along destroying the electoral boundaries of this State in order to get his own way.

We have the Electoral Act, as distinct from the Electoral Districts Act which now positively and deliberately discriminates against 42,000 Western Australians not on the electoral rolls. They should be, but they are not, basically because their skin is black or they happen to be migrants from the European part of the world and cannot handle our language. They come from different cultural backgrounds. What a wonderful facet of his legacy that is; he will sit back and admire it in his retirement.

I will complete my remarks with a brief reference to the Electoral Districts Act which has the most deliberately distorted and dishonest set of boundaries in the nation. I say to you, Sir, that this Act is an Act of deception; an Act of downright and outright political thuggery. The Government has lost any moral right it had to provide leadership to our community.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [7.54 p.m.]: Mr Speaker—

Mr Pearce: The boy from the bush.

Mr HERZFELD: The member who has just—

Mr Pearce interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. The debate has been held so far with very little interjection. I believe that as members of the Opposition were heard almost in total silence the same courtesy should be accorded a member from the Government benches when he addresses the House.

Mr T. H. Jones: Government members have been suppressed, that is why.

Mr Pearce: They were told to be quiet.

Mr HERZFELD: As I was about to say, this House has been subjected to one of the most astounding speeches I have heard since I have been in this place.

Mr Bryce: You are one of the crooked ones.

Mr HERZFELD: The member for Ascot spent 45 minutes apparently trying to impress this House with his command of extravagant language; despite the great dictionary he has next
to him he must have studied one all last night to enable him to deliver his speech to the House. It may well have been if one listened carefully to his speech that not an ounce of substance could be found in it. I found very little in it that could be substantiated. Prior to that we heard the Leader of the Opposition give a very long speech which included many flights of fancy.

Mr T. H. Jones: He was spot-on and you know it.

Mr Pearce: How many electors do you have?

Mr HERZFELD: The Leader of the Opposition based his remarks on conjecture of what may or may not happen as a result of a redistribution that may eventuate from this legislation when it is passed. All the words that have flowed and no doubt will flow for a long time tonight in relation to this Bill boil down to one simple and fundamental fact: There is a difference of viewpoints between the two sides of the House as to what is considered to be a reasonable representation for people in the sparsely populated far-flung areas of this State.

Mr Pearce: How far flung is Mundaring?

Mr HERZFELD: I have cited the fundamental point.

Mr Pearce: Why should you have a country electorate?

Mr HERZFELD: We have been shown that if the ALP were given a chance to govern it would completely forget country people; it would treat them as if they did not matter.

Mr Pearce: The country people of Mundaring!

Mr HERZFELD: The ALP would concentrate its efforts on urban dwellers. We saw ample evidence of that when the Whitlam Government was in power.

Several Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. I want to say to members of the House I will not tolerate the continual interjections at the rate they have been coming during the recent part of the member for Mundaring’s speech.

I say to people in the gallery that I am delighted they have come to listen to the debate, but I cannot permit any noise to emanate from the gallery. If there is and it continues I will have no choice but to clear the gallery.

Mr HERZFELD: This country has seen ample evidence of what members of the ALP will do when in Government to make it more difficult for country people to survive in Australia. I put to the House that the very basis of all the objections we heard tonight is that the ALP does not want to see adequate representation for the country people of Western Australia.

Mr Pearce: Why should you have less than Kimberley when you are 12 miles from the GPO and Kimberley is 2 000 miles away?

Mr HERZFELD: In contrast—

Mr Davies: He is incapable.

Mr Pearce: Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

I ask the member for Gosnells to desist from interjecting. If I do not miss my mark, before this night is over the member for Gosnells will exercise his right to address the House. I believe he ought to contain himself until he has the call from the Chair.

Mr Pearce: It is a load of rubbish.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Mundaring.

Mr HERZFELD: In five minutes that is the third time I have been sat down.

Mr Pearce: That is right.

An Opposition member: You ought to stay down.

Mr HERZFELD: I hope that people in the Public Gallery will note how the Opposition believes in the freedom of speech! It does not even believe in it in this place.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Gosnells that if he continues interjecting, I will take action.

Mr HERZFELD: I again indicate, the real basis of the objection of the Australian Labor Party to the legislation before us—

Mr Barnett: It rigs your boundary.

Mr HERZFELD: By contrast, let us look at what this Bill proposes to do, in the context of the Westminster system which we have adopted in this country.

Mr Pearce: Years out of date.

Mr HERZFELD: We will see how it has evolved over the years since responsible government came to this State.

Mr Bertram: When was that?

Mr HERZFELD: Let us look at the basic elements of the Westminster system.

Mr Pearce: Equal electorates!

Mr HERZFELD: Let me remind members of that basis because it is fundamental to the established traditions of this State. The
Westminster system takes into account that there should be equality of representation.

Mr Pearce: Oh yes.

Mr HERZFELD: Let me define what is meant by equality of representation.

Mr Barnett: This will be what you think it means.

Mr HERZFELD: Of course, the Opposition will say one-vote-one value.

Mr Pearce: That is right.

Mr HERZFELD: That is not what it means.

Mr Barnett: Of course not.

Mr HERZFELD: Equality of representation means people of the State are given the same representation taking into account a number of factors.

Mr Carr: Then how do you equate 12,000 people in the Kimberley with that?

Mr HERZFELD: These factors include—

Mr Pearce: This is not the Westminster system.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HERZFELD: —population density—

Mr Pearce: Rubbish.

Mr HERZFELD: —the distance that the electorate is from the capital city—

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the member for Mundaring resume his seat at that point. I ask him to apologise for reflecting on the Chair.

Mr BARNETT: Certainly I apologise if any reflection was taken by you because—

The SPEAKER: The member will apologise without qualification.

Mr BARNETT: I qualified it by saying none was meant. If that is not a satisfactory apology, I do not know what is.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockingham will apologise without qualification.

Mr BARNETT: I apologise. Would it be permissible for me now to continue?

The SPEAKER: Yes, with your point of order.

Mr BARNETT: It has been evident over the last few minutes that the member for Mundaring has been extremely provocative in terms of the speech he is making. I put it to you, Sir, he is no less provocative than those members on this side of the House who have chosen to interject, and I would ask for your protection as much from him as has been directed by him against us.

The SPEAKER: Order! In the first place I will say that there is no point of order. In the second place, I want to say there is a technique that appears to be employed by the Opposition benches at times—

An Opposition member: And the Government benches.

The SPEAKER: —or there to be a relay of interjectors. We have had a case here tonight of the member for Gosnells and then the member for Rockingham interjecting at fairly regular intervals on the member who has indicated he wishes to address his remarks to the Chair and not field the interjections.

At times members make provocative speeches and they invite interjections; indeed, they relish the interjections forthcoming. However, this member has indicated he wants to make a fairly considered speech to the House by addressing the Chair, and in those circumstances he will be afforded every protection I can give him. I will give the same protection to members on the Opposition benches when they are attempting to do the same thing.

The member for Gosnells is one of the most capable debaters in the House: no other member, I suggest, has had more debating experience than he, and I suggest that he should reflect on the principles followed in debating circles, and I think he will come to believe for a member to be constantly interrupted when making a speech is not a fair thing. The member for Mundaring.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: Mr Speaker, I would just like to rise on this matter to ask for your special guidance in protecting both sides of the House and not just one.
Debate Resumed

Mr HERZFELD: I go back again, and if I have to do this too often, I will not get through my speech. I appreciate the support you are giving me, Sir, in trying to make my speech.

Mr H. D. Evans: You need it mate!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HERZFELD: I referred to the need, under the Westminster system for equality of representation. The second basis under which the Westminster system has evolved is that individual representation is central to our system, and I do not need to explain that concept any further.

The third point is that there should be a community of interest that results in the formation of an electoral district.

Mr Carr: What community of interest is there between Paraburdoo and the Kimberley?

Mr HERZFELD: We must look at the way the Westminster system has developed in this State historically. We must consider the special features that exist in this State that do not exist in the mother country where the system commenced. These features had to be taken into account in designing the electoral districts of this State.

First of all I mentioned the obvious fact of the concentration of population in the metropolitan area. By far the majority of the residents of Western Australia lived in the metropolitan area in the past and they continue to do so, and this leaves a very vast sparsely populated hinterland. Some areas may be more sparsely populated than others, but certainly in comparison with, say, Europe or America, they are very sparsely populated indeed.

Another factor is becoming evident increasingly, and that is the pattern of growth as a result of the policies of this Government. We have seen a great move towards decentralisation.

Mr B. T. Burke: You are joking!

Mr Davies: You have seen nothing.

Mr HERZFELD: We have seen the development of great new centres where previously there were none.

Mr Bryce: You jest!

Mr HERZFELD: One has only to look at the north-west, the Pilbara and such places, to see what has happened as a result of this Government’s policies. Nothing like that would have happened had the Opposition been in government. These explosions of population created particular difficulties in deciding the boundaries of electoral districts. Even more significant is the fact that we are on the point of seeing even greater changes. For instance, in the Karratha area in the next three or four years—and that is not a long period of time—we will see a huge increase in the population.

Mr B. T. Burke: But none will get on the roll.

Mr HERZFELD: There will be another 50,000 or 60,000 people there.

Mr B. T. Burke: Did you say 50,000 or 60,000 in a couple of years?

Mr Davies: Fantasising again.

Mr HERZFELD: I said in three or four years.

Mr Bryce: We still say “Ho, ho, ho!”

Mr HERZFELD: It is conjecture, I admit.

Mr Davies: No it is not; it is fantasy.

Mr HERZFELD: Not as much fantasy as the Leader of the Opposition gave us tonight.

Mr Davies: All facts, every one of them.

Mr HERZFELD: All this makes it tremendously difficult for those—

Mr B. T. Burke: That sort of thing would!

Mr HERZFELD: —who have to determine the electoral boundaries. I believe the Bill before us tonight—with the framework of the Westminster system which I outlined earlier—tries to take into account the very special difficulties that exist as a result of our population distribution and other factors. So one can say that it recognises the changes that have taken place since the last distribution that was completed in 1975—

Mr Davies: Absolute nonsense.

Mr HERZFELD: —and that it tries to modify the Act so those changes are taken into account. I think that is a very good thing.

Mr Bryce: As you benefit by it, we wouldn’t expect you to say much else.

Mr HERZFELD: It modifies the existing Act along principles that have been in effect since 1965, as I understand it.

Mr Davies: It protects your seat.

Mr HERZFELD: I do not think I heard any Opposition speaker suggest that the areas that are proposed to be brought into the metropolitan area under this legislation cannot be classed properly as urban areas. I have not heard anyone say that.

Mr Bryce: Are you saying Kalamunda isn’t urban?

Mr B. T. Burke: Darlington?

Mr Davies: We are comparing like with like. Of course, you are talking nonsense.
Mr HERZFELD: Another factor that comes into the whole problem—

Mr Bryce: Ask the residents of Lesmurdie whether they live in the country?

Mr HERZFELD: Consider the history of the Darling escarpment. It has been taken roughly as the line dividing the metropolitan area from the rural area for a long time.

Mr Bryce: How far back in history?

Mr B. T. Burke: Who said that?

Mr HERZFELD: It is debatable whether the areas there can be considered urban. Darlington, Glen Forrest, and some of my electorate have residents who follow a different lifestyle. The community of interest is quite different from that of an urban area.

Mr Bryce: Where do the majority of them work?

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: The biggest percentage commute to the city.

Mr HERZFELD: It has nothing to do with where they work—the community of interest is the important thing.

Mr Jamieson: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr HERZFELD: One cannot take pockets out of the metropolitan area like that.

Mr Jamieson: That is what you are doing.

Mr HERZFELD: It is a moot point whether the line should be a bit further up the escarpment than it is. I would not argue about that, but it seems a reasonable line to me because the whole idea of the legislation is to alter the boundary of the metropolitan area as little as possible.

Mr Bryce: Can I ask a question?

Mr HERZFELD: I can see a considerable amount of logic in the legislation. We could argue all night about whether it should be a little further up the hill.

Mr Davies: Let someone else define it.

Mr Bryce: Have you been promised the next vacancy in the Cabinet to stand up tonight to give us this rubbish?

Mr HERZFELD: The member for Ascot should not talk rubbish. I was elected to this place to represent the people of Mundaring, and I exercise that right as frequently as I can.

Mr Bryce: You are not doing very well in the Cabinet stakes at the moment.

Mr HERZFELD: Let me turn now to the question raised by all Opposition speakers opposing the creation of additional metropolitan seats.

I listened with some interest to the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition which he claimed indicated that as a result of the addition of two extra seats, the actual ratio of representatives to electors would reduce. That is not the result I found from my research. The following table indicates the actual ratio of representation: In 1976, when the boundaries were last changed, the total population of the State was 1.183 million and the House was given 55 seats, providing a ratio of 21,509 electors to each member. By 1983, it is estimated that the population of the State will have increased to 1.363 million which, with the 57 seats provided by this legislation, will provide a ratio of 23,912 electors to each member. So, in fact, there is to be an increase rather than a decrease in this ratio.

I turn now to the actual electorates and break them up into the three distinct zones covered by the legislation. I deal first with the metropolitan area. In September 1975 when the electoral commissioners last carried out a redistribution there were 420,925 electors on the roll and 27 metropolitan seats giving a ratio of 15,589 electors to each member. As at March 1981—the last figures which are available—there were 493,465 electors. This legislation proposes 30 seats for this House, which means there would be a ratio of 16,448 electors to each member. I suspect that by the time the next election comes around in 1983, that ratio will have substantially increased.

So, members will see that despite the increase by three seats in metropolitan representation, the ratio of electors to members has gone up and will go up even more.

The same thing has happened in the agricultural, mining, and pastoral areas. At the end of my speech I will seek leave to have those figures incorporated in Hansard to complete the table of figures I have just given. The same applies in the north; the ratio of electors to members throughout the State will also increase.

Several accusations have been made from the other side using rather strong words which I would prefer not to repeat suggesting there has been some sort of manipulation of boundaries.

Mr T. H. Jones: You do not believe that?

Mr HERZFELD: No, I do not. Again, I have some statistics to prove the system of electoral boundaries which operates in Western Australia works extremely fairly when we compare the number of seats won by individual parties with the total votes cast for those parties. This is the point about which the Opposition is always arguing; members opposite feel that somehow or
other their representation in this place does not reflect a fair result in terms of the number of votes cast for them. The following are the figures for the metropolitan area at the 1980 election—

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<th>Total Votes</th>
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<th>NCP</th>
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<td>18,788</td>
<td>3,994</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Votes</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Seats</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Seats</td>
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<td>29.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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*Collie excluded.

If anyone should claim there is a gerrymander or a malapportionment of votes, I should say that claim should come from those on this side of the House, because the ALP won more seats than they received in total votes, by proportion.

Mr Carr: That is not true on a State basis.

Mr HERZFELD: Those are the facts, and they cannot be denied. We do not find people on this side of the House complaining about those facts, and I will tell members why: It is because there is a recognition on this side of the House that where there are electoral districts which elect one representative, there must be some sort of disparity between the percentage of seats won and the total votes achieved. It is the old example where if one side wins very well and the other side does not win by so many votes, a disparity occurs. I was amazed when I studied these figures to see how they came out, and how close the party by party representation in this place was to the percentage of total votes cast for the respective parties.

Mr H. D. Evans: Are you going to give us the figures for the country areas?

Mr HERZFELD: That appears to indicate our electoral system is working remarkably well. In answer to the member for Warren, I should now like to give the figures for the country areas.

Mr Carr: Are you going to combine the two sets of figures to give one result for the whole State?

Mr HERZFELD: I said at the beginning of my remarks that the fundamental difference in stance adopted in this House between the ALP and members on this side was the fact that members opposite would not grasp that country people had a right to proper representation. Members opposite want to take that representation away from them. The following are the figures for the country areas—

So, in the case of the Liberal Party, the reverse result occurred in the country areas; it won slightly more seats than it received votes, proportionately; the ALP won slightly fewer seats, on a proportional basis. I put it to the House that is a very reasonable sort of variation; the disparity could not be considered unreasonable in our system. In fact, I would say the ALP was very lucky it received even that many votes in the country areas, considering the way it treats country people with its policies.

All these statistics can be very confusing but to me and, I hope, to the House, they indicate—quite contrary to what members opposite would have us believe—that our electoral system does provide a reasonable reflection of the wishes of the electors of this State.

Mr Stephens: Don't you understand the meaning of gerrymander?

Mr HERZFELD: I will leave those results at that point.

Let me come back to the approach of members opposite to what they consider to be acceptable electoral reform. We have not heard much of what they consider is the right thing; all they have done is to criticise, without coming up with alternatives.

Mr Pearce: Yes we have; one-vote-one-value is the only alternative.

Mr HERZFELD: Members opposite have tried to convince the House they are really knights in shining armour, seeking to rectify some grave injustice perpetuated on the electors of Western Australia when really, all they are trying to do is to cover themselves for their lack of support in the country.

As I said earlier, the reason the ALP has a lack of support in the country is that its policies are such that the party is roundly rejected by country people. People in the country do not trust the ALP. We have heard this very convenient catch cry of "one-vote-one-value"; it is written into their platform, and it all sounds very good.

Mr Melver: You say people in the country do not support the ALP. Where do you think we live—in the desert?

Mr HERZFELD: Even that platform recognises that one-vote-one-value is not fully achievable because, after making that statement, it goes on to qualify the one-vote-one-value concept by saying the party would permit a 10 per cent fluctuation in enrolment, and that it would also continue with single representation in this Assembly.

Let us have a look at what one-vote-one-value would mean. These statistics are important for country people to digest so that they can recognise what would happen if members of the Opposition were given the opportunity to carry out what they describe as a "reform" of a system which, as I
have indicated, already accurately reflects the wishes of the electorate.

I shall quote figures I have here and indicate the result if we were to have this so-called one-vote-one-value system and give an indication of the resultant ratio of electors to members. I am informed that currently there are 714,242 electors on the electoral roll and that there are 55 seats in this House at the present time. This means the ratio of electors to members is roughly 13,000:1. If we had a change in the agricultural, pastoral, and mining areas so this one-vote-one-value concept came into being, the 193,983 electors who currently have 24 members representing them would end up with only 15 members.

Mr Pearce: That shows the extent of the gerrymander, you idiot.

Mr HERZFELD: No, it does not.

Mr Bryce: Of course it does.

Mr HERZFELD: It indicates how members opposite will not accept the fact that country people should have a reasonably equal level of representation.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is 17:1, you donkey.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! Members of the Opposition were heard in relative silence and with relative dignity.

Mr Bryce: We were very unprovocative.

The ACTING SPEAKER: If the member wishes to interject while I am speaking he can do so if he is prepared to accept the consequences. I ask members to give the member for Mundaring the same courtesy as was extended to them.

Mr HERZFELD: In the metropolitan area there are 493,465 electors and they are currently represented by 27 members. If the ratio of 13,000 electors to one member were used, the metropolitan area would end up with 38 representatives in this place.

Mr Bryce: That is fair and democratic.

Mr HERZFELD: We will come to that in a minute. Let us look at the northern areas where there are 267,974 electors who currently have four members representing them. Under this one-vote-one-value system, all the north would be represented by two members.

Mr Bryce: Not true.

Mr HERZFELD: That would be completely unrealistic. There is no way such a system could work. It is quite obvious that if the ALP were given the chance it would certainly deprive the country people of a fair and equitable voice in this place.

Mr Davies: It would do away with the gerrymander.

Mr HERZFELD: I remind members of things that have occurred in other States when Governments of the Opposition's ilk have been given the opportunity to implement their schemes. Members should consider what happened in New South Wales and South Australia under Labor Governments. I met a member of the South Australian Parliament when I was there with the member for Murchison-Eyre recently. That member—the member for Eyre—indicated that his electorate covered nine-tenths of that State. That is an example of the one-vote-one-value system. What chance do his constituents have of getting any sort of reasonable representation? It is quite ridiculous.

Mr Bryce: You are guiding the lily.

Mr HERZFELD: I think I have shown just how ridiculous it is the stance taken by the Opposition and how, even with the practical limitations and constraints created by the geographical and demographic difficulties we have in this State, this Bill does provide us with something that is consistent with a number of fundamentals which I would like to list before I conclude.

The first is that the Bill does provide for changes to the electoral districts in conformity with long established and tried principles of the Westminster system. There is absolutely no doubt about that. The Bill sets out to resolve some particularly difficult problems associated with the very sparsely populated areas of the north that are very distant from the capital city and have very special problems.

There is no question that before too long, changes must be made to northern constituencies because they will get out of kilter in time. However, in the context of present circumstances, this legislation is as good as could be hoped for. There is no question that the amendments being brought forward do reflect the underlying philosophy of the current Act, a philosophy which goes back at least to 1965.

The Act was acceptable to the ALP in those days mainly because it saw advantage in it. However, in the years which have passed we have seen that it has lost the support of the Opposition members as they have lost more and more seats; so, one can trace back their dislike of the legislation to their loss of support. I guess that situation is hardly likely to change. I expect that because the ALP cannot reflect the needs of the people it will be out of government for a long time.

The Bill does make a good job of a difficult situation.
Mr T. H. Jones: It is a lovely gerrymander.

Mr HERZFELD: Unless someone can come up with something concrete that is better and is consistent with the principles I have outlined, something which would give as good a result as the present system gives us, it behoves the Opposition to go along with the intent of this legislation. I gave the statistics which reflected the results of the last election. As I say, the Opposition should go along with the intent of this legislation.

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [8.37 p.m.]: Before beginning the few remarks I have prepared, I should comment on the speech made by the member for Mundaring. It may have been a balm to his conscience, but I doubt that it would have convinced anyone to change his mind in any way whatsoever about this legislation. I use the word "conscience" although I sometimes wonder whether members in certain areas of the Chamber have a conscience.

Mr Nanovich: Why do you not speak for yourself?

Mr Bryce: The member for Whitford has broken rank.

Mr STEPHENS: I realise I am getting close to the quick. However, some of the comments made by the member for Mundaring indicated that the Labor Party, when in office, would concentrate only on the urban dwellers. The member for Mundaring should know who concentrates on urban dwellers. I suggest he tried to draw a red herring across our paths, because the Liberal Government in this State has in fact concentrated, on the urban population. It has done it with the assistance and connivance of the party which calls itself the National Country Party. Those who are political analysts and those who follow the political scene know the real situation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are far too many interjections and far too much casual conversation.

Mr Davies: That is what the Government Whip is saying to the member for Whitford.

Mr STEPHENS: Members of the National Country Party have completely and utterly sold out and have been taken over by way of infiltration of Liberals into their organisation. We all know the reason for the existence of the National Party. That party will continue to exist for the very reasons it was established in the first place. One of the principal reasons was the need for a genuine centre party with a conscience and a responsible approach to legislation.

Mr B. T. Burke: Now tell us you are it.

Mr STEPHENS: We hope to restore the Parliament to what it should be and return it to an important role rather than the role of a rubber stamp—a rubber stamp for the Executive and the people behind the Executive, who at present are not allowed to interject. That is a situation which enforces the idea that there is an Executive dictatorship in this Parliament. That is what is bringing this country down and is one of the reasons that people in Western Australia have very little regard for Parliament or politicians.

Coming back to the question of the concentration of parties on urban dwellers, recently we have seen the Liberal Party increase freight rates in Western Australia by 10 per cent whilst at the same time increasing the fare structure of the metropolitan transport system by only 5 per cent. That was done notwithstanding that the losses of the metropolitan system were twice the losses of Westrail's country freight system. So who is concentrating on urban dwellers? It was not the Labor Party at the time, because it was not in office, so it must have been the Liberal Party.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEPHENS: We have seen legislation introducing clearing bans which very distinctly worked against farmers in rural areas. Undoubtedly the legislation was introduced in an attempt to provide water supplies for the metropolitan area.

Mr Sibson: Did you support that legislation?

Mr STEPHENS: I supported a requirement that there be a clear system of licensing for clearing. The member for Bunbury was a member of the Government which deceived this Parliament. Senior members of the Public Works Department told me within six weeks of the legislation going through this House, that although the legislation was to control clearing by a licensing system, no licences would be granted. If that was not misleading this House, I do not know what is.

We have seen this Government create a situation at Jervoise Bay for the benefit of urban people when it cannot even provide a much needed fishing boat harbour at Albany, an area which I know about because I represent it.

Mr Pearce: This is a Bill, not the Address-in-Reply.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like the member for Stirling to relate to me how his
Mr STEPHENS: I was replying to a comment made by the member for Mundaring who claimed that the Labor Party would concentrate only on urban areas. I believe there ought to be a refutation of his accusation. Surely if that comment was allowed to go unchallenged, a refutation should also be allowed.

We find the Government has taken a socialistic approach and provided a number of facilities at Jervoise Bay. I cannot prove what I am about to say because the information came from a senior public servant who shall remain nameless, but he indicated that the Government has even gone so far as to say to a businessman interested in fabricating certain goods in the Port of Albany that the Government has facilities for this work at Jervoise Bay and that the businessman should use those.

Mr Carr: It is a very centralist Government.

Mr STEPHENS: There is a great deal of pollution in Cockburn Sound and $46 million is to be taken from the taxpayers' purse to overcome this problem—a problem caused by the concentration of industries in the metropolitan area. However, when it comes to country areas the Government adopts a policy of the user-must-pay. I appreciate your comments, Mr Speaker, but I thought it a serious matter to challenge the comment made by the member for Mundaring that it is only the Labor Party which looks after urban areas. I think I have said enough to indicate that the Liberal Party certainly concentrates on urban areas. It may be a little successful in conning the National Country Party into believing that it also looks after country people.

This legislation is really a replay of the 1975 legislation.

Mr Harman: It is about 10 times worse.

Mr STEPHENS: But it is still a replay of that legislation. That legislation was popularly known as the "get rid of the National Country Party legislation". As I said earlier, the Government achieved that by its infiltration into that organisation, making it an effective tool of the Liberal Party. They are one and the same thing.

I suppose this legislation could be referred to as the "Get-rid-of-the-National-Party" legislation. That is quite understandable because we have assumed that independent role—I have just been reminded by my colleague that it could be termed "Get-rid-of-the-member-for-Subiaco" legislation also—of representation for non-metropolitan people which has been abrogated by the National Country Party. Our party has that interest, as a responsible middle-of-the-road organisation.

It may be argued that I have adopted a double standard because in 1975 I did not oppose the legislation.

Mr Barnett: Let us get it right: You have adopted a double standard or you did not oppose the legislation.

Mr STEPHENS: It is true I did not oppose the legislation and I did not vote against it. However, I wish to refresh the minds of members with regard to my situation. The legislation was devised during the period I was in Cabinet. I was responsible for three portfolios and had a heavy workload; this fact will be recognised by members of the Opposition who have been Ministers. I had a considerable amount of work to do in order to get on top of the problems involved in my portfolios and whilst in that role I did not have the opportunity to involve myself in the debate on the legislation subsequently presented to the House.

Mr Harman: Who advised the Cabinet?

Mr STEPHENS: I do not know and even if I did I would not divulge it.

Mr Harman: Fair enough.

Mr STEPHENS: When the legislation was presented I was a back-bench member. Members will recall that the member for Mt. Marshall—who was then the Leader of the National Country Party—and I took a certain line of action at our own request and which was supported unanimously by the parliamentary party.

It is history now that some of those members reneged on their decision. The matter has been referred to in this House by one member as the tinkle of silver has given way to the rustle of portfolios.

Several members interjected.

Mr Bryce: Judas Iscariot!

Mr STEPHENS: Being a back-bench member I was able to take an interest in that legislation, but because of the nature of the situation that existed at that time I remained silent. Even if I had spoken and voted according to my conscience it would not have altered the legislation.

However, that legislation did spark an interest in me about the need for electoral and parliamentary reform. If members care to refer to the speeches I have made since 1975 they will note that quite often I have been a keen advocate of electoral and parliamentary reform. The catalyst for that was the 1975 legislation.
In the Minister's second reading speech he made reference to the fact that the State was divided into three areas: The country; agricultural, pastoral and mining areas; and the north-west and Murchison-Eyre area.

The National Party has no basic argument about the need for the three areas. As a country member, I make no apologies for my support of the principle of a weighted vote for country areas. I find it exceedingly difficult to give adequate representation to an area covering 7,500 to 8,000 square miles.

If the one-vote-one-value principle were applicable to the State as a whole, country electors would be seriously disadvantaged because it would not be possible for them to have equality of representation.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of overcoming this problem with the provision of additional facilities—additional electorate offices and secretaries. I do not agree with that opinion because then it would become representation by proxy. I believe we should have a weighted vote in country areas.

Mr Pearce: Would you accept a weighted vote in the Parliament if you are saying country people should have more access? Why not have a half vote for people who have half a vote in the Parliament?

Mr STEPHENS: I made points on the speech of the member for Mundaring and then commented on them when I spoke. The member for Gosnells will have an opportunity to put his point of view when he speaks. I do not have time to answer all the interjections.

The SPEAKER: I ask members to desist from interjecting.

Mr STEPHENS: We are concerned about the gerrymander with the metropolitan boundary. As I have said that we in the National Party believe in a weighted vote for genuine country people, it would follow that we do not necessarily hold that the weighted vote should apply to people who are termed country, but who are in fact metropolitan residents.

It has been said that if one stood in the district of Nedlands one could see the electorates of Dale, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring.

Mr Pearce: I cannot see a good part of my electorate, metropolitan as it is!

Mr STEPHENS: By no stretch of the imagination can it be argued that the metropolitan boundaries as they are envisaged by this legislation are not metropolitan areas.

Mr Harman: If the Speaker stood on the steps of Parliament House he could see the housewives hanging clothes on their washing lines in his electorate.

Mr STEPHENS: It appears that overnight Rockingham will become a metropolitan electorate. How can we support that move without querying the integrity of the intention of the Government when the Dale, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring electorates are left as country electorates? How can it be argued that overnight the Rockingham electorate will change from a country electorate to a metropolitan electorate when the others remain as they are? They are all basically in the same situation.

Mr Barnett: No; they are 12 miles away from Perth!

Mr STEPHENS: Those areas are still regarded as country electorates so one can come to the conclusion only that there must be some advantage for the perpetrators of this legislation in holding those seats as country seats. That is something we in the National Party view with concern.

Mr Harman: I do not blame you.

Mr STEPHENS: In his second reading speech the Minister said that this step of changing the boundaries is taken without diminishing the actual representation of country and remote areas of the State. He said that the Government is formally of the view that in light of the continuing basic economic importance of the country areas, their representation should not be diminished. I agree that their representation should not be diminished, but representation is not being diminished by leaving the dormitory areas such as Dale, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring as country areas. That move does not increase country representation at all.

Those areas should be included in the metropolitan area and be part of the city vote. If they were, of course there would be no need to increase the number of members representing the metropolitan area. Of course, there is no advantage to the Rockingham area in its being included in the metropolitan area when other dormitory areas, which are basically the same, remain as country areas.

By being honest and fair we can maintain equality of representation; those were the words of the Premier when he first announced this move to the Press. He did not say it would also cost the State two more Assembly members and two Council members.

The Minister referred to the electoral commissioners' independence and said that it was
without question. I will not challenge that statement but the parameters within which the commissioners have to work is not without question. Therefore, the system, while it appears to be fair, is grossly unfair because the commissioners are asked to achieve the impossible: a fair distribution of votes within the metropolitan boundaries—boundaries which do not truly portray the metropolitan area.

The cost to the State as a result of this move is of considerable importance and concern to members of the National Party. We have estimated—after taking into account all factors including the additional parliamentary salaries, parliamentary offices and parliamentary secretaries, and not forgetting the additional cost to the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund—that the cost would be at least $300 000, and may be considerably more. I recently asked a question regarding the cost of running these offices so as to ascertain the full additional cost of four members of Parliament.

Mr T. H. Jones: Didn't you vote for the superannuation Bill? You did not oppose it when the Bill came to the House and now you are complaining about it.

Mr STEPHENS: Yes I am complaining about it.

Mr T. H. Jones: Why didn't you complain about it then? Why didn't you do your homework when the legislation was before the House?

Mr Bryce: What has this to do with the legislation?

Mr STEPHENS: It is part of the cost involved if we have additional members of Parliament. I was amazed to find out the cost of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund.

Mr T. H. Jones: You could have raised all that when the Bill was before the House.

Mr STEPHENS: I asked a question when I was attempting to ascertain the overall cost of the additional members of Parliament. I was surprised, as would be the member for Collie.

Mr T. H. Jones: You should have found out earlier.

Mr STEPHENS: I have found out now and that is no mistake.

Mr T. H. Jones: You should have found out then.

Mr STEPHENS: If I were to suggest to the Premier that contributions to party funds to finance elections should come from the public purse, as has been suggested possibly here and in other States of the Commonwealth, he would no doubt refuse. In fact, the nature of some of his answers have been such that I think I would be fair in saying that he would refuse to accept political funding for election campaigns. As I see the situation now, we are being subjected to public funding to maintain the Liberal Party in office.

I find it rather inconsistent that we have no agreement to provide for public funding of party campaigns, but it is quite okay to have public funding in an endeavour to maintain Liberal Party dominance of this House.

I come now to the duties of members of this Parliament. Each of us has a duty to represent his electorate in particular and the State as a whole. If that is the case, and bearing in mind the cost to the State of this legislation, I find it strange that I hear no voices on the Government side urging caution or which are opposed to this legislation which will impose additional financial burdens on the State not for one year, but ad infinitum and in an escalating manner because of inflation. Yet the Government is prepared to subject the taxpayers to this form of expense. We all know the Premier had insufficient funds to meet the nurses' pay increase. If we are to take any notice of an article which appeared in The West Australian this morning, the Premier has ordered cuts in all departments. He has told his Ministers to find ways and means of making cuts in their departmental budgets, in order to reduce the Budget which will be brought down for the 1981-82 financial year.

We had the Minister who introduced this Bill actually putting a proposition to the prison officers not to accept an extra week's leave which was granted to them by the Industrial Commission. He made that request on the grounds that it would cost the Government $530 000, and the Government did not have sufficient money to meet that. I am not commenting on whether that additional leave is fair or otherwise, but at least it was granted by the Industrial Commission. The Chief Secretary was asking the officers who were awarded that extra week's leave by the Industrial Commission to forgo it as a result of the budgetary situation. I know $530 000 is a little more than the $300 000 odd to which this Bill will commit the taxpayers; but there is a double standard. Increasing the number of members of Parliament apparently is no problem, but any other increases cause a problem.

We frequently hear reference made to the need for works and activities in our electorates. The Government acknowledges the need, but says the work is subject to the availability of finance, or else commencement is delayed due to budgetary
restraints. I could refer to a facility which is required in my area and which I mentioned earlier; that is, the need for a fishing boat harbour at Albany. We have a need for a water supply at Kendenup, Many Peaks, and Elleker. They are acknowledged needs, but they cannot be met due to budgetary restraints.

Yet suddenly we have sufficient finance to provide four additional members of Parliament—members who I would suggest are not really necessary and who would place us in a far different situation from that pertaining in other States on the basis of the ratio of population to members of Parliament.

Figures I have taken from the 1980 Year Book Australia indicate—and these figures are for 1979, so they are a couple of years behind—that New South Wales has a population of 5.075 million-odd with 142 members in the upper and lower Houses of Parliament, giving a ratio of something like 35 700:1. Victoria has a population of 3.853 million with 125 members in the upper and lower Houses of Parliament, giving a ratio of something like 30 800:1. Queensland has a population of 2.196 million and has a single House of Parliament with 82 members, giving a ratio of 26 780:1. South Australia has a population of 1.294 million, with 69 members in two Houses of Parliament, giving a ratio of 18 750:1. Western Australia has a population of 1.2419 million, and currently we have 87 members of Parliament which gives us a ratio of something like 14 200:1. If we support this legislation the Parliament will increase to 91 members, giving a ratio of something like 13 600:1.

The only other State with a lower ratio is Tasmania, and we all recognise the particular difficulties of that State. It has a ratio of population to members of Parliament of something like 7 700:1.

Of all the mainland States, Western Australia has the lowest ratio, and on that basis I would suggest we have no need for additional members of Parliament. If we have a need to obtain better representation in Western Australia, then we should find out what is going on in the Parliaments of the Eastern States.

The member for Mundaring made reference also to the Westminster system, and said our Parliament is along the lines of the principles embodied in that system. I would challenge his statement; if he likes to check the debates of the Westminster Parliament he will see there exists a degree of cross-voting that does not exist in this Chamber. That indicates that members of the House of Commons do not bow to the dictates of their party but act according to their consciences. They have a democratic approach inasmuch as their loyalty to their electorate is greater than the need to blindly follow the party line.

Mr Jamieson: We get cross enough here sometimes.

Mr STEPHENS: We might get cross enough, but we do not have cross-voting. I suggest that if we want to model this Parliament on the Westminster system it would be advantageous for every member to study the degree of cross-voting that occurs in the House of Commons. Recently we saw a situation in the United States in which a considerable degree of cross-voting occurred in the Congress. Cross-voting occurred between Republicans and Democrats which I feel was in the best interests of the country as a whole. The members concerned indicated that their loyalty to their electors was foremost, and I think that is where our first loyalty should lie.

If that is the case there is no way in view of the present financial stringency that we can support the legislation to increase the Parliament by four members.

There is an alternative, of course, and that is that we could remove the setting of the boundaries from the jurisdiction of the Parliament. I will admit this is not a new concept, because basically it is done in the Federal scene and certainly it is done in South Australia. We could have electoral commissioners decide where the boundaries shall be. There is no reason that we could not enact legislation to empower electoral commissioners—and they could be the ones who now draw the boundaries—to draw up the metropolitan boundary and the boundaries for the statutory seats in the north. Having done that, the agricultural, mining, and pastoral boundaries would be set automatically.

If we allowed the commissioners to do that, with input from the public who would make suggestions prior to the delineation of the boundaries, a better system would result. The public could be permitted also to make an input after the boundaries are first announced, and then the boundaries as defined by the electoral commissioners would be automatically approved by the Parliament.

My understanding of the Federal situation is that the Parliament may either approve or reject the boundaries; it cannot amend them. I believe that is a reasonable system, and we should look to instituting such a system in Western Australia.
In South Australia boundaries are set by independent commissioners and the Parliament cannot alter them. However, any aggrieved person has a right of appeal to a full sitting of the Supreme Court. Perhaps we could embody the same principle in our legislation. If the Government is really serious, and if the Chief Secretary really wants the electoral system in Western Australia to be one of the fairest known to exist, I suggest that they seek legislation which would embody the principle I have outlined. In that case perhaps I could agree with the comment made by the Chief Secretary—certainly at the moment I cannot because it is far from the truth—when he said the electoral system in Western Australia is one of the most fair known to exist.

As I said earlier, with the parameters having been set the commissioners, who are independent in their own right, are severely restricted in what they can do. As an alternative to the present system I would urge the Government to give urgent consideration to a more independent approach to the setting of boundaries. The Government has blatantly said this is a fair piece of legislation. If that is so I have no doubt that as a test of its sincerity the Government will permit the measure to be subjected to public inspection and debate. Therefore in the unfortunate event that the Bill is read a second time, it is my intention to move that it be referred to a Select Committee. At the Select Committee stage we would have public input and the Minister’s comment in respect of fairness would really be put to the test.

In conclusion, the National Party opposes this legislation, not because we are opposed to the principle of a weighted vote for country people but because, firstly, the metropolitan boundary is so blatantly rigged that it does not include all genuine urban dwellers in the metropolitan area; and, secondly, because of the unnecessary expenditure which will be imposed upon taxpayers by the increase in the number of members of Parliament. At this stage of our development we do not need extra members of Parliament who would not be to the benefit of the people of this State. If additional members of Parliament are not going to be of benefit to Western Australia, then obviously the additional expense is unwarranted and unjustified.

I oppose the second reading.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [9.14 p.m.]: There is one thing consistent about debates on redistributions—and my research has borne this out—which is that they are always acrimonious debates, and with some justification. The Australian Labor Party has never been successful when in government in having amendments accepted in respect of boundary changes and redistributions. All legislative redistributions have been the responsibility of the conservative forces in this State. This has gone on since time immemorial.

The index to the subjects in Hansard does not generally make good reading; but it gives the measure of the action in the House in debates. Under the Redistribution of Seats Bill in the 1910-11 Hansard, the following appears: “Assembly—Leave to introduce, (point of order, dissent from ruling, m. to print, (point of order), carried on division, m. amendment to refer to select committee, negatived on division, to fix Committee stage (Point of order, disorder); Com. (point of order), (dissent from Chairman’s ruling); (disorder, members suspended and removed)—

Mr Davies: Is that last week’s Hansard, or this week’s?

Mr JAMIESON: It continues—“dissent from Chairman’s ruling, privilege, inaccurate Press report, progress), Committee resumed, (points of order, members suspended, dissent from Chairman’s ruling, dissent from Speaker’s ruling)—

Mr Davies: You have a long way to go yet.

Mr JAMIESON: It continues—“Opposition members leave Chamber”—

Mr Davies: That is on the cards.

Mr JAMIESON: It continues—“Committee concluded, Standing Orders suspension, point of order, (member suspended), dissent from Speaker’s ruling, report stage, 3r, passing, transmitting to Council, returned”. That is not a bad effort; and you think you have been badly done by, Mr Speaker. By comparison, you have had an easy run so far. Still, there may be more in store.

It is worth remembering that they were the incidents when the Bill was dealt with in 1910-11. That shows the consistency of our attitude. Incidentally, for the benefit of members, on that occasion the House began sitting at somewhere about half past four in the afternoon, and it adjourned at 9.14 a.m. the following day.

Mr Young: That is a rotten forecast.

Mr JAMIESON: It indicates a fairly long day in the Parliament. It indicates our consistency in our objections to the whole redistribution question generally.

There has been a degree of consistency in The West Australian. I will not read the editorials in
When definition of the metropolitan area is left to governments, the way is open for political manipulation. That is what we are seeing now. Despite an extension of the boundary to include a further 24,000 voters, the result will still be well short of a truly metropolitan area.

I say there is consistency on the part of *The West Australian* because in 1910 the following appears on page 2462 of *Hansard*—

*The West Australian* said—

Indeed the fatal defect of the scheme is its lack of any common or uniting principle. It will appear to many critics that Ministers, especially the Attorney General, seem incapable of getting away from the antiquated and illogical notion that a Parliament should be chiefly concerned with acres and sheep rather than men and brains.

*The West Australian* followed our line of thought on that occasion. If there has not been anything else since that time, there have been two lines of consistency.

The other day I asked the Minister a question about the Electoral Districts Act as it stands. His answer shows that he and the Premier do not know very much about the Act or its history. I asked a question without notice of the Premier that if he was so keen on the idea of the independent commissioners dealing with the boundaries, why were they not left to deal with the boundaries of the metropolitan area and other areas, as the member for Stirling has just mentioned. The Premier said that that had not been done before. I asked the Minister the following question—

How long is it since the determination of boundaries between areas defined in the Electoral Districts Act has been removed from the responsibility of the electoral district commissioners?

He said—

The Electoral Districts Act Amendment Act of 1963 fixed the boundaries of the North-West-Murchison-Eyre area as those drawn by the electoral commissioners in their report published on 14 December 1961.

The responsibility of the commissioners to fix the boundaries of districts within the metropolitan area and the agricultural, mining and pastoral area was not and has not been changed.

Of course it has. I will read to him the difference in a moment, because the system has been changed vastly.

In 1947, when the Act was first passed, there was a charge on the commissioners, in the exercise of their powers, as set out in section 8 of the Electoral Districts Act of that year—

8. In the exercise of the powers conferred on the Commissioners, but subject to the proviso to subsection (2) of the next preceding section, the boundaries of the several areas and Electoral Districts described in the Second Schedule hereto may be modified by the Commissioners ....

I know that that was the case, because I was involved in that redistribution which gave me part of the Dale electorate that had previously been a country area. It was a goodly part of Dale at the time; so obviously the boundaries of the metropolitan area had been changed. There is no use in the Premier and the Minister coming into this House and saying that is not so, because the evidence is there.

Now the commissioners are allowed to deal with redistribution but only under certain guidelines. Section 8 now reads—

8. (1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Commissioners by this Act, the boundaries of the electoral districts contained in the Metropolitan Area and the Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Area described in section four of this Act may be modified by the Commissioners by excising portions therefrom or by adding other portions thereto and the electoral districts may be designated and redesignated.

That was the result of the amendment in 1965. Prior to that the Act gave the commissioners some scope to fix the boundaries as they saw fit. Had they seen fit, no doubt they would have been looking at the Armadale-Kelmscott local authority; they would have been looking at the Kalamunda and Mundaring local authorities; and they would have been looking at the Swan local authority as part of the metropolitan area. There would have been some sense in that activity, rather than going half way. There would be sense in including Wanneroo. While Yanchep-Sun City might be a long way from the city, it is stupid to consider it as anything but an urban area. All these areas could properly be included in the metropolitan area. Now the Government has interfered to make sure that its position is safe.
In introducing the Bill in 1910 the then Attorney General (the Hon. J. L. Nanson) said on page 2191 of Hansard—

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.

It is rather strange that the present Government, through the Minister, says—

The Government believes that the time has not arrived for equal electorates, although it recognises that with the growth and development of the State, especially at the pace now being taken up, the situation will change in the years ahead.

That was 70 years ago. What is the present Government afraid of?

In his address the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Scadden) pointed out the following on page 2459 of Hansard of 1910—

If there be need for redistribution at all there can be only one reason, and that is that the present Parliament is not truly representative of the aspirations of the people of the country. If it is, I hold that there is no need for a readjustment of the electoral boundaries, except that need is one which, I assume, on this occasion has been accepted as the paramount thing on the part of the present Government, that is of retaining office for a further term irrespective of the will of the people of the country.

How much have we changed? What is new? We have heard all these things said again this afternoon and tonight. These are the things that have been harped on, and that have been stressed. Is it any wonder that the Opposition forces become annoyed when they come to a stage like this and the Minister puts over this nonsense? He is putting up arguments that were dealt with in this Chamber 70 years ago—and in a hostile fashion, at that.

In introducing the legislation, the Minister did not give us the timetable for the redistribution. He might have given us some indication of what it would be. It seems that the time for the final report of the commissioners will extend from 18 May to 31 December, or about 7½ months. On the occasion of the last redistribution, it took 8½ months from 13 September to 1 June. Actually, it took a little longer because the final report was printed in the Government Gazette of 9 June. The first report was 4½ months after 13 September, which was the date for the closing of the rolls.

On this occasion, the date fixed for the closing of the rolls is 18 May; and 31 December is the date for the final report. One assumes that during that period the first report would probably be produced during mid to late September. There would be a couple of months for objections, but it is doubtful whether the members of this Parliament or the general public will see the final report until the Government Gazette on 8 or 15 January, because it is hopeless to have anything printed by the Government Printer on 31 December.

We would be looking at that sort of period before we knew what would take place finally in regard to the redistribution. However, we should know fairly soon after the first report in September.

The Premier once said in this House that when electoral Bills are introduced, or there is legislation dealing with elections, there is an immediate mistrust on the part of the party on the other side. I can assure him that that is the case with the Labor Party, because we have never been in a position to put legislation through. He is safe in making that statement. We would be entitled to mistrust him because of the actions that have taken place over the years, involving various Governments. Every time matters appeared to be a little chancy for the Government, it altered the rules of the game.

I mentioned a little while ago that the electoral commissioners once had the right to vary the areas as well as the electorates. In respect of the north-west, they were confined to a particular area. In 1947, as a matter of fact, the commissioners were told that the north-west zone would be reduced from four to three electorates. They were commissioned to keep those three seats within the parameters; but they still had scope to move the boundaries around. Subsequently, that scope was removed; and the boundaries were prescribed by Statute. Later, the section that allowed the variation between the boundaries of the metropolitan and country areas was removed. We have had evidence in the past that the commissioners are capable of taking such action and behaving in a more independent manner than the Government when dealing with these issues.

A number of times last year the Premier was asked about a redistribution of boundaries. He kept saying that there would not be one or that the number of seats out of kilter did not exceed those required for a redistribution at the time of the election. No indication was given of what would be introduced in Parliament this year.
The Government is not bound to answer such questions. However, some prior notice should be given of its intention to increase the number of seats in the Parliament, in the same way as prior notice should be given of its intention to increase the number of Ministers in the Cabinet. The Government should obtain public endorsement in regard to these matters. On the last occasion, this was not done and no-one would have imagined that legislation to further increase the number of seats in the Parliament would be introduced this year.

If this situation continues, when another decade has gone by we will not have enough space in this place. We will have to build a new Parliament House and, of course, that will increase the costs which have been quoted already in this House on a number of occasions in relation to parliamentarians and the facilities which go with such positions.

Much has been said in this debate in regard to distances and difficulties experienced with communication. A number of the remarks made by Government members have been nonsense. The most populated area outside the metropolitan region is the Kimberley and that is the one situated the greatest distance from Perth. It makes nonsense of everything else.

Reference can be made to Murchison-Eyre, but without being unkind to the member for that electorate, except for a few residual towns the residents of which are involved in mining or the nickel boom, there are few people in that area. The task of looking after that electorate, therefore, is not as onerous as it would first appear. It is a vast area, but the member representing it would never see certain parts of it. The same can be said for the south-east corner of the Kimberley. Nevertheless, emphasis is placed on the problems of communication in country areas.

It will be necessary in the near future to have a reorientation of boundaries in these areas. The situation in Murchison-Eyre is hopeless. Part of the area surrounding the Eyre Highway in that electorate should be attached to the southern goldfields seat with which it has some communicative interest. The northern part of that electorate around Laverton, Leonora, and Menzies should be attached to Kalgoorlie with which it has communicative interests. The way in which the rest of the electorate should be divided would need further observation, but parts could be included in areas to the west.

Generally the communicative interests of electorates have been looked at inadequately. If the commissioners were allowed to examine these matters on their own behalf, they would produce a sounder situation. As a Parliament, we are not entitled to make laws to protect ourselves. If in fact that is what we are here for, I am mistaken in my belief that the purpose of a parliamentarian is to provide fair representation of electors. If disproportionate voting patterns occur, my electors will not obtain the correct representation by comparison with other electorates and the reverse situation would apply also.

The result of the proposed redistribution will be that electorates such as Murchison-Eyre will go from a 14:1 to a 10:1 ratio as far as disproportionate representation compared with the largest metropolitan area is concerned. We will not gain anything from it.

People say that country people should receive an advantage in this regard, because if they are not advantaged electorally, they will be disregarded. That is a lot of nonsense. If one can put it this way, the whole of Australia is rather like a large Western Australia, because it has a very big inland centre which is populated sparsely. Indeed, country areas have not managed badly since Federation. I would say they have done very well regardless of which Government has been in office, despite the comments made by the member for Mundaring. Some of the marketing legislation which has been introduced by Labor Governments has saved communities which exist east of the Darling Range. Such legislation has resulted in wool and wheat marketing becoming a viable proposition.

People who are critical in this area should examine what has in fact occurred and they should count their blessings. If they became aware of what has been provided for them by various Labor Governments, they would be less apt to criticise. However, these people seem to want things all their own way. They give the impression it is further from the country to Perth than it is from Perth to the country, which is, of course, an impossible situation. One is just as far as the other.

Unfortunately, people in country areas frequently have the impression that the other paddock is greener and that is not always the case.

Mr McIver: It is not too green up there at the moment.

Mr JAMIESON: The only improvement that will occur if this Bill is proclaimed is that at last a metropolitan area, although not properly proportioned, will have a greater proportion of seats in this Chamber than occurs at the moment.
In the past the only party which has been prepared to accept a regression in its political position in order to achieve improvements in the electoral scene has been the ALP. I well remember the situation in 1965 when certain electoral provinces were deleted and replaced with others. The legislation which was introduced, for the first time encompassed adult franchise for the Legislative Council. At that time some of the Government members thought the ALP would not be prepared to accept the amendments to the Electoral Districts Act. They felt we would object strongly to them, because we would lose provinces in the goldfields and not regain them anywhere else. However, the ALP stuck to its principles. It regarded the legislation as a very important step in democracy and believed everybody should have a right to vote in elections in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. As a result of the support of the ALP for those provisions, the number of seats it held in the Council went from 13 in 1965 to nine at the present time.

We were prepared to submit our will to the principle of democracy and we did not work to our own advantage. I hope that shows members opposite that they should endeavour also to give the other side a reasonable chance. Of course, they are not prepared to do that. They simply adopt the bully boy tactics they have been using over the years. By using their numbers, members opposite push through these types of provisions as often as they wish in order to try to overcome problems.

I suggested recently that probably the reason for the present legislation we are debating would be found in the fact that the Government is frightened that it will lose the next election or, if it does not go out of office, that it will lose its constitutional majority and thus its control over altering boundaries.

I mentioned the fact that the Playford Government miscalculated on one occasion and it caused a great deal of difference in the situation in South Australia. My leader mentioned earlier in the debate that the Liberals in South Australia are liberal in their thoughts on electoral matters.

Mr Stephens: Wasn't it the Steele Hall Government which did that?

Mr JAMESON: The Steele Hall Liberals were committed to it and his Government introduced the amending legislation. He was elected on the basis that he believed in one-vote-one-value.

Earlier today my leader referred to the fact that the President of the Liberal Party in South Australia, when giving evidence before a commission, said that any party which received 50 per cent of the vote plus one should be entitled to be in a position to govern. Of course, when people like the member for Mundaring quoted figures, all sorts of situations arise. Even if every seat in the State had the same number of electors, we could end up with a Parliament elected by a minority of voters. Some electorates on the Opposition side could have considerable majorities and the average winning margin might be only 50 on the Government side. The Opposition could have some very strong electorates and when one looked at the figures, one might say "The other party should have won"; but this cannot be helped. The only action one can take is to draw up the boundaries on a basis of one-vote-one-value and then let the electorate take its course. If as a result of a disproportionate number of Liberal supporters in Nedlands, Cottesloe, or Floreat as against the strong Labor forces in Balcatta, Maylands, and Ascot, the party which wins in the final count has more members of Parliament, but fewer votes, that cannot be avoided. We would have done our duty in regard to overcoming the problem and if it does not work out exactly, there is no reason to be ashamed.

It has been said that the commissioners are independent and are capable of drawing the boundaries in a fair manner. I have never had any argument with the commissioners and it would be a very brave member of Parliament who wanted to pick a row with them. Indeed, the President of the Legislative Council has said frequently that "Whenever there is a redistribution, the commissioners give me the pencil first and then they fill in afterwards." I have been very well suited by the commissioners, but I am very careful with them. I should like to relate a tale about what happened one evening some years ago at Rottnest Island when I was sitting on a rock with my son near the northern Bathurst lighthouse trying to catch a fish. Another chap came along with a son about the same age as mine. Both of us were fishing and it became dark. A fish was silly enough to get on one of the lines which became tangled. We were trying to sort it out when the other fellow said "You do not know me, but I know you. I am the Surveyor General." As we were then half-way through a redistribution, I will leave members to guess who got the fish. Always I have been very careful when dealing with the commissioners.

Mr Rushton: You have always had pretty good electorates.

Mr JAMESON: According to the Hon. Clive Griffiths I have always been in first. However, that is not the case—I have not had the pencil. I
am agreeable to handing it over to someone more independent. Sometimes the commissioners draw electorates which are of advantage to certain members and sometimes it is rather difficult to see why particular boundaries have been drawn.

I now refer to the servicing of electorates which is a vital matter. In this day and age the Premier could have provided better facilities for members in far-flung electorates to service their electors rather than introduce legislation for more members of Parliament. For example, someone like the member for Murchison-Eyre and other members representing the north of our State could have more access to charter aircraft. They should not have them for pleasure and to fly all around the place—

Mr Davies: They would not be able to have them for pleasure; they would be working all the time.

Mr JAMIESON: I know that. Members of the Liberal Party who will benefit from this redistribution are the darlings of their party. Instead of a redistribution our areas need proper service. In this day and age there are not the same problems in regard to servicing as were encountered when representation was first given to the north. All of those places can be reached within three hours by modern jet aircraft travel. There is not one place in this State that cannot be reached within three hours. I do not mean to say the member for Kimberley should be given the right to charter a jet to go to Kununurra, because reasonable services are provided to that area. However, other areas must be visited by him and he should be able to get to them quickly. He is entitled to do that; he is the representative of that area. He should be on the spot to discuss with his constituents whatever they want to discuss with him.

As I have often explained in this House, members are not likely to abuse that particular privilege. The member for Kimberley will have the area of Marble Bar in his electorate, but I am sure he will not go to Marble Bar repeatedly just for the heck of it, but when he must go there he should be entitled to do so in the quickest way possible. If the Premier had applied himself to the task of providing better services than legislation to provide more members, there would be some sense in electoral law changes. If we divided the State into 57 seats there would be an average number of voters of 12,504 for each seat. That situation would be more fair. The Government has given the member for Kimberley that number of electors and his electorate is the furthest from the city. If the Government is prepared to draw the lines properly and divide electorates on an equitable basis, give or take 10 per cent, or whatever, then we would see equitable electoral distribution in this State.

We now have the situation of people having their vote values changed from year to year. School teachers, bank managers, postal clerks and half a dozen other types of people are having their vote values changed. A shire clerk in, say, Mt. Magnet, may move to one of the shires in the northern suburbs of Perth to be the assistant shire clerk. His vote value would decrease from 12 to one. Of course, in the Legislative Council it would decrease from 17 to one. If the same person went from Perth to, say, Mt. Magnet his vote value would increase, but nobody is entitled just because he moves from one area to another to have his vote value change. In this day and age that is absolute nonsense, and has been left over from the past. Any Government which perpetrates such nonsense, like the present Government, must answer to the community. The Government is playing around with figures and trying to advantage itself by the legislation before us.

I indicated earlier there would be a considerable amount of cost associated with the new members it is proposed to bring into this Parliament. If they are brought into this House there will be a recurring charge; it will not disappear after a period. We must bear in mind the Premier has cemented legislation in this State which does not allow either Chamber to reduce its number of members. The numbers may increase, but they cannot decrease unless a referendum is held and legislation is signed by Her Majesty. The situation is all one way against the taxpayers of this State.

If the Labor Party came into government at a later stage and wanted to reduce the number of members within the structure of Parliament it would not be able to do so without holding a referendum. We all know referendum results usually are against the proposals. The chance of obtaining a “Yes” vote is much less than that of a “No” vote. Anyone can frighten people into giving a “No” vote rather than a positive vote after thinking about the matter at hand. The legislation is a one-way loading to which the public of this State should not be subjected. If the Premier had included in that legislation the need for a referendum before a Government could increase the number of parliamentarians as well as reduce it, there would have been sense in it; however, at present it is a one-way deal to the detriment of the public.

In no way can the Opposition see any justification for the present proposal. As I said, the present commissioners have limited scope.
They are given the lines already drawn for the metropolitan area. The lines represent what the Government believes will give it an advantage. It says to the commissioners "You go ahead and make up the electorates with those lines." It does not need commissioners of the present calibre to do that. I have no disrespect for them, but provided a person has figures in regard to habitation and other necessary information he can carry out a redistribution under the guidelines of the present Government. Anyone with clerical experience would be able to come up with reasonable boundaries.

I will refer to something the Minister said. He said he wanted to make one point clear, and that was that the electoral system in Western Australia is one of the most fair known to exist. I do not know what fairy story he got that out of, but certainly it is not fact. Somebody must have written it for him and, if so, that person must have been from overseas; he could not have been someone with local knowledge.

We have had examples of distributions in other States referred to us. All of them without exception, including those within the Federal sphere, have been more sensitive to public requirements than those in this State under the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act. The fact that the commissioners are independent is not questioned, but because they are independent does not mean anything if they are not able to conduct themselves in a proper manner. The Minister also said that any Government of any ability which embarks on a course leading to a redistribution cannot guarantee for itself a conclusion which embodies any electorate advantages. He has not been in Parliament long enough. I would say that most people familiar with electoral boundaries have a good idea where pockets of Liberal and pockets of Labor supporters are. It is noticeable from the lines drawn by the Government that the changes will be for the benefit of the Government of the day.

We are entitled to indicate our strong objections to the legislation. It has been described as hypocritical, but that is mild compared with what one could describe it as. References have been made to its being corrupt, and anything which does not give equal representation to citizens of this State is corrupt and should not exist. We could describe the people who support this type of system with one small sentence. However, I indicate I have seen a number of such Bills come before this House, and this is no better than others. In fact, it is much worse. Its perpetration of the Electoral Districts Act should not be accepted in this day and age.

Way back in 1911 the same sort of thing was experienced. One can only say, having regard to the words to which I referred previously, anyone supporting this legislation in this day and age could be regarded as gutless, hypocritical, and corrupt. The people of this State are entitled to a fair redistribution independently drawn, preferably by someone from outside the State who has no interest in or anything to win or lose by a redistribution. Certainly it should not be carried out in a Cabinet room with all the sort of midnight carryings on which occurred over this legislation.

It is a funny thing that in 1911 the same situation occurred. One night legislation was supposed to be introduced and questions were asked as to why it was not. It was delayed because of some trepidation on the part of the Government. The Government at that time went one worse—I hope this does not occur on this occasion—when the Opposition walked out; its members stayed and kept amending the schedule as each section came up so that it would suit that Government. It drew its own lines. This Government did the same thing in the Cabinet room. I oppose the Bill.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [9.59 p.m.]: I rise also to oppose the Bill. I want firstly to draw the attention of the House to the lack of support being extended to the Minister by his own members. When considering this critical and crucial piece of legislation we have had only three, four or five Ministers and some back-bench members prepared to brave the storm alongside this foppish and consumptive Minister.

Mr Harman: He will then want to close the debate.

Mr Bryce: Yes, what a cheek—popping to his feet.

Mr Carr: Pretty embarrassed, aren't you?

Mr Hassell: You are not suggesting there are any new arguments to come, are you?

Mr Bryce: You just wait, Noddy.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order! Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ascot will cease interjecting. The member for Balcatta was given the call. He was not able to say more than a few words before there was a barrage of interjections.

Mr Parker: Started by the Minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Fremantle will not interject while I am on my feet. If the situation of the last few minutes
continues, drastic action will be taken. I ask members to co-operate with the Chair.

Mr B. T. BURKE: As I was saying, the lack of support being given to this foppish and consumptive Minister in his attempts to subvert the laws of this State is obvious in the vows of silence which seem to have been taken by Government members tonight. One would think they have taken a detached and disinterested position.

We have yet to hear what the member for Clontarf thinks of this legislation.

Mr Davies: Or what he thinks at all!

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Opposition is perfectly prepared to pause to allow the member for Clontarf to tell us, by way of interjection, what he thinks of the debate so far.

Mr Williams: Your contributions have been pathetic. Carry on.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The same applies to the member for Murchison-Eyre. At the centre of the maelstrom is the seat of Murchison-Eyre and yet that member has been remarkably silent. The Opposition has the right to expect from this member, who would pretend to represent here 2 000 rather than 12 000 or 18 000 electors, some contribution about the change in the law that will affect his electorate so markedly. And yet the member for Murchison-Eyre—and I notice the Minister handling the Bill leaving his seat—has said nothing whatsoever.

Now what is wrong with the back-benchers on the Government side? Are they so ashamed of this legislation that they have absolutely nothing to say, or have they been told they are not to talk on this occasion? Have they been told that this legislation is to be pushed through with alacrity, and that the less debate the better, as far as the Government is concerned?

It is clear to members on this side that the Government is acting at a political margin with this measure. Whilst members of the Opposition are prepared to concede that the people of this State from time to time—too frequently it seems to us—vote to return a conservative Government in Western Australia, the people will not tolerate and will not stand for the confiscation of their power to change their Government should they decide that a change is necessary. That is why I say that, with this legislation, the Government is acting at the political margin because this legislation threatens to confiscate from the ordinary people of this State any power they had, taking into account the Legislative Council and the vast majority that the Australian Labor Party needs to change the Government that so orders their daily lives.

On the present boundaries and with the present legislation, it is necessary, for the Labor Party to form a government in this State, to gain something in excess of 51 per cent of the vote. Under the legislation we are considering now, the Labor Party's task to form a government in this State will be to win more than 52 per cent.

Mr Carr: It is already more than 52 on MacKerras' figures.

Mr Pearce: It is 53.8 per cent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is that a satisfactory situation? Is that something the member for Gascoyne is happy with, because he has had precious little to say so far in this debate. It seems to be self-evidently untenable that any member in this place should be able to say that it is necessary for either major party to gain more than 50 per cent plus one of the total vote to form a government; and yet, that is what this Government has said, and that is what this Government persists in saying by putting forward this legislation.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, the job of electoral reform may prove to be a long haul, but it is a haul that has been started, and one that will not be laid to rest until the people of this State are aware sufficiently of the confiscation of their inalienable rights to bring about a change in the thinking of the conservative parties in this country.

It is an absolutely horrible piece of legislation we are being asked to consider. It is repulsive and objectionable to the fundamentals under which those on the conservative side of the House claim they so often exist.

Mr Davies: Don't call it corrupt though!

Mr B. T. BURKE: Those of us who have been here more than a year or two know that whenever this Government starts to develop feet of clay, we are called upon to consider a redistribution.

That was the case in 1975 when the fortunes of the Government appeared to be in doubt. That was when we were asked to create extra members of Parliament; when we were asked to expand the boundary of the metropolitan area, possibly it seemed to us and as was confirmed at the 1977 election, to formalise the existing disparity in the number of seats that the parties held in this Chamber.

Every time this Government appears to be beginning to develop feet of clay, we are called upon to consider a redistribution, and it always follows the same pattern; the metropolitan area is
expanded to take away from those fringe metropolitan seats the part of their area that threatens to go to the Labor Party, and in the reduction in the number of country voters for country electorates, we see the formalising of the hold that the conservative parties have on the majority of country seats.

How often are we to be asked to increase the number of members of Parliament that have to be paid out of the public purse, simply to ensure that this Government stays in power? How long will it be before this Government exceeds what is considered to be reasonable, not by The West Australian newspaper because that point has been passed, but by the ordinary people who it seems to me are being done the great possible disservice in the cruelty inherent in this Bill?

From time to time we hear members on the conservative side of the House set down what they consider to be the criteria by which it is reasonable and appropriate to judge the redistribution of seats. It was done by the Premier in 1975; it was done by the Minister in the second reading speech to introduce this Bill; and it was done by the member for Mundaring, that miserable little cretin.

Mr O'Connor: That is dreadful.

Mr Young: You are just a miserable fat cretin.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes, that is right! He was the only one on the Government side with the courage to rise.

Mr MacKinnon: The substance of your argument is indicative of the comments you make.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Honorary Minister has plenty of time to rise to his feet. Government members have shown a singular lack of courage. The Honorary Minister should not talk through the seat of his pants—he should talk on his feet.

We saw these three members attempt to set up the criteria by which they thought this legislation reasonable and appropriate. It is funny that Government members object to the term I used, and while they object to my words, they do to the public of this State something far more cruel.

Let us consider the criteria those three members set out; what they thought was appropriate for the redistribution of the electoral districts of this State. The first criterion was population, the second criterion area, and the third criterion was distance from the capital. The fourth criterion was communication, and the fifth, community of interest. Let us just see where this legislation takes us on those criteria which are the ones put forward, not from this side of the House but from the other side. Let us consider the case for the Kimberley electorate and its population, because that is what the conservatives in this House say we should be considering when we are talking about redistribution. The population of the proposed seat of Kimberley will exceed the population of the seat of Mundaring. Should it? It will exceed the population of the seat of Dale. Should that be? It would exceed the population of Darling Range. Is that appropriate? It would exceed the population in the seats of Pilbara, Gascoyne, and Murchison-Eyre.

Mr Bryce: How deathly silent they are.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Is that appropriate for the criterion of population?

Mr Bryce: Ask the member for Murdoch again if he thinks it is democratic.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If not, let us turn to the second of those guide posts that those on the other side of the House—not the Opposition—referred to as being appropriate in determining the redistribution of seats. That was the distance from the capital. The Kimberley, with its size and population is so much further from the capital than is Darling Range, Dale, Mundaring, or Kalamunda. Is that an appropriate or proper implementation of that criterion of distance from the capital? I am not surprised that the Deputy Premier remains quiet because he cannot contradict that.

Mr O'Connor: I am listening to the debate as I ought to be.

Mr Pearce: I wouldn't open my mouth either.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have referred to the first two criteria—population and distance from the capital—and the way those criteria affect the Kimberley, not to mention the way the other seats from the north-west face the test. Let us look at the next criterion advanced, not by the Opposition, but by the Government, in defence of this Bill; that is, communication. Who in his right mind would say that communications are more difficult in Darling Range, Mundaring, and Kalamunda, than they are in the Kimberley? That is what Government members are saying to the House; that is what the conservative parties are saying to the public of the State.

Mr Stephens: There is so much pollution in the metropolitan area that they cannot see the smoke signals.

Mr O'Connor: Why don't you go home and there wouldn't be so much?

Mr Bryce: The Deputy Premier has broken his own golden rule.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order!
Mr B. T. BURKE: The Deputy Premier will be getting into trouble with the Premier if he is seen to interject, so perhaps I should not provoke him. Let me return to the criteria and see whether this Government passes its own test in respect of the redistribution of the Kimberley seat, not to mention the other seats adjacent to the Kimberley, in comparison with the metropolitan and near-metropolitan seats.

On the score of population, the proposal put forward by the Government failed. On the score of area, of course the Kimberley is far in excess of the area of the other seats to which I have referred. On the question of distance from the capital, once again the Government's proposal fails in its own test. On the question of communication, only blind Freddie—and perhaps not even he—would say that communications were more difficult in the seats to which I have referred than in the seat of Kimberley.

The last criterion is community of interest, and here it is not even faintly possible to make out a case in support of the Government's proposition because what the Government has done is to join in the one seat, and separated by 1 000 miles of desert, the two major centres of population—one in the traditional Kimberley, and one in the Pilbara iron ore towns. There cannot be community of interest with such a separation. In the Minister's second reading speech, he himself said there was no community of interest evident.

So according to the criteria the Government lays down itself for the redistribution of boundaries, the proposal as it affects the Kimberley electorate and its adjacent electorate has failed the test. So why should we support the measure? Why should we have to contribute to the debate that has not been graced by communications, only blind Freddie—and perhaps not even he—would say that communications were more difficult in the seats to which I have referred than in the seat of Kimberley.

Mr Grewar: I am perfectly happy with it.
Mr B. T. BURKE: That is a surprise.
Mr Bryce: That is on the record.
Mr Blaikie interjected.
Mr B. T. BURKE: We have not yet got around to the situation of the member for Vasse where votes are accorded to sheep and tractors.
Mr Bryce: Don't forget the dairy cows.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Deputy Premier is telling the member for Vasse to be quiet.

Let us first turn our attention to the member for Darling Range. I admit he has not been known in this place as a frequent or lengthy contributor to debate.

Mr Davies: He spoke once.
Mr B. T. BURKE: I would like to know what he thinks about this piece of legislation.
Mr Spriggs: Very just.
Mr Pearce: To be fair to the honourable member, he interjected on me a couple of weeks ago and Hansard did not know who he was; all the report said was "a Government member".
Mr B. T. BURKE: The member for Darling Range has just made the longest speech since he has been in this place; we should be fair to him.
Mr MacKinnon: Why don't you take a leaf out of his book?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Honorary Minister is always talking from the seat of his pants. Why does he not make a contribution in this place instead of talking from his seat? Does he not have anything worth while to say? Is he the member who was boasting some time ago when he lost Coolbellup? Does he deny that?

Mr MacKinnon: When did I boast about that?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Honorary Minister should stick around, because we are going to work our way down to him and then we will have a chance to hear him say or deny what he wants—I suspect, from the sitting position.

What about the member for Greenough? Does he think the failure of his Government to meet its own criteria is an important failure?

Mr Grewar: Have you run out of things to say?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The member for Roe has never had very much to say. Why do we not have the right to hear the contributions of members opposite?

Mr Davies: Because they are ashamed.
Mr Herzfeld: Every time a member on this side gets up to speak there are six cockatoos on the other side interjecting on him.

Mr B. T. BURKE: This legislation affects members in this Chamber very vividly. Why do we not have the right to hear what members opposite have to say? It is an absolutely indefensible proposition that the boundaries of the Kimberley electorate should be changed in the way proposed. If that is not being done for blatant political advantage, it behoves members opposite to explain why it is being done. However, members opposite remain mute.

Let us turn to the member for Mundaring, who was the only member opposite with the gumption to contribute to the debate. After his performance, it was no wonder nobody else on the other side bothered to speak, because members who were present in the Chamber would have
heard this man say that within three or four years there would be an extra 50 000 or 60 000 people in Karratha.

Mr Herzfeld: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr Bryce: You did so.

Mr Herzfeld: I did not. Do you want to hear the truth? I said it has been suggested by some. Those were my words; do not misinterpret them.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Not only did the member for Mundaring say that, but when I interjected on him he also said it was his own estimate, and he repeated it.

Mr Bryce: Exactly.

Mr B. T. BURKE: And members wonder why I call him a cretin. I have never before heard anyone propose that sort of nonsense in this place. The statement that 60 000 more electors would be living in Karratha within three or four years is so over and above reality it is obvious the member did not even bother to read his Minister’s second reading speech because in that speech, the Minister said the increase would be of the order of 3 000 to 5 000.

Mr Herzfeld: I was speaking not about electors but about population. There is a lot of difference.

Mr B. T. BURKE: So, after denying the sin, the member for Mundaring now attempts to repeat it. I have patience; I am prepared to allow him to tell us exactly what he means. Does he mean there will be 50 000 or 60 000 more people in Karratha in three or four years?

Mr Herzfeld: There is no point in explaining things to you; you do not listen, and you misinterpret what people have said.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is important, because that sort of imagination was what the Government used to attempt to justify what is being done to the electors in the north-west of the State. Whilst the Minister did not use the fanciful figures of the member for Mundaring, he said there would be an increase in population in the next few years in the Pilbara electorate—I think he said until 1983-84—and that justified leaving the Pilbara electorate with 9 000 electors and the Kimberley electorate with 12 000 electors.

That is the point I am trying to make: The Government attempts to justify its gerrymander on this occasion by saying “We are making allowance for future growth.”

However, what the Government does not make allowance for is the hopelessly inept contribution of people like the member for Mundaring, who wants to tell us there will be 60 000 more people in Karratha in three or four years. That is nonsense.

If this Government is dinkum about who does and does not draw the line, let me put this to the Premier: If the Government wants to be seen to be in a detached position, and if he wants to free this situation from some of the taint of political bias which appears to be attached to it, is the Premier prepared to tell the House he will allow the electoral commissioners to draw the boundaries of the four statutory seats?

Sir Charles Court: Of course not; that is the job of Parliament; it has been for a long time.

Mr Bryce: A corrupt Parliament.

Sir Charles Court: Have you looked at the Bill introduced by the Hawke Government?

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the Premier is not prepared to concede that the commissioners should draw those lines affecting the statutory seats, perhaps he is prepared to say that when he previously said the Parliament, or the Government, or the Executive did not draw the lines, he was not telling the whole truth?

Sir Charles Court: I was. The boundaries of metropolitan seats are entirely in the hands of the commissioners, once this Parliament determines the perimeter of the metropolitan area.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier has a great deal of difficulty with the truth.

Sir Charles Court: So do you, my boy.

Mr B. T. BURKE: As far as the metropolitan area is concerned, it is not even true to say the commissioners have the unbridled ability to draw the lines because at the margin of the metropolitan area one boundary at least of the seats which ring the metropolitan area has always been drawn by this Parliament. So, it is not even true of the metropolitan area. How less true is it of those statutory seats which the Premier decides for himself?

Sir Charles Court: I do nothing of the sort. The Parliament decides the perimeter of the statutory seats, and of the metropolitan area.

Mr Davies: You draw the lines on the map.

Mr Bryce: Your grubby little hands were basically responsible for those lines, and you know it. Do not seek to hide behind the Chief Justice.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr Bryce: You should be ashamed of yourself.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Once again, we have a situation where the member on his feet is not being permitted to make his speech.

Mr Pearce: The Premier is stopping him.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! This will be my last warning. If members interject while I am
standing and addressing the Chamber, they will be named. I call the member for Balcatta.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let me repeat those two propositions: The Premier has consistently said without qualification, on many occasions that the commissioners draw the boundaries. What I am saying to the House is, firstly, that in respect of the seats of Pilbara, Kimberley, Murchison-Eyre, and Gascoyne that simply is not true. I will give the Premier a chance to say it is true and that the commissioners do draw those lines.

Sir Charles Court: You are being extraordinarily pedantic, because you know it is part of the Statute that the boundaries for the northern seats are set by the Parliament. No-one has ever said anything to the contrary. Do not try to distort the words of other people.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Having extracted that from the Premier, let me ask him now to talk about the truth of his statement that the commissioners draw the boundaries of electorates in the metropolitan area when in fact the limit of those boundaries is not drawn by the commissioners but is set down in this Statute by the Parliament. Is it true as the Premier says that the commissioners draw the boundaries in the metropolitan area?

Sir Charles Court: That is perfectly correct.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier is trying to tell this House that the commissioners have the ability to change the size of the metropolitan area.

Sir Charles Court: No, we give them the parameters within which to work.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Let us move on to the next logical question. Having extracted from the Premier an admission that the boundaries of the four statutory seats are not drawn by the commissioners, can he tell the House—because his Minister seems unable to do so—why the commissioners should not be called upon to draw the boundaries of the statutory seats?

Sir Charles Court: For very good reason: It has been the practice of this House to draw the boundaries for the northern seats. It is as simple as that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It was the practice of people to ride horses before they invented motorcars.

Mr Old: A lot of people still do.

Mr B. T. BURKE: For the benefit of the Minister for Agriculture, not as many as before. To say that something has been carried on for many years is not to justify its perseverance. I am simply asking for some sensible, logical rationale behind the proposition that the Parliament—that is, the Government, that is, the Premier—is better suited to draw the boundaries of the statutory seats than are the commissioners, who are charged with the responsibility of drawing the boundaries for the other seats. No reason has been advanced, apart from the proposition it has always been thus, and that is not a reason sufficient to require that the practice continue.

The last thing I want to say is this: Members opposite appear to be obsessed with a fear about the one-vote-one-value proposition and they explain that obsession by talking about the differences and difficulties in representation.

The Opposition has never said the only way in which we can achieve one-vote-one-value is by having electorates of the same size, regardless of where they are located. It has been put forward previously that if members who come to this place voted according to the number of people they represent—that is, if they cast a weighted vote—what would be reflecting the principle of one-vote-one-value. If the member for Kimberley had only three voters in his electorate but had a voting power equal to those people when compared with the rest of the electorates in this State, that would be a case of one-vote-one-value without all the drawbacks, the difficulty and the problems about which we are so often told by members opposite who represent more remote areas.

So, it is not really a question of considering the idle excuses put forward by Government members when they talk about the difficulty of representation. I do not think many people would argue that if a seat contained 30,000 electors and were situated near the capital city of the State, and if those 30,000 electors were represented in terms of voting power in this place, in proportion to their percentage of the total electorate at large, we would be talking about the same thing as one-vote-one-value. If it is difficult to represent small, pocket-handkerchief-sized electorates in the north of the State, they could remain that size. No-one is obsessed with size; we are obsessed only with the unfairness of the voting value in this place as it reflects the number of people who elect members to sit in this Chamber. So, do not let us carry on with this idle argument about the great difficulty of representing remote electorates when there is a way to give a practical application to the theory of one-vote-one-value without encountering any of those problems.

Mr Davies: The Minister is trying to close the debate.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I hope he will not rise as he did before.

Mr Bryce: That would be a dirty trick indeed.
Mr B. T. BURKE: I do not think it would be appropriate for the Minister to attempt to close the debate, with other members already having indicated their desire to speak. However, that is up to him.

As far as I am concerned, this is a cruel and horrible piece of legislation. It cannot be justified by measurement against the Government's own criteria.

I sound this warning to the Government: While it may seek to keep itself in power by this sort of measure, the time is rapidly approaching when people will realise and act upon the realisation that they value very dearly the right to change Governments when they so desire. If the Government confiscates that power from them, regardless of whether it rigs electoral boundaries the way it has, there will be such a wrath brought down on the head of the Government as to make it almost impossible for it to maintain or obtain power.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [10.31 p.m.]: Mr Speaker—

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosnells referred to the Minister in an unparliamentary way. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr Pearce: I spoke a number of sentences. I suppose you, Mr Speaker, will have to be a little more specific.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the member knows precisely what he said and I am sure that what he is wanting to happen now is for me to repeat the offending words. He referred to the Minister as a corrupt Minister. In my view that word is unparliamentary and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr Barnett: Do you deny it?

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw the term I ruled is unparliamentary.

I again invite the member to withdraw the offending word.

Mr PEARCE: I withdraw; but he is incompetent just the same.

Mr Hassell: Mr Speaker, a withdrawal is supposed to be unconditional.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order! I have accepted the withdrawal from the member for Gosnells as satisfying my requirements.

Mr COWAN: The member for Balcatta spent a great deal of his time arguing the case against changes to the statutory seat of Kimberley and pointing out that all the criteria which the Government laid down as being fair and reasonable in the drawing of the statutory boundary could not be met when the Kimberley and Pilbara boundary was moved to the west. I will let that subject rest because it was very adequately explained by the member for Balcatta, and his arguments could not be refuted by any member on this side of the House.

There is another reason for this electoral redistribution. Everyone is aware there is power in the Act now to handle a redistribution provided more than eight seats are out of quota. That redistribution does not handle some anomalies which become evident after a period of time.

One of the anomalies—the Government considers it an anomaly although the Opposition would not—is that this Government has 29 seats—that is, one above an absolute majority. Basically, this reduction in its majority was brought about by the formation of the National Party. That very slim majority is of some concern to the Government.

After the 1980 election, the Government realised the National Party was not going to be removed rapidly, as the Government first thought, and there was also a startling realisation that the Labor Party Opposition had made some reasonable gains in terms of the percentage of the vote. There had been only one gain in terms of seats won, and quite coincidentaly, that was the seat of Kimberley, the seat in which we are about to see a very major change in the western boundary.

It is quite clear to us that the Government is very concerned about its working majority. In that case it cannot afford to leave the redistribution to the provisions that already exist within the Electoral Districts Act. The Government cannot afford to do that in the knowledge the Opposition is gradually gaining momentum in terms of electoral support. The presence of the National Party and the better performance of the Opposition quite clearly concerns this Government with respect to its working majority. That is the reason for this electoral redistribution. Let us consider the effect of the redistribution.

Something like 22,000 electors have been transferred into the metropolitan area. In fact, this Government has given 2½ quotas to the metropolitan area. It has extracted electors from
three parts of what was designated rural areas and placed them in the metropolitan area. These electors have been quite strategically placed. We will forget about the Kimberley because that matter has been well canvassed by the member for Balcatta, but if we examine the redrawing of the metropolitan boundary it becomes perfectly clear just what the Government’s strategy is.

The Government’s intention is to preserve those peripheral seats it already holds. When we consider it already holds five out of six of the seats, there is good reason for that. The seat of Dale, which is under threat, has suddenly lost 2,900 Labor Party electors. The seat of Mundaring has lost an area called Ballajura which may comprise Labor Party voters. The real strategy of the Government involves the seat of Moore, which has lost 5,700 electors. This makes the seat of Moore a rural constituency very much under quota.

Further, we have in the northern portion of the agricultural, mining, and pastoral regions, five seats which are now very much under quota. It does not take a person with any amount of intellect—I am sure that category includes every member on the Government back benches—to understand what will happen when we have five seats in a row which need to have electors added to them.

The commissioners—although the Government has stated they are independent and that it is confident of the integrity of the commissioners—must start somewhere and they must start with the seat of Moore. They must move eastward. If we examine the seat of Kalgoorlie and the seat of Yilgarn-Dundas, we find the commissioners must also commence there. There are too many electors for the seats of Kalgoorlie and Yilgarn-Dundas to be amalgamated, so the seat of Yilgarn-Dundas will either be moved southwards to the seat of Roe or, better still for the Government, it will be moved westward into the Merredin electorate. The consequential squeezing of the two seats held by the National Party is the second most important strategy in this redistribution.

The most important strategy is to cement the Liberal Party in power, and there is no question of that. The redistribution is designed to protect those peripheral seats which the Government holds in the dormitories surrounding the metropolitan area. It is prepared to throw away the Kimberley seat which is already lost to it in order to protect the seat of Pilbara and to ensure that the seats of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre remain untouched. As far as this strategy goes for a Government which wishes to manipulate the system, it is perfect, but the member for Balcatta stated that members of the public—not members of this place, because most are puppets—are not going to be prepared to accept this sort of redistribution. There will come a time when people will discover they get only the government they deserve. They may feel they no longer deserve a Government which does this sort of thing to perpetuate itself in power.

What we believe should happen and what everyone knows should happen is that the metropolitan boundary should not be drawn by this Government or any Government. If people believe in a weighted voting system as we do and as the people on this side are constantly stating they do, they should believe in a degree of equality and impartiality. They should draw the metropolitan boundary consistently. Such a boundary already exists.

There are natural boundaries surrounding Perth. It is one of the few cities in the world that is surrounded by natural boundaries. We have parks and plantations to the north; we have parks, plantations and State forests to the east and to the south. It is very rare that anywhere do we find there is not a natural boundary which defines what is urban and what is rural. This Government can see that. Its members are not blind. The Minister handling the Bill is not blind. I have had some association with the Minister and I know he is not unintelligent; but he has certainly destroyed his credibility in terms of fairness with this Bill. That boundary has been naturally defined by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and it would be acceptable to everyone who believes in a weighted voting system.

Let us examine what we should do. If electors of all those dormitory seats designated rural are included in the metropolitan area, about 55,000 to 60,000 electors would be added, together with five or six seats. Bearing in mind a metropolitan quota will be about 16,500, this compares favourably with the Government’s proposal of two new seats plus one country seat in the metropolitan area. True rural seats will hardly be affected by drawing the boundaries properly.

So what would be achieved would be even better in terms of the individual metropolitan quota for each seat. It would be better if this Government were prepared to be impartial and fair about drawing the metropolitan boundary. It has not been. What astounds me is that members of the Government are prepared to accept that type of manipulation of the metropolitan boundary without complaint. The only complaint received was about the poor drawing of the statutory seats and nothing was said about the
metropolitan boundary, yet most Government members would be aware of the manipulations which have taken place. I will point out something which bears repeating, which is that if we were to redraw the metropolitan boundary so that it did include all the true metropolitan area, we would not have any need for two new seats in this Chamber and an additional province in the other place. This State would be saved the cost of four members of Parliament.

It is hypocritical in the extreme for the Premier, in his position as Treasurer, to talk about the need for extra representation and to justify that at whatever cost when he knows there is an alternative. We realise what the effect is of drawing the metropolitan boundary correctly, and we know why the Premier does not want to do it.

The seats of Mundaring, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Dale are likely to be amalgamated and where there were four Government-held seats there would be just two. When we go back to the number of Government-held seats and subtract two from 29 we find the Government would have a minority. This Government is not prepared to accept that and that is the reason for this redistribution.

So please do not let us hear any more comments about the legislation being fair and equitable, that under the circumstances the Government has done the best it can, and that it has corrected all sorts of imbalances. That is not the case. I would prefer the Minister to stand and say to the House that the Government has introduced the Bill to protect the Government’s position. That would be the truth.

Mr Davies: The Government would not be that honest.

Mr COWAN: It seems there is not much point in being honest in this place, because it gets us nowhere. The Government should be prepared to admit and accept the fact that the people realise it has manipulated the electoral boundaries.

It is quite natural that we would oppose this legislation, which is quite simply designed to perpetuate a Liberal Government. It is designed to ensure the power base of the National Party is reduced because of the constraints under which the electoral commissioners are forced to operate. Further, the Bill has been introduced to make certain the Government retains the seat of Pilbara, even if it means throwing away the seat of Kimberley. We oppose the legislation.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [10.45 p.m.]: It was as recently as 1975 when this Government tampered with the Electoral Districts Act. On many occasions since that time I have mentioned that that legislation increased the numbers in this Parliament by creating another six seats. The reasons for that move and this legislation were eloquently explained by the previous speaker.

However, I wish to add that on that occasion in 1975, no mandate was asked for or was given by the people. How well I can remember the performance of the Premier when he proudly placed a map in the corner of the Chamber. When any other sensitive person would have held his head in shame, the Premier appeared pleased about the crooked lines on the map which could be seen by everyone in the precincts of this Chamber.

I had hoped that there would not be a repeat of that performance but a few moments ago a map appeared over yonder with crooked lines on it which so adequately illustrates the true nature of the legislation which in my memory, is as crooked a Bill as has ever been brought into this Parliament.

Mr Parker: As crooked as the line.

MR BERTRAM: This Bill is an insult. This legislation is a meal ticket for favoured members of the Government. It is a product of something resembling absolute power; it is an abuse of that power and it humiliates this State.

I enter this debate knowing that there is no hope that the Bill will be amended, much less that it will be withdrawn or defeated. I suppose it is an unprecedented approach but there is ample justification for that belief. However, to contemplate that this legislation may not be passed is nothing less than a rank absurdity; it is possible one of those things could occur but it is an overwhelming improbability.

We believe ourselves to be responsible members who are concerned with the probabilities and not possibilities.

This Bill will become law and that has been decided already by the Government parties, in secret session. All that is occurring now and all that has been occurring since this Bill was presented in this place is a deception of all those people in this State who think that this Parliament will be functioning properly and in fairness and justice when dealing with this legislation.

The Premier quite often—when it suits his purpose—says that certain legislation is a product of this Parliament. In pedantic, and technical terms that may be so but in all honesty that is utterly false so far as this legislation is concerned. We should concern ourselves with something even
faintly resembling honesty. So often, we seem to be quite prepared to do the opposite.

I am speaking, not so much to this Chamber because of the hopelessness and senselessness of it all, but through Hansard and the media in the belief and hope that some good may at some time result. It is a person's right to tolerate, acquiesce in or condone political corruption, maladministration, oppressive administration; that is democracy and we see such things every day.

This Bill is one example, indeed an excellent example. One of the most militant and oppressive unions of people in this State is the State Parliamentary-Liberal Party which in its union or coalition with those who masquerade as the National Country Party, has as its prime objective that the benefits which flow to its members and that segment of the people which it represents—from its position of power—may continue.

Mr Parker: Do you think we could get them under the Trade Practices Act for false representation?

Mr Stephens: Unfortunately that does not cover political parties. I wonder why?

Mr BERTRAM: So far, this militant union of conservatives has succeeded in its objectives since 1829 and in a sense, in a more obvious form since 1890—the advent of so-called responsible government. In this place the use of the words power and office are often construed by inadvertence by the inept, the stupid or the mischievous as meaning the same thing—they are not. Office and power are not the same thing.

The old belief that the Legislative Council is a House of Review; that is to say it is a bipartisan House has been abandoned; it is simply not true. Power in this Parliament is achieved only by a political party or coalition of political parties having simultaneously the majority of members in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

It is a stark reality that only the Liberal Party and the National Country Party have ever possessed power in this State. No other parties have ever done so. The reason for this is crooked electoral laws; laws which were once acceptable in the political jungle but which are no longer acceptable to any decent, right-thinking people who possess some semblance of conscience.

It was said recently that more has happened in our lifetime than has occurred previously in history. It is important that all members of Parliament recognise that fact because only a few moments ago the Premier said—not seriously but of course it was the sort of thing he gets away with—that we should have a look at the boundaries prepared by Mr Hawke when he was Premier in the years 1953 to 1959.

The whole electoral standard of the world has changed dramatically since that time and the Premier knows that well. What was acceptable in 1953 is not acceptable in 1981.

Mr Jamieson: Hawke didn't get very far then, the Liberals saw to that.

Mr BERTRAM: It is somewhat novel that Government members should rely on what was said by Labor Party members.

It is important that the Australian Labor Party, being in permanent Opposition, should be vigilant to ensure that it does not prop up a Government by making that Government appear democratic when it is not. It should not make this Parliament appear legitimate when it is not. It should not make the Government's task easier by its input of grass roots knowledge and ideas.

For an Opposition to act as though this Parliament functions as it should amounts to deception of its own supporters and will serve to keep its opponents in power. It would be doing the very opposite from what it should be doing. The members of the Opposition, as representatives of their electors should not be here propping up Governments that are elected under corrupt laws.

The position would be entirely different if the laws were drawn up fairly thereby giving the Opposition the opportunity, without undue obstruction, to replace the Government and vice versa. However, that is not the case.

In consequence, the State Labor Party must make sure it is doing its job in representing its electors and must take a look at the performance of the members in this House.

At the risk of the familiar jeering or laughter in this place which usually occurs when this subject is mentioned, I remind all people that all of the 40 general elections for the Legislative Council held since 1890 have been won by one political party or coalition of parties. All have been lost by the other and that is because of the electoral laws of this State.

Need one say any more about the electoral laws of this State, particularly when one remembers that in the same time general elections for the Legislative Assembly contested, on different electoral boundaries, have been won about equally by the Liberal-Country Parties and the Australian Labor Party.

When the Labor Party has had the majority of members in the Legislative Assembly it has merely been in office; it has never had power.
This Bill may go further and keep the Labor Party out of office; in other words, it may, amongst other things, deny this State of a vital parliamentary unit, a viable Opposition. It matters not the quality of the Opposition if the electoral laws are sufficiently rigged. However it matters that the Government can be sufficiently oppressive so that the Opposition is virtually without any power or voice. That would be an extraordinary parlous and unsatisfactory position for any Government to be in.

The consequences of power as against the consequences of office are so vastly different that there is simply no comparison. Put into a nutshell it means that about half the people of Western Australia have the preponderance or all of the say in our lives all the time, whilst the other half of the people have no say in our lives any of the time. Elections in a democracy as distinct from a pretended democracy are fundamentally exercises in choice. The Liberal-Country Parties emphasise amongst other things the right to choice when it suits them, but they have never allowed Western Australians the right of free choice as to the most important political choice—namely, political power.

We all remember that the Government—although not so often lately—has had as its cry through the years the advancement of competition. What it really means is competition is good for those who know they will always win.

I can tell you here and now, Sir, who will be in power after the next State election.

Mr Nanovich: Who?

Mr BERTRAM: And that will not be the result of policies or performance; other than malperformance of the kind, which is evidenced by this Bill to amend the Electoral Districts Act.

A parliamentary union which rigs electoral laws is anti-social and un-Australian, particularly when it is done as it is done by this Bill with a clear knowledge and clear intention as to what it is doing. Rotten electoral laws put this State at risk of rotten Government, rotten laws generally, and a divided and dangerous society.

It is most noticeable that opinion leaders in this State who from time to time speak out against various forms of misconduct in our society are silent on a matter so fundamental to a decent society as its electoral laws. I would like at this stage to express appreciation of and acknowledgment to The West Australian newspaper, which is an organ of the establishment. It published an editorial before this Bill was presented, presumably before the editor had even read the Bill, which condemned the measure; and then after the Bill was introduced a further editorial was published, again condemning the Bill. Is that not sufficient for those who want to look at this matter objectively and put party politics aside? Is that not sufficient condemnation of this Bill? I thought it would be ample and sufficient evidence of just that.

I do not readily see how politicians who do not play fair in electoral laws can be respected or can expect the community to advance Australia, as they are nowadays being urged to do.

Following the 1939-1945 war an urgent desire appeared to make this world a better and fairer place. Millions of people had died so that this may be.

Mr Davies: Another myth which is perpetuated.

Mr BERTRAM: There followed inevitably from the United Nations the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, item 21 of which states that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. It went on to say that this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures.

The member for Mundaring, being hopelessly out of date, has already intimated in his contribution that this Parliament is based upon the Westminster system—a system which we resemble only faintly in this place, anyhow. However, that is not important these days because the Westminster system is not the world standard for our electoral laws.

The declaration to which I have just referred was, of course, a policy declaration. It was not a legally binding document or anything resembling that. However, subsequently what is known as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emerged. This covenant, as the name suggests, is a contractual document which has been signed on behalf of Australia, but has not yet been ratified by it. One might ask when will that occur? Under the Fraser regime I should imagine it is a long way off; and the reason that Fraser will not ratify it is that Governments such as the one in Queensland and the one in this State will apply sufficient pressure to see that it is not done. Therefore the people of Australia are dragged down to the anomalous situations that we have in Western Australia and Queensland.

Article 25 of the international covenant—a legal and contractual document which has been signed by Australia—reads as follows—

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions
mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions;

(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

This Bill is unmistakably an obvious breach of that covenant. One may ask: Why should we be worrying too much about that covenant anyhow? Should we take it seriously? The Premier of this State most certainly does take it seriously. Therefore, if it is good for the Premier to take it seriously when it is aimed at the Russians, presumably it is good enough to take it seriously when it is aimed at Western Australians.

Recently trouble occurred in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning Scharansky, Ginsburg, and Byatykus, and the Premier suddenly became very enthused about this. I think he saw an opportunity to do a little political point-scoring, and he decided to write to His Excellency, the Ambassador of the USSR in Canberra. It is a good idea to write a letter if one has clean hands on an issue. This is what the Premier said, and I hope members will not break out in laughter—

In this country of Australia and including our State of Western Australia there is no discrimination against any person who may utter criticisms of the Government. Furthermore, we believe it is a human right of any citizen of any country to criticise his Government.

We might agree with those sentiments; but coming back to the international covenant, apparently the Premier thinks it is good to be able to apply it against the Russians, but it is not good enough for application in this State; because in his fourth paragraph the Premier said—

Your country is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—Article 14 of which entitles persons charged with criminal offences to have a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law.

I note that unlike this Bill article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides such an independent and impartial tribunal. Here is the Premier of Western Australia telling the people of Western Australia “We uphold this covenant” and then complaining to the Russians that they have not upheld it, when he well knows that the covenant, in respect of a most vital part of politics in this State, is breached by him and the people who follow his bidding.

So we have the authority of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and, of course, we have the fact that over a period of about 20 years—I am estimating that; it was from about the mid-1950s to the late 1960s—a battle occurred in the United States. It was the same battle we are fighting tonight; that we should have honest and fair elections. That battle ultimately was won in the United States, the vehicle being the Fourteenth Amendment to the American Constitution, and a formidable judgment was delivered by the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Regrettably I do not have the whole judgment with me, but I have at least part of it. Mr Justice Earl Warren said—

Every citizen should have the opportunity for an equal say in the outcome of elections.

We believe there can be no democracy unless the will of the people is reflected in Parliament.

There can be no democracy unless country and metropolitan voters are considered equally important.

To the extent that a citizen’s right to vote is debased, he is that much less a citizen.

I would remind the member for Mundaring there is no mention of the Westminster system in that. I have quoted other parts of that judgment on previous occasions. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court made it very clear, with extreme conviction, that it matters not how much money a person has in his pocket, it matters not how many cattle he has or what his wealth is, it matters not what is the colour of his skin—he said all those things are irrelevant and that everyone should have an equal vote.

When I say “equal vote” I mean an equal vote. It is unconstitutional in the United States, whether it be in Federal elections, State elections, or local government elections, to have a gerrymander or malapportionment, in which the Government of Western Australia specialises. As most people would know, a gerrymander is the crooked drawing of lines which is exemplified on the map hanging on the other side of the Chamber; whereas malapportionment is the procedure whereby one electorate may have 50,000 electors and another may have 10,000.

So we have the international covenant, the Declaration of Human Rights, and the full authority of the Supreme Court of the United
States in respect of a law developed over about 20 years during the 1950s and late 1960s. In Australia, in the Federal House of Representatives we have virtually the same standards as are required under the international covenant.

In effect what the militant Liberal Party parliamentary union is saying through this Bill is “The millions of lives given, the international covenant, and the leadership of the Supreme Court of the United States mean nothing to us. We want permanent political power. We have it and we have always possessed it. We now propose to perpetuate it through this Bill.” This political thuggery involves theft and a breach of trust and it is in my opinion a far worse offence than most crimes recognised by law. It drags us all down to the level of the people in the Government opposite and, of course, Mr Speaker, unfortunately that includes you.

Finally, let me record my protest should the Chief Justice of Western Australia allow himself to be used in the manner intended by this Bill. The manner intended by this Bill is that the Chief Justice should give this Bill respectability—to give a vile Bill respectability! There is ample precedent for this sort of thing down through the years. Companies have had appointed to the heads of their directorates people who have been called “guinea pigs” for exactly the same reason—that there might be a respectable figurehead to preside over it.

I remind members that any reasonable tribunal would come up with the same or similar boundaries as those likely to be fixed by the Chief Justice and his boundaries commission; so there is no real reason to have the Chief Justice and the other members of the commission involved in this. The real reason behind it is to allow the people to be deceived in the belief that what is going on is regular, honest, fair, and decent. All of us in this place, with the inevitable possible exceptions, know what this Bill is up to.

The Bill does not empower the Chief Justice and his committee to draw the boundaries freely and without fetter. In fact, it requires the Chief Justice to breach the international covenant. I would remind you, Sir, that he is a lawyer. He is not a political person, in the ordinary sense of the word. He is a lawyer; and he is being required to breach the international covenant.

I know we have not yet ratified the convenant; but it is a legal document, and the sentiments expressed in it are denied by this Bill which will force him, furthermore, to do that which he would not ordinarily be inclined to do. He will be obliged to ignore precedent—and good precedent: the precedent of the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

Australia is a comparable country in a lot of respects—certainly in law—to the United States. Certainly it is comparable in electoral matters. The precedent is there. It is a precedent; and if it is followed, the Chief Justice will be denied his rights because the strictures already placed upon him by the lines drawn on the map over yonder will make this inevitable. It places him in a straitjacket, while the people, as I have said, are allowed, mischievously and dishonestly, to believe the contrary.

I remind members that a former Chief Justice of this State, on one occasion, preferred not to preside over a certain tribunal lest he should be seen, even indirectly, to be giving either himself or his brethren some advantage through his deliberations. That was a mere matter to do with dollars; and that was the standard set by the former Chief Justice. This issue is more important by a million miles than that particular issue.

On one occasion, the Australian Labor Party wrote to the Chief Justice and put to him that he should not be drawn in as a political tool because it was undesirably demeaning of him, other members of the judiciary, the magistracy, and the legal profession. The stand taken by the former Chief Justice was an eminently decent stand.

With the greatest respect to the present Chief Justice of the State (Sir Francis Burt) I am of the opinion that he should take the same step in this case and say to the Government that he will not be a party to this particular political manoeuvre. If he does not do that, the respect to which the judiciary and the Chief Justice are entitled—to which I personally subscribe—will be damaged. The judiciary will lose an element of respect, and the law generally, and those people who practise it, will be damaged also.

In closing, let me say that one does not need to be anything vaguely approaching angelic to feel contaminated by this Bill and by the people who have presented it. They are of the vilest kind. They are thugs, and they are monsters. I am aware of the meaning in the dictionary of those expressions. Frankly, I will have nothing to do with them, nor with this Bill.

I oppose the Bill.

MR McPharlin (Mt. Marshall) [11.20 p.m.]: When speaking towards the closing stages of a Bill of this nature—
Mr Pearce: About midway, I think.

Mr McPHARLIN: —one always runs the danger of repetition. However, I do not propose to indulge in repetition by going through the various sets of figures which have been quoted by several members in the debate this evening.

I suppose all of us have had our calculators out, and we have looked at the proposed changes and counted the numbers of electors in each electorate. We have worked out, in our own way, what we think may happen when this Bill becomes an Act, and the commissioners are charged with their job.

Were the Opposition members the Government, and they had a requirement or there was a need to change the boundaries, I wonder what action they would have taken. The member for Welshpool made the statement that this responsibility has not fallen to a Labor Government. I wonder whether the same sorts of procedures would have been followed, had the Opposition been the Government under these circumstances.

Mr Pearce: We would not have drawn a metropolitan boundary, because we do not believe in a metropolitan boundary. We believe in one-vote-one-value.

Mr McPHARLIN: It has been stated that the Government has drawn the boundaries to keep it in government. I venture to suggest that if the Opposition had been in government, it would have done exactly the same thing.

Mr Pearce: We have never done it in 70 years.

Mr McPHARLIN: The Labor Party has not had the opportunity to do it.

Mr Pearce: We have been in government and not done it.

Mr McPHARLIN: That does not mean the Labor Party would not do it.

Mr Sodeman: Talk to him about New South Wales.

Mr Pearce: New South Wales is one-vote-one-value. There is nothing wrong with New South Wales.

Mr McPHARLIN: The charges being levelled against the Government are quite true. It aims to keep itself in power. So would any other Government.

When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, he made comments about one-vote-one-value, as other speakers have done. I join my colleagues on this issue. I do not support that concept because it would make it difficult in country areas to service the electorates in the way they should expect to be serviced.

I do not want to enter into debate on Kimberley, because I believe that has been treated in a way that will make it most difficult for the member to service his electorate. In relation to one-vote-one-value, the Leader of the Opposition suggested, to overcome the difficulties, there should be better travelling allowances, air travel, a higher postage allowance, more than one electorate office, and additional staff. Then he criticised the Government for the extra cost of four new members of Parliament.

Mr Jamieson: It would still be cheaper that way.

Mr McPHARLIN: The Opposition cannot have it both ways.

Mr Jamieson: It would be cheaper.

Mr McPHARLIN: I doubt very much that it would.

Mr Jamieson: You add it up.

Mr McPHARLIN: The cost of running the electorate offices is considerable. Those extra benefits would offset the cost of four extra members of Parliament.

Mr Pearce: Which way are you voting on this Bill? Is there another split in the National Party?

Mr McPHARLIN: If the member for Gosnells waits, he might hear which way I propose to vote.

Mr Pearce: It is traditional to tell us at the beginning, instead of keeping us in suspense.

Mr McPHARLIN: We do not support one-vote-one-value; and I do not go along with the Leader of the Opposition in his proposed methods of helping the members representing those electorates if that sort of situation were to come about.

The matter of animosity between country and city electorates and members of Parliament has been debated over many years. The member for Welshpool made reference to the fact that the country areas have been treated well. There has been an acceptance of the understanding between members, and considerable advantages have been gained after strong representations by country members. It is not always easy; but it is realised that there should be acceptance and common sense, and members of Parliament know that some consideration has to be given to country areas.

The drift of population brings about the need for a redistribution. There has been a marked drift out of the country areas, towards the coast and the metropolitan area. It is unfortunate that this has happened. It is a matter of concern to all of the members representing the country areas in which this has happened. Population numbers
have been reduced. The shift in population is a detrimental factor, for which there appears to be no solution. There seems to be no way that it can be prevented. The adverse seasonal conditions in a number of years have exaggerated the drift. It is not in the best interests of the State for this sort of thing to happen.

A number of speakers have gazed into the crystal ball and said what they believe will be the moves made in adjusting the boundaries by the commissioners. We can all speculate. We can all gaze into the crystal ball. Of course, if one's own electorate is in danger—

Mr Pearce: As yours is.

Mr McPharlin: My electorate may possibly be in danger, but there is no guarantee of that.

Mr Pearce: It is a fair bet.

Mr McPharlin: There is no guarantee of that. One hopes that the commissioners act in a responsible, common-sense way. I believe they will—

Mr T. H. Jones: It is pretty difficult under the Bill, is it not?

Mr McPharlin: The commissioners are not associated with the Pilbara proposals.

Mr T. H. Jones: Under the terms of the Bill, it is very difficult for them.

Mr McPharlin: The commissioners have a responsibility. It has been said a number of times that consideration has to be given to various factors. The factors have been listed, but I noted one factor has not been mentioned. Factors such as community interest, means of communication, distance, and others have been mentioned, but they should also give due consideration to the existing boundaries of districts.

That has not been mentioned tonight, although it is one of the considerations. I do not accept that the seats, as we know them at the present time, will be abolished. I could be proved wrong, but that is my firm belief, because I have full confidence in the commissioners.

Mr Pearce: Come back in three months and we will say "I told you so."

Mr McPharlin: I suppose all of us who are representatives in this Parliament know that there is always a risk that our boundaries will be changed. That is one of the matters a member of Parliament accepts when he is elected. If it happens, that is not his responsibility; it is the responsibility of commissioners who are charged with that duty. Therefore, I accept that, if it happens—although, I say again, I do not believe it will.

I have given a great deal of thought to the measure which is before the House and the changes which are proposed. I have not observed that the Opposition has, as yet, put forward any amendments to the legislation.

Mr Bertram: What would be the point in doing that?

Mr McPharlin: I would have thought, were the Opposition concerned about the matter—there is no doubt that it is concerned—it would have submitted amendments which could be considered by the House.

Mr Pearce: Wait for the Committee stage.

Mr McPharlin: No mention has been made of any amendments.

Mr Jamieson: You cannot amend a thing like this. It is a principle and you cannot amend a principle.

Mr McPharlin: The Opposition has debated the legislation vigorously, but it has not, as yet, proposed any amendments. If the Opposition is so opposed to the legislation, one would have expected it to move some amendments which we could debate.

I support the legislation.

Mr Pearce: You could have stayed home, Andrew!

Mr McPharlin: My colleagues have indicated they do not intend to support the Bill. We are all entitled to vote the way we wish and I intend to support the legislation, because of my confidence in the commissioners.

Mr Pearce: You could have submitted amendments which could be debated.

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MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [11.33 p.m.]: I never cease to be fascinated by the microcosm politics which operate in rural areas.

Mr Blaikie: Talk about the Bill.

Mr Pearce: I wonder how far we can go in the splits and counter splits in respect of the country parties we have in this place. There is a fair chance on both sides of the country parties spectrum that a good number of them will disappear in this redistribution and perhaps we will get back to a good, two-party system in this Parliament.

It would be remiss of me, as a representative of one of the largest electorates in this State in terms of population at the present time, not to express my considerable dissatisfaction with the proposed redistribution before us. I am not, as the member for Mt. Marshall appears to be suggesting, at all opposed to redistribution. Of course, it is a fact that boundaries have to be changed constantly to keep pace with the development and growth of
population inside the State in both metropolitan and country areas.

My seat has grown from less than 15,000 when it was created in 1976 redistribution, to something like 24,000 at the present time. I do not need members who come from little, pocket handkerchief, rotten boroughs in the country to tell me how incredibly difficult it is to service 2,000, 7,000, or 8,000 electors, because the centres which make up the country electorates may be 50 or 60 miles apart.

When a member has 24,000 or 25,000 suburban electors to service—that is three times the number of electors that these country, pocket handkerchief boroughs have—he can come here and complain about how difficult it is to keep pace with an electorate. How the member for Whitford manages, if he does his job properly, I do not know. There is not enough time in the day for somebody who is representing a large city electorate.

These are the difficult electorates in terms of taking up a problem, because if a member has to take up a problem for an individual elector, that problem takes approximately the same amount of time to deal with, irrespective of the home address of the person on whose behalf the member takes up the matter. If one has three times as many problems to take up and the problems are much greater in urban areas anyway, because of the nature of urbanisation, it is a fact that city representatives of metropolitan electorates are worked much harder in terms of representing their electors than are country members.

So the general squeals we have had about communicative interests and the Westminster system about which the member for Mundaring told us, and how one must take into account topography—apparently hills get a vote in some of these country electorates—do not particularly wring my heart, because they are based on insincere grasping and political advantage. They are put forward for no other reason.

The member for Mundaring referred to his incredible understanding of the Westminster system and how it had enshrined in it, principles with regard to distance. I spent a month in London on behalf of the Western Australian branch of the CPA as you, Sir, are aware. I was there only six weeks ago studying at first hand the Westminster system at Westminster. I can tell the member for Mundaring wherever he is—perhaps he has gone back to the country—that there is no proposition in the Westminster system of democracy that the distance from London has any bearing on the size of the electorate. There is no proposition in the Westminster Parliament that the rural nature of the electorate leads to a smaller electorate. In fact, the whole development of the Westminster system through all the reform Bills—notably the Reform Bill of 1832 and thereafter—has been carried out with the specific aim of getting rid of this kind of rotten borough.

If the member for Vasse wants to interject, let him do so now, instead of opening and shutting his mouth like a dying goldfish.

Mr Blaikie: While you are discussing the Westminster system and having learnt what you have learnt, it is a pity you do not show some of the dignity and respect for the Parliament which is evident in members of Westminster. Your behaviour in this House is a disgrace to the Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: The vast number of the members of the Westminster Parliament would not put up with the sort of nonsense that is talked about in this place. The member for Vasse should visit the House of Commons and have a look around—

Mr Blaikie: Which I did.

Mr PEARCE: —and see what happens when this sort of trickery is tried there.

Mr Blaikie: They have a respect for the institution of Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: That is right.

Mr Blaikie: Which you do not have.

Mr PEARCE: A respect which I share. No decent member of the House of Commons would come into the House and argue on his own behalf to have an electorate which was half the size of everybody else's, or smaller than all the other electorates, on the grounds that he could not win an election if his electorate was of a proper size or his party would not be in government if it could not grasp at this sort of electoral trickery.

If there is one aspect of respect for Parliament evidenced in the Westminster system it is that there is not a great deal of admiration for those members who seek to win office by cheating. In the time I was there, I did not see any suggestion that the people who were cheats in Parliament were held in anything other than contempt. However, the Government can sustain itself in this State not only by cheating electorally in this way, but also by calling all sorts of odium on the people who protest at the cheating and pretend they do not in fact have any feeling for the parliamentary system.

The point is: One can have admiration for a parliamentary system, only if it is a democratic Parliament and one which is elected properly on a
universal and equal franchise. Indeed, the words of the United Nations charter include "equal franchise"—not a weighted vote.

We have had appeals from the Liberal Party and the National Party in favour of a weighted vote, but, of course, the reason that they seek a weighted vote is that it gives them a specific advantage. I am prepared to concede such views are a little understandable for the National Party, undemocratic as their principles are, because at least the two members who hold to the weighted voting system are sincere in believing country people should have a weighted vote; but one cannot say the same for the Liberal Party.

Mr Sodeman: Labor people did too. What about the remarks of such people as Strickland, Wise, and all the others when you were in government between 1971 and 1974?

Mr PEARCE: I am talking about the policy of the Labor Party at the present time. Members opposite should be the last to talk about changes in policy. Their policy changes from day to day. They should cast back their minds to the 1974 education policy when they were going to split high schools into junior high schools and senior high schools and everyone was going to start primary school at age five. Members opposite should look at some of their own policies if they want to talk about that.

The point I am making about the weighted vote for which the National Party asks, is that it may be sincere in its regard for country people, but it is certainly undemocratic, and one cannot say the same degree of sincerity is expressed by the Liberal Party adherents to the same proposition, because the maps which someone has so kindly brought into the Chamber for us demonstrate that the farthest flung electorate—that is, Kimberley—is to be more than doubled in size in terms of population and increased considerably in terms of its actual area. Why is that so? Why is the weighted vote argument to be dispensed with in the case of Kimberley?

The answer is, of course, summarised easily in two words and they are "political advantage". Having fought desperately and cheated in that area to hang onto the Kimberley electorate, the Government has now lost it and has realised its chances of regaining it are nil. The Government cannot even obtain a candidate at the present time. The efforts of a member in the other place to contest the Kimberley election are backed by motives other than those of simply winning the seat for the Government and such motives will be very clear to anyone who understands the way in which the parliamentary superannuation system operates.

Therefore, Kimberley has been abandoned and, with Pilbara on a total knife edge and, in terms of the vote in the Federal election last year it is a seat which would certainly go to Labor with a swing of something like 1 per cent, the Government has decided it must be salvaged by means of a simple boundary adjustment. It is a very telling adjustment, because it undermines, indeed completely refutes, the claims of the Liberals to be in favour of a weighted vote to compensate for the disadvantage of isolation.

Let me ask the Chief Secretary the following question: What advantage is he giving to the Kimberley under the proposal in order to compensate for its isolation and the disadvantage experienced in regard to communications and other things in the Kimberley area?

Mr Hassell: I have dealt with that once already. I have dealt with it in regard to the northern boundaries in the second reading speech and I will respond to your speech when I reply.

Mr PEARCE: So the Chief Secretary does not intend to tell us. Members should wait until the Chief Secretary replies and we will see how forthcoming he is.

It is undeniable that the Kimberley position will be in a worse state both in terms of area and population and that is the seat which, on all the criteria listed by the member for Mundaring in his misunderstanding of the Westminster system, and all the criteria listed by those who favour a weighted vote—hills, square miles, and the length of telephone lines get a vote—all these matters are supposed to be compensated for by giving people a greater say in who should be in government, but in the case of Kimberley, the most isolated area, the electorate which is farthest from the metropolitan area, the one which has the greatest topographical problems, the one with the greatest communication problem—indeed, one can go so far as to say there are very sketchy communications throughout the Kimberley and there is no television and the telephones and roads are uncertain—what area could be worst affected and could require the greatest vote-weighting, but the Kimberley? However, its population is to be more than doubled and its area is to be increased considerably.

That demonstrates clearly there is no sensitivity in the proposals put forward by the Government at the present time. The name of the game is electoral advantage.

I am sorry the Minister for Transport is not with us at the present time, because I have a word
The figures show that the Labor Party is disadvantaged to the extent of 2.2 per cent. One would think that a Government would be able to live with a 2.2 per cent advantage, but clearly this Government saw the poll in that magazine in which it was reported the Labor Party in this State has a 9 per cent lead over the Liberal Party. The Government's popularity in this State has suffered as has the Premier's personal popularity which is at an all-time low. The Liberal Party is set for electoral defeat at the next election. No doubt there is considerable disunity amongst the Liberal Party as the shuffling continues for who will be the Premier; however, we will see in any case that who gets the job will become the Leader of the Opposition.

Instead of fighting an election on the basis of a 2.2 per cent advantage the Government has sought a further unfair advantage by this type of manipulation.

I was not surprised Government members were told to be quiet tonight. Every time one of them has been drawn into interjecting the Government Whip or Deputy Premier has leant over to them to tell them to cool it.

Mr Sodeman: That is totally untrue.

Mr PEARSE: We have seen it. We saw the member for Whitford being told to cool it.

Mr Bryce: During the course of the debate Government members have been shut up.

Mr PEARSE: The member for Whitford was able to give two interjections and halfway through the third we saw the Government Whip tap him on the shoulder in an endeavour to quieten him. It is disgraceful that the Minister has attempted to seal off the debate by seeking each call for the last two hours.

Mr Hassell: After six hours of repetition.

Mr PEARSE: We have beaten him to the call every time. His efforts have been totally incompetent. One does not need to be particularly perceptive to see that this would occur as soon as the Government ranks were assembled.

The Government wants as little discussion as possible. The reason is that it is ashamed of the legislation. The member for Mundaring distorted the total Westminster system. One can hardly believe that someone has come into this Parliament so unknowing of that system. One would have to agree that a degree of deliberation took place in regard to the distortions the member for Mundaring put before us.

The Government will get this legislation through either tonight or tomorrow. We do not dispute that; however, it has made an error in
calculating the percentage gains. The Pilbara seat will be a little harder to win, but with the reaction I have encountered throughout the community, this legislation will not be to the advantage of the Government. This time Western Australians have taken up the cudgels.

The Government has ineptly explained its case for the change to the Pilbara boundaries. Many people in the community do not accept the claims of the Government and require one-vote-one-value. Some people have accepted that country people receive an advantage. I do not say that should be so but some people take that view. However, the 2 or 3 per cent gain the Government hopes to achieve through this redistribution will be compensated by the odium it will suffer because of its seeking the changes.

Ministers and back-bench members of the Government believe this redistribution will make them safe for the 1983 election. Certainly that is the plan, but there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. It is still possible for the electoral commissioners to take a little more notice of the blatant action which the Government has taken and try to compensate for that action. There is not that much room for manoeuvre in the metropolitan area, but not much will be required, as large as it is. This legislation will lose the seats which will lose the Liberal Party its position of power.

Mr Sodeman: Do you agree with the strategy of the Labor Party for enrolling only Labor voters as espoused in the Labor Voice before the last election?

Mr PEARCE: That is not so.

Mr Sodeman: Haven’t you read it? I will read it to you.

Mr PEARCE: Bring it forward. I enrol anybody who comes into my office and requires enrolment. I do not run specific enrolment drives. My point is that everybody should be on the roll. If everybody is on the roll, as we have often said, there would not be any difficulty. We have frequently said the State Electoral Department should have, as does the Commonwealth Electoral Office, people to go around the districts to ensure that everybody is on the roll. The Government has tried desperately to keep people off the roll. It assumes that the fewer people on the roll the more Labor voters are excluded. Our attitude is that if everybody is on the roll there is no argument. That is a democratic system. We are in favour of everybody voting. Certainly I am in favour of enrolling anyone.

My experience has been that if I enrol people in my area they usually will vote Labor. One cannot determine that in advance, and if someone asks to be enrolled I do not inquire how they will vote and refuse to deal with them if they intend to vote for somebody else. In my area it does not seem to be a problem, but it is a problem in the area of the member for Pilbara and will be a great problem in 1983.

The Government feels it will gain an advantage by this legislation, but with this corrupt system it will see what the end result will be because corruption is not tolerated in politics by Australians. The Government will live to regret what it is attempting to do this evening.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.56 p.m.]: I was a little perturbed earlier when the member for Morley was named and dealt with by the House in the manner that was laid down. At the same time—I regret the Speaker is not present—I draw attention to the fact that the member for Morley used the words—

We have opposite us very ordinary men and one woman; they are very ordinary people indeed. They have been seduced and corrupted by power. Power corrupts, and if we have ever seen a corrupt set of people, it is these members opposite who have sat there and drawn a line on the map—

That was verbatim from the uncorrected transcript of Hansard which the member for Morley will peruse when the opportunity arises. Earlier this evening I was surprised when the Leader of the Opposition spoke in the terms he did. The corrected Hansard states—

The Government’s corruption is manifest in this piece of legislation which makes no attempt to install a democratic Parliament in Western Australia.

“Corrupt” is a hard and a nasty word to use, and I do not use it without some misgivings.

Mr Harman: Where is the architect of all this corruption?

Mr DAVIES: The following is a dictionary definition of the word “corrupt”—

Dishonest, without integrity; depraved; perverted; wicked; evil; tainted.

All of those words are reasonable descriptions of this legislation. I am sure any member of the Government with any decency has no pride whatever in being required to support a Bill of this nature in a supposedly enlightened western country in this day and age.
I make the point that the member for Morley was dealt with in a manner which seemed to be verging on the severe, particularly in view of the utterances of the Leader of the Opposition who went to some lengths to express his feelings, as I pointed out.

That is now a complete record in *Hansard* of the situation and I draw attention to the irony, if not double standards, that appear to exist. Some remarks were made by the Premier and the member for Mundaring. I do not propose to deal at any length with the remarks of the member for Mundaring. It was a rather pathetic attempt to rationalise the inconsistencies inherent in the drawing of these boundaries. He had the temerity to refer to the quality of representation as being consistent with the Westminster system. He was taking the point a little too far.

The Premier tried to state and project further the argument of the Minister that it was Parliament drawing the boundaries of the metropolitan area. No blame or shame was placed on the Government at all. Who in the Parliament will come down in the life of the existing Government.

The electoral system in Western Australia is one of the most fair which is known to exist. Subject to the legislative structure, boundaries are drawn by electoral commissioners whose independence is without question.

The operative phrase there is “subject to the legislative structure” and that legislative structure requires the drawing up of the boundaries which the commissioners are obliged to do under the terms of their commission.

The two essential points that are in issue are the redefining of the metropolitan area and the way in which the Kimberley boundaries have been drawn. Bearing in mind too that the drawing of those boundaries has the profound effect of determining just where the balance of the electors will be located, the commissioners' job is completely constrained. The definition of the word “democracy” in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* is “Government by the people”. Lincoln indulged in a slightly more elaborate definition and added, “or a state in which government by the people prevails.” He said also that a democratic system is one in which the citizens have equal political rights.

It has been demonstrated by a number of speakers that this is just not the case. Reference was made also to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, to which Australia is a signatory, and that part of the declaration should be recorded in *Hansard* as follows—

> The will of the people shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage.

The system in Western Australia hardly can be said to be that!

Having put paid to the misrepresentation that the commission is responsible for the change, let us see what the other half of the truth is. The manner in which the boundary of the metropolitan area has been drawn in accordance with the map which the Leader of the Opposition is now pondering upon, is the first area of dispute. The first question is: Who should define the metropolitan area? Certainly we could debate whether to accept the delineation of the MRPA or of the Road Traffic Authority, but one thing is certain—the delineation should not be decided upon by this Parliament, or by any Parliament which has a vested interest in the decision as many members of this place have.

So it would be fair and more appropriate to hand over this decision to the commissioners, or to some other independent judicial type of organisation that is not under some pressure of self-interest.

Rockingham is to be included in the metropolitan area for the obvious purpose of ensuring that the Government is not embarrassed
by the creation of two predominately Labor Party
areas just outside the metropolitan area, and as
well as that, it would place pressure on the seats
of Dale and Mundaring.

Mr Shalders: Murray is 2 000 over-quota now.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The domino theory would
apply. I cannot predict what the result would be.
However, I deplore the principle involved. To
ensure that the very close near-metropolitan seats
further northwards—Dale, Mundaring, and
Kalamunda in particular—are safeguarded, an
adjustment has been made. But that is nothing
compared with what has happened in Kimberley.
I am sorry the Minister is not here, because this
gives the complete lie to his utterances in his
concluding remarks when he said—

In the view of the Government the
proposals now put to the Parliament improve
the system of representation of people in the
Parliament of a State the growth of which,
the development of which, and the success of
which is unequalled in the nation.

Let us see how this applies in the seat of
Kimberley. The situation of 60 years ago when
the statutory seats became inherent in the
legislation has changed completely, and in a
number of ways. In those days, travel to the north
was by State ships at a very leisurely rate.
Obviously for a member to travel up to, and down
from, his electorate to attend Parliament imposed
a great inconvenience on him. Nowadays, the
members for these northern electorates use air
transport. I know in my case it probably takes me
longer to come to Perth than it does for the
member for Kimberley. That is the extent of the
change that has occurred.

Also, the telephone was invented and radio
communication has improved steadily over the
years. For this reason, the disadvantages are not
as great as they were when the legislation was
first enacted. So the argument for special
treatment is diminished proportionately.
However, some argument still exists when we
compare the electorate of Kimberley with the
near-metropolitan country seats which under the
Bill are being cushioned for their representatives.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), you, too, must
wonder how the division in the electorate of
Kimberley can be justified. A look at the map is
most revealing. The Kimberley electorate will
now be in two parts separated by a thousand miles
of desert.

The criteria for setting boundaries that have
been mentioned—population, area, distance,
communication, and community of interest—start
to look a little tattered. How can the Government
be concerned about community of interest when it
is prepared to divide an electorate by a thousand
miles of desert? To try to say the new electorate
will be a unified entity is complete and utter
rubbish, and surely the Government and the
Minister would not expect even primary school
children to believe that!

This Bill will increase the difficulties which the
member for Kimberley faces. In the first instance,
the centers in the Kimberley electorate—Wyndham, Derby, Broome,
Kununurra, and Halls Creek—are all isolated in a
manner that people in the south do not fully
appreciate. At least in southern areas the roads
generally are good, and travelling within an
electorate is not a great difficulty. Certainly we
do not face the inconveniences that people in the
Kimberley face for the greater part of the year
when most of the roads are impassable.

A great many people in the Kimberley are
disadvantaged in a number of ways. The member
for the area is expected to represent and serve the
Aboriginal settlements. It has been pointed out
already that fewer than 50 per cent of the
residents are on the electoral roll for the
Kimberley seat, and to suggest that that
electorate could be regarded as in any way
comparable with the other electorates I have
mentioned is bordering on the completely
ridiculous.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), you represent
a country electorate. You also know the
Kimberley, and you know how well off we are by
comparison, and you are aware that the
Minister’s arguments are completely fallacious.

I will be interested to listen to the Minister’s
reply to ascertain whether he can reconcile some
of the points that we have referred to. Having
regard for the gross inequities and injustices that
are inherent in the Bill, it seems very strange that
the only emotions that have motivated the
members of the Government side have been those
of self-interest and self-preservation. Probably,
Mr Acting Speaker, you more than I would be
conversant with the circumstances that caused the
delay of the introduction of this Bill into the
House, but we are aware that there was a
midnight meeting of Cabinet. I was rather
surprised on my way home one night to see the
Ministers’ cars still in the car park following a
fairly hectic party meeting that day.

The lobbying of the member for Murchison-
Eyre was another feature and I have no doubt
that the member for Gascoyne was involved in
some very serious discussions. It is expected that
there will be 12 000 electors in the Kimberley
electorate, 9,000 in the Pilbara electorate, 3,783 in Gascoyne—if the number as at 16 March holds—and 1,941 in the seat of Murchison-Eyre, totalling in all 26,724. Even excluding every other consideration, the apportionment of that number of electors within the Kimberley region alone, which should average something like 6,780, has a variation of from 1,941 to 12,000.

In what way can that be defended? It cannot. It is sheer hypocrisy on the part of the Minister to present such a speech, and it does him no credit. It was sheer hypocrisy on his part and on the part of the Government to bring forward a proposition like this with an explanation of a three minute kind. So we see that, where a fair distribution would be 6,680 electors, we find electorates with 12,000, 9,000, 3,783, and 1,941 electors, always remembering there would be at least double that number in Kimberley; even though they may not be on the roll, they would still demand the time, effort and resources of the member for Kimberley.

To put a member of any political calibre in that position seems to be completely beyond the pale, and it is for that reason I agree with the member for Gosnells that the credibility of this Government will suffer grossly as a consequence. I believe the vast majority of the people in Western Australia will recognise this Bill for the blatant piece of manipulation it represents.

This Bill is not designed to safeguard democratic rights; it was put forward by members opposite in a spirit of self interest and self preservation. I appreciate the consternation of the member for Stirling and the member for Mt. Marshall. As both of them pointed out, the object of the exercise is to cement the Government in a position of power, to give it the greatest possible advantage at the next election and, at the same time, to be rid of that thorn in the side the National Party represents. The Government realises that with the Opposition breathing down its neck, it will be hard pressed to retain Government in 1983. So, it has adopted the practice of redefining the metropolitan boundary where the difficult Labor electors will have their right to vote diluted by about 100 per cent.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): I suggest the honourable member may be transgressing Standing Order No. 142. I know that the honourable member has had a great deal of experience in this House and that he would not want to put me in the position of being obliged to ask him not to indulge in repetitious argument. A passing reference would be in order.

Mr H. D. EVANS: A passing reference is all that is intended to underline and supplement the remarks made ably by my colleagues. It would be a shame if they were not fully appreciated by members opposite.

One aspect of this matter which was not touched upon is the attempt by the Government to rid itself of the National Party. It would seem the electorate of Mt. Marshall is to be squeezed. The electorate of Moore is to lose some 5,700 voters. A re-adjustment is to occur in Kalgoorlie and Boulder-Dundas and, probably, the boundaries of Merredin will be realigned, thus completely obliterating the boundaries of the electorate of Mt. Marshall. It is a sorry way to deal with the National Party. It is true its members have had their differences with the Government, but not without cause.

The genesis of the National Party goes back some years, and is due to differences over the subject of meat marketing. I must confess it was a very laudable and proper thing for the Country Party to have done; namely, to oppose the Liberals in the laying down of guidelines of what was a fundamental issue of policy. Unfortunately from their point of view the introduction of dairy legislation precipitated a situation where the Liberals were constrained by the interests of certain operators in fear of what might happen to their electoral funds if they did not follow a certain course. In retrospect, no doubt members of the Country Party realised they should have adopted a similar stance to the one adopted on meat marketing.

When the Country Party broke away, the big boys from the East moved in and we saw the two Country Party Ministers who were being pressured from behind to remain firm and uphold their end of the deal suddenly finding themselves in the rear rank, with two new Ministers in their end of the deal suddenly finding themselves pressured from behind to remain firm and uphold their end of the deal suddenly finding themselves in the rear rank, with two new Ministers in the front rank, and a new party formed. Once again, we are looking at the motives of self interest and self preservation.

For the Government to deliberately use the provisions of this Statute to remove the threat of the National Party is something which smacks of Tammany Hall in its worst era.

There are a number of other matters contained in this legislation about which the concern, distaste and hostility of the Opposition have been expressed. The figures already quoted have pointed to the crass stupidity of the logic contained in the Minister's second reading speech. That is all fully documented in Hansard and it is something which brings an eternal blot on the record of this Government.
Adjournment of Debate

MR CARR (Geraldton) [12.24 a.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 18
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

Noes 31
Mr Blair Mr Messara
Mr Clark Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan Mr Old
Mr Coyne Mr Rushton
Mrs Craig Mr Silson
Mr Crane Mr Sodeman
Dr Dadour Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden Mr Stephens
Mr Grewar Mr Trewson
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Lawrence Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders
Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.

Debate Resumed

MR CARR (Geraldton) [12.28 a.m.]: I am not prepared to let this legislation pass the House without taking the opportunity to express my complete opposition to it. I am sorry the time chosen for me to express that opposition was not a more pleasant time; however, that is a matter for the Government.

Mr Shalders: It must be too late for a few of your colleagues; they did not even bother to come in for the division.

Mr CARR: Be that as it may. This Bill, as we all know, is designed for one purpose; namely, to keep this Government in power. That should not surprise us because it is completely consistent with electoral legislation we have had before in this House and the current electoral legislation of this State. It is based on a system of putting as many electors as possible in electorates which are likely to be held by the Labor Party, and putting as few electors as possible in electorates likely to be held by Government supporters.

I remember in my first speech in this House back in 1974 making that very same point when speaking about electoral matters.

Clearly it has been demonstrated to be the case since then.

The 1975 legislation set out to achieve that and this legislation once again is based on the idea that where there is a group of Labor supporters they should be put into as big an electorate as possible, and where there is a group of Liberal supporters they should be put into as many electorates as possible. When one looks at the last available enrolment figures and compares the size of the average ALP electorate with the size of the average non-Labor electorate, one finds that the Labor-held electorates have considerably higher enrolments. The average enrolment for the 23 seats held in this House by the Labor Party works out at just over 14 000 electors, whereas for 32 seats held by the non-Labor Party members the average enrolment is just over 12 000 electors. In fact, we have a difference of only just under 2 000 electors. There is almost exactly 2 000 more electors in each of the seats held by the Labor Party compared with the seats held by Government members.

I believe the Bill before us does one very useful thing—it destroys a couple of the arguments used over and over again by our political opponents for their own purposes. Firstly, it destroys the argument concerning equality of representation.

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr CARR: Let us spend some time on that argument as it was enunciated tonight by the member for Mundaring and as it has been enunciated over a period of time by many Liberal supporters.

The argument works on the principle that we have fewer voters in electorates which suffer disadvantages, such as an electorate located a great distance from Perth and disadvantaged in terms of greater distance between centres within the electorate, in terms of remoteness, in terms of different centres located in the electorate, in terms of area, and in terms of communication. We have heard the argument many times that areas which suffer from those disadvantages are entitled to have fewer electors per member of Parliament.

I have always disagreed with that because it has always been my view that the principle of democracy of every elector having an equal say is a more important issue. But in all fairness, up to the time of the introduction of this Bill I have been prepared to say that whilst I did not agree with that argument, there was a degree of logic and consistency in the idea of equality of representation. But this Bill destroys that argument. The Bill creates a situation where the
most disadvantaged electorate, the most diversified electorate with the greatest problems of communication and so on, is to have more voters in it than any other electorate outside the metropolitan area. The seat of Kimberley, with its enormous distances and communication difficulties, is to have 12,000 people on its roll. That is more than the seat of Pilbara with 9,000 electors and it is more than every other country seat, which will have a quota of about 8,600 electors.

Mr H. D. Evans: And another 12,000 not on the roll.

Mr CARR: That is true. Those figures do not include the people not on the roll. It is interesting to compare the remote seats of Kimberley and Pilbara with the other two remote seats. The seat of Kimberley has 12,000 electors, which is far more than the 2,000 electors in the seat of Murchison-Eyre and 3,500 electors in the seat of Gascoyne.

How can Government members, who have so long spoken about equality of representation, justify that imbalance? I challenge the individual members opposite who have made those statements—I challenge the Premier as one who has supported the idea of equality of representation—to justify there being 12,000 electors in the seat of Kimberley and only 8,500 electors in seats within sight of Parliament House. The Premier is silent and makes no attempt to justify there being 12,000 electors in the seat of Kimberley.

Earlier tonight the member for Mundaring raised the argument of equality of representation. I was surprised he had the hide to do so. He used the argument only to suit his own purposes when comparing metropolitan electorates with country electorates. He made no effort to justify the placing of 12,000 electors on the Kimberley roll. I wonder whether he would care to explain how that move can be justified. The member for Mundaring is silent.

The member for Gascoyne is another member who has been quite vocal over a period of time. I wonder whether he is prepared to justify this move, bearing in mind there are fewer than 4,000 voters in his electorate.

Mr Bryce: Another crooked Cabinet Minister.

Mr CARR: Obviously the member for Murchison-Eyre has always supported the principle of equality of representation. Of all members he should understand the difficulty of covering large areas. He is the one member who should have said that putting 12,000 people into the seat of Kimberley was not fair. But he did not do that. To the contrary, he went to great lengths to make sure those extra voters went into the seat of Kimberley rather than into his own electorate.

Mr Hassell: Do you think it is unfair to put 12,000 people into the seat of Kimberley?

Mr CARR: No. It is completely out of balance. My point of view has been well known ever since I came to this place. I believe the most important principle in setting electoral boundaries should be that every elector throughout the State has an equal say in electing members of Parliament. If that idea is to be put into practice, given the 57 seats we will have after this legislation is passed, it would mean there would be 12,500 electors in each of the 57 seats. That is what we are proposing.

In one sense we also would have 12,000 people in the electorate of Kimberley, but we would not draw the line in relation to Kimberley—in fact we would not draw the line ourselves because we would give that job to the electoral commissioners.

The point I am making is that it is no longer any good for supporters of the Government to run around saying they will put only a very small number of electors in remote areas because of the difficulty of communication and the need to provide equality of representation. By the Government's actions in being prepared to place 12,000 people in the electorate of Kimberley it is saying it could reasonably put 12,000 electors in any other electorate of the State. After all, there is no electorate in the State which is more isolated and remote, involving larger distances in it, with a greater number of centres, and with more problems of communication, than the seat of Kimberley.

My view is that the Government will never again be able to use the equality of representation argument for the simple reason it has been prepared to put such a large number of electors in such a remote electorate.

The second good thing this Bill does is to destroy the Government's argument that the electoral commissioners draw the boundaries. Anybody can see that the line dividing the metropolitan area from the country areas is one of the boundary lines of a large number of electorates. It plays a very substantial role in determining what will be the shape and size of the electorates of Dale, Mundaring, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and others. Clearly that is not a line drawn by independent electoral commissioners. Clearly it is a line drawn by this Government, by this Cabinet, by this Premier,
and by the back-room boys who support this Government.

Most blatant are the lines in the north covering the four statutory seats; clearly once again the commissioners have had no say whatsoever. We have had the situation of Cabinet meeting at midnight.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): I ask the member to resume his seat. For the benefit of the member for Geraldton and those other members in the House who may wish to speak later, I draw their attention to Standing Order No. 142 which states—

The Speaker or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the House or the Committee to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition, either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech: Provided that such Member shall have the right to require that the question whether he shall be further heard be put, and thereupon such questions shall be put without debate.

I draw this to the attention of the member for Geraldton and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Whilst I appreciate the difficulties members may have in directing a point to the Chair, they can be assured that every latitude will be given; but where an argument continues which has already been advanced by other members over some five or six hours of debate, the argument becomes repetitious. I ask the member to enter the debate in the spirit of not being repetitious.

Mr CARR: Mr Acting Speaker, I am pleased to note that you were not objecting in any way to the relevance of my comments and that you were endeavouring to confine your remarks to what has been said previously. As you say, it is often difficult to make points without touching on arguments which have been raised earlier in debate. I shall therefore make no reference to the midnight Cabinet meeting and the lines drawn by Ministers on maps.

It is important to note that the actions of the Government are quite consistent with the Government’s behaviour over a period of time. It simply cannot be trusted with electoral matters. If we look at the record of the Government with respect to previous Bills on this subject we can see the Government does not have a very good record at all. I will refer only briefly to the amendment introduced a couple of years ago to require that new enrollees on State electoral rolls should have their enrolment cards witnessed by a JP or another qualified person. This has resulted in the State’s electoral roll being something like 42,000 electors fewer than those on the Commonwealth roll in this State.

Another example which fits into the same context of showing that this Government cannot be trusted with electoral matters relates to an amendment to electoral legislation it introduced involving the procedures for illiterate voting. It is interesting to see that before the House is a local government Bill to amend electoral procedures at local government elections. That Bill contains an excellent measure to assist in the polling provisions so that blind or illiterate voters are able to cast a vote. These people will be given the right to take into the booth a person of their own choice to assist them to cast a vote.

It is most curious that the Government should have such a contradiction by introducing that excellent provision in the local government measure and not having an identical measure in its electoral legislation. This clearly illustrates that the Government is prepared to amend the electoral laws of this State to make it harder for illiterate Aborigines to vote in the Kimberley. The Government realises that at the local government level it does not need to stop illiterate Aborigines voting; it does not need to assist Aborigines from reserves to vote because they are already excluded from that act by the franchise of the Local Government Act. Clearly it is an example of the Government being prepared to switch tack from one to the other in order to fulfil its own electoral interests. The Government seems to have no integrity. It seems this move is made only as a means of self-survival with regard to electoral matters.

The question can be asked: Why is the Government choosing this time to rig its boundaries? The reason is that it is facing the possibility of electoral defeat at the next election; at least, it faces the possibility of losing its constitutional majority.

I could summarise the position as it was portrayed last year by Australia’s leading authority on electoral matters, Mr Malcolm McKerras. I shall quote from the 29 April 1980 edition of The Bulletin in which he summarised the effects of the last State election as follows—

There is no doubt about the existence of a gerrymander in Western Australia. It can be demonstrated in two ways.

First, since Labor won 48.5 percent of the two-party preferred vote it needs a swing of 1.6 percent to become the majority party in
terms of votes. Yet it needs a swing of 3.8 per cent to win the median seat.

Second, there are enormous differences in the sizes of the seats.

He then continued to quote figures concerning the size of the Murchison-Eyre electorate and the Whitford electorate. It is important to note Mackerras' point that a swing of 1.6 per cent is required for the Labor Party to become the majority party in terms of votes, yet 3.8 per cent is required to win and to become the Government. We need a swing of 3.8 per cent to win Government and presumably the Government considers this to be possible. If that is not possible, then together with the National Party, the balance of power could be obtained with less than 2 per cent of the vote. So, the Labor Party could have a balance of power situation.

This Government has deliberately set out to protect its marginal seats. If one looks at the Mackerras pendulum and notes the most marginal seats of Bunbury, Pilbara, and Dale and then looks at the Bill before us, one can make some projection as to which seats may be altered by the Bill. We can ascertain that these three seats are those which are most likely to be strengthened for the Liberal Party.

When we note the electorate of Bunbury and its enrolment of 9 400 voters and that something like 800 votes will be taken out of that electorate—and they will most likely come from the Withers area which has a fair content of State Housing Commission homes—there is a distinct likelihood that the balance will move in favour of the Liberal Party.

Mr Sibson: The estimates you have made are quite wrong.

Mr CARR: I am quite prepared to answer the member's interjection but I could not hear it.

If we refer to the seat of Pilbara, which is obviously important to the Liberal Party, we note that many votes will be taken out of the Pilbara area and will go to the Kimberley area. We note that a line has been simply drawn somewhere from north-east of Port Hedland to west of Paraburdoo. I cannot see the logic in that; if the line was to be drawn surely it should have been drawn along shire council boundaries, and in that way it would have been more easily definable.

As well as Bunbury and the Pilbara, it is obvious that Dale is another Government seat which could become a safer seat with the transfer of 2 900 electors in Armadale into the metropolitan area. It is really a case of history repeating itself.

I remember in 1975, when we were last debating electoral matters and a Bill was before the House, it was referred to as the "Save Cyril's Seat" legislation.

Mr Bryce: He will be developing a complex soon.

Mr CARR: It seems that this legislation is designed to make that electorate more rural. The effect of this change will be that the Labor Party will need more than a 3.8 per cent swing to become the Government. I said earlier that in order to become the Government we will need something in excess of 52.5 per cent of the vote. If this Government were at all dinkum about electoral reform it would be allowing the commissioners to draw the boundaries independently. It would allow the commissioners to draw the lines between the metropolitan and country areas.

We should certainly allow the commissioners to draw the boundaries for the four statutory seats.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! I draw the member's attention to Standing Order No. 142. I believe that part of his argument has been canvassed by almost every member who has spoken.

Mr CARR: I am surprised to hear that; however I will adhere to the ruling. I did not think that the matter had been that widely covered.

I make the point that if the Government were dinkum it would be prepared to abolish the four statutory seats and place them in with the other 23 country, rural and pastoral seats. Then there would be 27 seats which would make up the country areas of the State. The Government should allow the electoral commissioners more freedom and independence in drawing those lines.

In spite of my rejection of this Bill because it is a blatant attempt to preserve the Government in office, it gives me some cause for optimism because I think the Government has misjudged the situation. Firstly, the Government made its changes too blatant. When legislation was brought before this House in 1975 it was a gerrymander designed for certain purposes and at that time the Government could judge what the public was prepared to cop. However, this time the changes are too blatant. The drawing of the Pilbara-Kimberley line is such that any fair and reasonable person could look at the line and see that a reasonable situation does not occur.

Whilst we have difficulty in bringing the matter to the attention of the entire public it does not mean that people will not be sympathetic to our point of view. People will be most cynical of
this Government's action in placing the line where it has.

The second reason for my optimism is that I think at the next election the result will bring about a situation where the Australian Labor Party will poll over 50 per cent of the vote and lose the election. That will bring us to the starting point of a campaign for electoral reform.

That is my view and I expect it to happen. Members will recall that we polled 48.5 per cent under the two-party preferential voting system at the last election. We know that Fraser is very unpopular and we know that the Premier of this State is associated with the Fraser Government. We know also that the new federalism policy is proving to be a disaster and that this Premier is tied to the so-called new federalism.

Our Premier was the great architect who said the responsibility should be given back to the States; that is, responsibility for health, education, and other matters. Then of course the question of financing arose and the States will have to raise their own income taxes.

This Premier, this great architect, was prepared to draft legislation to provide for State income tax. However, the Australian public has woken up to the new federalism and knows that it is a disaster, that Fraser is on the nose and that the Premier is guilty by association with the new federalism. However, he is attempting to crawl out and pretend that the new federalism of the Fraser Government is not one with which he is associated. He is tied to it.

Mr Davies: He always blames someone else.

Mr CARR: The standard of this Premier and this Government has fallen through its tiredness and through its association with the Fraser Government.

We have a situation where it is likely that there will be a swing of more than 1.5 per cent to the Australian Labor Party. That may not put us in Government but when we have an election that shows we have 50 per cent of the vote and lose the election, the public will see that something is wrong.

We will be in the same sort of situation in which South Australia found itself a number of years ago. A number of comments have been made in this debate about the South Australian situation and it has been said that Dunstan was the champion of electoral reform and that Steele-Hall was the great law reformer. I reject that latter statement.

When the election was held the Labor Party polled 52.5 per cent of the vote but lost the election. That put Dunstan in the situation where he had the opportunity to develop his argument and it was easy to project to the public that the electoral laws of the State were crooked and rigged. The matter built up and it meant that Steele-Hall, far from being the great law reformer, was forced to go along with the tide; very much the same way as was the case in Western Australia in 1970 when there was a very strong feeling that 18-year-olds should have the vote. So strong was the feeling that the Brand Government had to accede, even though it was of no advantage to it.

So, that is the situation I predict and I am quite optimistic because the Government has so blatantly over-played the mark.

Mr Watt: If you had exactly the same number of electors and still got more than 50 per cent of the vote you could still lose the election.

Mr CARR: I accept it is theoretically possible that one could have minor variations and that if all electorates are very much the same size one could still have a situation where one could exceed 50 per cent of the vote and still lose the election.

On Mackerras' figures we would need 52.3 per cent or more of the vote to win an election. However, the Government has made the most marginal seats less marginal. We cannot be certain until the boundaries are drawn in the metropolitan and country areas. If we won over 50 per cent of the vote the public would realise that the electoral boundaries are not fair. I am totally opposed to the Bill.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary) [12.57 a.m.]: I think we have come to something like the 11th hour of the debate and a great deal of it has been repetitive and an even greater deal of it has been simple abuse without any argument whatsoever.

Mr Bryce: Well and truly deserved.

Mr HASSELL: I wish to refer to a couple of points which have been harped on and repeated over and over again by the Opposition. The first matter is one-vote-one-value.

Two Opposition speakers said that with a one-vote-one-value system we would have a quota slightly in excess of 12,000 electors. The immediate result of that would be that the Kimberley electorate would be precisely as it is now proposed, whether the lines were drawn by the Government or by the commissioners.

Mr Bryce: It would rectify the situation in the Murchison-Eyre area and the Gascoyne area in terms of equality and figures.
Mr HASSELL: Let us deal with that point. The Opposition has criticised the legislation with respect to the Pilbara and Kimberley areas, yet the change has produced the exact result which they maintain is ideal, and there is nowhere else from which those additional voters for Kimberley can be obtained other than from the Pilbara area, because that is where the nearest centre of population is.

Mr Bryce: If you were not so racist and determined to keep them off the roll, you would find them in the Kimberley alone.

Mr HASSELL: The second result of applying that one-vote-one-value quota would be to deprive the north-west of a seat.

Mr Bryce: Rubbish! The electors are there.

Mr HASSELL: If we add up the current enrolments of the four seats—

Mr Bryce: And the potential enrolment in the Pilbara and the Kimberley.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! I think one of the things that has been paramount in the debate this evening has been in general terms the understanding that members have afforded each other. The Leader of the Opposition was heard in relative silence, as were a number of other speakers. The Minister is now replying and I call on members to pay him due courtesy to enable him to answer the questions he has been asked to answer. Failing that I will be forced to take more stern action.

Mr HASSELL: One of the factual misstatements made by the Opposition twice tonight—the member for Warren made it once and another member also made it—was that my second reading speech took three minutes. The 

Mr Davies: What a splendid debating point.

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition raised this matter twice tonight and put it forward as a fact, quite deliberately and dishonestly.

Mr Davies: I did not say it even once.

Mr HASSELL: Members opposite tried to say that the second reading speech did not adequately support the Bill.

Mr Davies: Don't flick your pencil at me. I did not say it.

Mr HASSELL: Let us come back to the point that members opposite would deprive the north-west of this State of a seat because of their one-vote-one-value quota. There would not be enough electors to provide four seats in the north-west under that quota.

Mr Bryce: There would be plenty in the Pilbara alone if you would only look for them.

Mr HASSELL: The third result of the one-vote-one-value quota—

Mr Bryce: You don't like them because they are black.

Mr HASSELL: —with over 12 000 electors—

Mr Bryce: You are racist.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Blaikie): Order! The member for Ascot will keep order!

Mr HASSELL: —would be to deprive substantially the remote and country areas of this State of their representation. Let members opposite look at the electoral map of country areas in this State and look at the size of the electorates now. If the quota were increased to 12 300 or so how big would the seat of Roe be? It is already vast. How big would be the electorates of Yilgarn-Dundas, Merredin, and Mt. Marshall?

Mr Davies: That is the same excuse you have used for years and years.

Mr HASSELL: These are areas of great economic importance to this State, and areas which are not empty of people. They have in them people who need representation in this place.

Mr Bryce: Yes, sheep and ears of wheat.

Mr HASSELL: How big would be the electorate of Murchison-Eyre?

Mr Bryce: Baa!

Mr HASSELL: It would be demolished because members opposite would deprive a prime development area of this State of one of its seats.

Mr Bryce: Not so.

Mr HASSELL: Yes, members opposite would do that; they would have to do it on their artificial application of artificial rules unrelated to the reality of the size of our State, the situation of its development, and the needs of the people.

Mr Bryce: You have already knocked 42 000 off the roll.

Mr HASSELL: The Labor Party is quite dishonest in this approach—

Mr Carr: You ought to talk about honesty.

Mr HASSELL: —because if we are objective about the matter of electoral boundaries and step outside this Parliament and look at what is going on, what is really being said is not that what the Government is doing is wrong; what is really being said is that what is really being done is not seen by the Labor Party to be to its advantage. On one hand the Leader of the Opposition took as one of his three main points the fact that the proposal includes having more members of
Parliament. However at the same time it was accepted by the Opposition that an extra seat would be all right if it was in the Pilbara.

Mr Davies: I said that was the only circumstance.

Mr HASSELL: It would be acceptable to the Opposition because it can see electoral advantage in it.

Mr Davies: None at all.

Mr Bryce: Noddy, that is where the people are.

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition's argument is about the fact that members opposite do not see electoral advantage in it, and all the abuse they have hurled at the Government tonight is false and hypocritical, and members opposite know it. Members opposite have got onto this plane of righteousness which is not based on anything but words, and they know it.

Mr Davies: We really got under his skin.

Mr HASSELL: Members opposite know very well that their concern is for the seats they can win, just as that is the concern of every political party.

Several members interjected.

Mr Davies: Don't put every political party on the level of yours.

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition is trying to make out it is not concerned about that seat when in fact it is concerned about it.

Mr Davies: One-vote-one-value cannot be gerrymandered.

Mr HASSELL: The reason the Opposition believes in one-vote-one-value is that it thinks it will give it electoral advantage in Western Australia.

Mr Davies: In no way whatsoever. We are prepared to take a gamble, but I am sorry to say you would not understand that. You have not been here long enough to appreciate it.

Mr HASSELL: It was Mr Tonkin, as Leader of the Labor Party in this House on 19 October 1965 who said—

Mr Bryce: Oh!

Mr Jamieson: I bet he was not the leader in 1965.

Mr HASSELL: He said that he did not quarrel with that basis of representation in Western Australia because this is a very vast State. He said the people in the outback have communication difficulties; their community of interest is different; and therefore he had no objection to their having a louder voice in the government of the country than a person in the metropolitan area. For weeks and weeks the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Bryce: What about a little technology, Noddy?

Mr HASSELL: —has been trying to create the impression that by some incredible process of change the Labor Party is now concerned about the country and about country people. How that has been shown up tonight for what it is! It is a false presentation for political purposes.

Mr Davies: By the same reasoning you are abandoning the people in the metropolitan area, are you?

Mr HASSELL: I did not come here and say we regarded the redistribution in the Pilbara, Murchison-Eyre, and Gascoyne areas as ideal. I said properly that the measure was the best that could be done in what is obviously a difficult area to consider.

Mr Davies: By an incompetent Government.

Mr Barnett: The best that could be done for the Liberal Party.

Mr HASSELL: I said in due course it would have to be reviewed further.

Mr Davies: About 2020.

Mr HASSELL: Under the system of the Leader of the Opposition—which I do not believe he would adopt, even if he were in Government—

Mr Davies: We would if you would let it through the Legislative Council.

Mr HASSELL: —there would be a massive shift of seats to the metropolitan area and a reduction of representation in remote areas—

Mr Barnett: Rubbish!

Mr HASSELL: —and a reduction of representation in country areas, generally.

Mr Barnett: Equal rubbish!

Mr HASSELL: The Leader of the Opposition had three main objections to the Bill, and one of them was that there would be more members of Parliament at this time; yet he accepted that there might well be one extra member from the Kimberley.

Mr Davies: If you are going to have an extra member anywhere, that is where he should be.

Mr Bryce: It was the Pilbara.

Mr HASSELL: Well, the Pilbara.

Mr Davies: You must learn to listen. You are so intent on trying to defeat the debate to justify your own ends that you do not listen.

Mr HASSELL: The basic system of representation we have in this State is—
Mr Davies: Corrupt.

Mr HASSELL: —a fair one—

Mr Bryce: As corrupt as possible.

Mr HASSELL: —based on a recognition of the size of the State and the distribution of its population.

Mr Davies: In 60 years the northern part of the State has not altered at all.

Mr HASSELL: Let me point out another complaint of the Opposition, and one made over and over again. It is part of the one-vote-one-value syndrome upon which the Opposition rests so much. I refer to the value of the metropolitan vote being less than the value of the country vote.

Mr Barnett: Yes, Noddy.

Mr HASSELL: Yet with the additional seats proposed that greater value in the country will be diminished. To be consistent with their argument, members opposite should support additional seats in the metropolitan area.

Mr Davies: We would if we could afford them.

Mr HASSELL: The Leader of the Opposition is back to his “afford” argument.

Mr Sodeman: Ask him about electorate offices, air transport, charter travel, office typewriters, etc.

Mr HASSELL: Yet the self-same Leader of the Opposition wants to give members in country and remote areas free travel, charter travel on aircraft, extra electorate offices, extra staff, reverse charge telephone calls, and unrestricted mail, amongst other things.

Mr Davies: They are some of the options you should be looking at.

Mr HASSELL: In addition to that the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to have an extra seat in the Pilbara, which would be to his advantage. Therefore, his cost argument is not in any way sincere, and he knows it.

Mr Davies: That is your opinion.

Mr HASSELL: Let us come back to another point.

Mr Barnett: Are you the best the Government can put up on this?

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition has been carrying on about a redistribution for at least the last 12 months, and it has asked a series of questions about it.

Mr Davies: Two questions.

Mr HASSELL: It is quite obvious that the Opposition would accept a redistribution based on the present boundaries. That is the way in which it wanted the Government to move, because it kept on pointing out the number of seats out of balance in the metropolitan area. It wanted a redistribution, but it put forward no proposal for a change in the structure of the system. The Opposition wanted a redistribution based on existing legislation with no increase in the size of the metropolitan area, no increase in the number of seats, and no transfer of seats from the country to the metropolitan area.

I want to remind the House of the very positive aspects of this redistribution.

Mr Davies: For the Government.

Mr HASSELL: I refer to the positive aspect of increasing the size of the metropolitan area geographically and in terms of increasing the number of electors by some 24 500 or 25 000. Bringing those people into the metropolitan area is a proper step forward.

Mr Parker: You said in answer to a question that if we got to this stage you would tell us on what basis you decided that each area would come in.

Mr HASSELL: Obviously the decision as to what areas come in and what areas go out is something which has been considered.

Mr Parker: Of course it has been considered.

Mr Davies: Come on!

Mr HASSELL: It was our view that to bring in that number of people and that area was the proper step forward.

Mr Parker: Why?

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition disagrees with that approach.

Mr Bryce: We just want to know why.

Mr HASSELL: It might disagree with it; but that does not make it wrong.

Mr Parker: We want to know the reasons. You have not given a reason yet.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: The Opposition has made a mistake in that it has failed completely to distinguish between those seats with which it agrees and those with which it does not agree, because it has been so obsessed with worrying about its own political advantage and trying to wrap that up—

Mr Parker: What an extraordinarily hypocritical thing to say. You are evading the issue. Why did you decide that Mundaring, Kalamunda, and Darling Range should not come in, but that Rockingham, which is twice as far from the GPO, should? You are evading the issue. You will not answer that question.
Mr HASSELL: The decision for the redistribution—
Mr Parker interjected.
The SPEAKER: Order!
Mr HASSELL: The Opposition rejects the suggestion that there should be a redistribution to balance up the seats.
Mr Parker interjected.
The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fremantle!
Mr HASSELL: That redistribution will be carried out in the metropolitan area, which has increased geographically and in the number of electors.
Mr Davies: By whose decision?
Mr HASSELL: It will be done by the electoral commissioners. They will do their work independently of the Government. No amount of twisting and turning by the Opposition—
Mr Bryce: What a cowardly act that is, to hide behind the Chief Justice.
Mr HASSELL: There will be no attempt to influence the commissioners. They will work in the defined metropolitan area, and in the country areas, without any direction from the Government, from the Opposition, from the National Party, from the National Country Party, or from anybody else. The commissioners will carry out a redistribution of boundaries—
Mr Davies: Within the parameters set by the Government.
Mr HASSELL: —within the legislation strictly laid down. When they have reached their conclusion, the redistribution will take effect automatically, after a period for public objection and public comment on the draft proposals.
Mr Barnett: What will happen to the public objections?
Mr HASSELL: The public objections will be dealt with by the commissioners, without reference to the Government. The Government will have no more say than any other member of the public.
Mr Barnett: While I have your attention, are you aware that you drew the lines for the Perth area on a three-year-old map?
Mr Davies: What does it matter?
Mr Parker: When are you going to tell us the reasons for the areas that are in and the ones that are out?
Mr HASSELL: At least the member for Welshpool was straightforward in what he said.
Mr Bryce: This has to be your worst performance.
Mr HASSELL: He was the one member of the Opposition who did not devote himself exclusively to unsupported abuse, and who did not become involved in a stunt to have himself expelled from the House so he could grab another headline—
Mr Davies: Helped by the Premier.
Mr HASSELL: The Opposition has indulged in stunts from time to time; but it has no arguments.
Mr Bryce: You are evading the substance of the question.
Mr Parker interjected.
The SPEAKER: Order!
Mr HASSELL: In October 1965, the member for Welshpool, who was then the member for Beeloo, said the following—
Changes in electoral Acts and redistribution Acts through the ages, as a reference to Hansard will indicate, have always raised long arguments in the Parliaments as to whether the changes were justified and whether they were to the advantage of one side or the other. Governments and Oppositions of the State have argued backwards and forwards, and changes which could have been of advantage, were shelved.
He recognised then, and again tonight, that the debate is about the political reality of what can and should be done at a particular time. That would apply as much if the Opposition were in government as it applies when we are in government.
Mr Bryce: He did not endorse corruption, which is what this is.
Mr HASSELL: The member for Welshpool did not become involved in the debate in the way the member for Ascot and so many of his colleagues did.
Mr Pearce: The whole legislation is an abuse of the parliamentary system.
Mr Parker interjected.
Mr Harman: Are you prepared to quote the next sentence?
Mr HASSELL: If the member for Maylands wanted that sentence quoted, he had plenty of opportunity to do so.
Mr Harman: You are not prepared to quote the next sentence, are you? You have deliberately ignored the next sentence. That is what you do all the time.
Mr HASSELL: It was the Leader of the Opposition who said—

Mr Harman: You come in here with half truths.

Mr HASSELL: In an interview last year on Channel 2, during the lead-up to the State election, when the Leader of the Opposition was trying to win over the people of this State, it was put to him that the electoral boundaries were not as he liked them. That related to the electoral boundaries about which he has been abusing us all night. On that occasion, the Leader of the Opposition said—

I don’t believe that electoral systems win elections. They are vital; and they are certainly gerrymandered in this State where two-thirds of the members of the Legislative Council are elected by one-third of the population and one-third of the voters. I don’t believe they win elections.

Opposition members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: It has been the burden of the Opposition all night that these boundaries are designed in some way to ensure that the Labor Party does not win.

I conclude by referring to what I said, but what has not been reported, in the second reading speech. This legislation represents an adjustment of the situation we have—

Mr Bryce: It is corrupt.

Mr HASSELL: —which gives an increase in representation for the metropolitan area—

Mr Harman: Why?

Mr HASSELL: —without depriving the country of its representation—

Mr Stephens: That is false.

Mr HASSELL: —and without depriving the remote areas of their representation.

Mr Harman: You are talking nonsense.

Mr Davies: You are cutting the country down by one.

Mr HASSELL: The Bill seeks to give recognition to the realities of distance, remoteness, communications, and transport which, despite the city background of most of the members of the Opposition, should still be apparent as real difficulties for many people in this State.

Mr Parker: Are you saying this legislation was drawn up on the basis of some sort of principle?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: The legislation does not guarantee anything to anyone.

Mr Davies: It guarantees the return of the Government.

Mr HASSELL: It ensures a redistribution that puts the seats back into balance.

Mr Pearce: Kimberley is so unbalanced the whole State is likely to topple over.

Mr HASSELL: It increases the number of seats in the metropolitan area in a way that is not politically advantageous as far as we are concerned. It provides two more seats in the upper House, the political fortunes of which, if they are predictable, would not be in our favour.

Mr Bryce: Oh ho!

Mr HASSELL: However, that is not the issue. The issue is that there is to be a redistribution in the metropolitan area—

Mr Davies: In the Government’s favour.

Mr HASSELL: —that will be done independently. There is to be a redistribution, done independently, in the country areas. The difficulties of redrawing the representational system for the north-west, to which I referred—

Mr Parker: And all the difficulties with your back-benchers lobbying you.

Mr HASSELL: There are difficulties with the adjustment.

In relation to the broad sweep of the Opposition’s scheme, the present proposals may not be ideal, but at least they give some reasonable balance between the two zones, bearing in mind that immediate developments will take place in the Pilbara.

Mr Harman: You are absolutely dishonest.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HASSELL: In a very short time, there will be a re-establishment of the balance between these two seats, as a result of this development.

Mr Parker: What about Murchison-Eyre? Will there be a redevelopment there?

Mr HASSELL: I commend the Bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: In order to pass, the question will require the support of an absolute majority. If, when I put the question, there is a dissentient voice, I shall have to divide the House. The question is that—

Mr DAVIES I move—

That the word “now” be deleted with a view to substituting the words “this day six months”.
The SPEAKER: The debate is closed at this stage.

Mr DAVIES: I can amend the motion that you are putting to the House. Standing Orders Nos. 259 and 260 say that the word "now" can be deleted, and "this day three months" or "this day six months" may be substituted.

The SPEAKER: I must rule against the motion of the Opposition, because the debate on the question that the Bill be now read a second time has been closed by the Chief Secretary having concluded his speech. All that remains is for me to put the question. The question is that the Bill be now read a second time. Those of that opinion will say "Aye", to the contrary "No".

Mr Davies: Divide!
Bells rung and the House divided.

Remarks during Division

Mr Davies: The member for Mt. Marshall is signing his own death warrant.
Mr Barnett: You deserve to have your seat abolished. How could you be so thick?
Mr Parker: What have they promised you? Who will get the Agent General's job—you or Graham MacKinnon?

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 29
Mr Blaikie Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne Mr Old
Mrs Craig Mr Rushton
Mr Crane Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grew Mr Trehowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Laurance Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 20
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr Melver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan Mr Stephens
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

(Teller)

The SPEAKER: I declare the second reading carried with an absolute majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

Mr Stephens: Mr Speaker!
Mr Hassell: Mr Speaker!

The SPEAKER: The member for Stirling.

Reference to Select Committee

MR STEPHENS (Stirling) [1.29 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

When speaking on the second reading, I gave an indication that it was my intention to move this motion. It is quite apparent that the public at this stage are not—

Mr Bryce: The Minister is performing like a complete ass.

Mr B. T. Burke: What is the matter with you?
Several members interjected.
Mr B. T. Burke: The Chief Secretary had a lot of notice that this was going to happen.

Mr STEPHENS: The public are not fully aware of the implications of this measure.

Mr B. T. Burke: What is the matter with you? Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: The member for Stirling gave ample notice of this.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEPHENS: If this Bill were referred to a Select Committee, the public could be involved fully and they could be made aware of the Government's intentions. If we are to believe what the Chief Secretary has been telling us that this is a fair and reasonable Bill, I am sure Government members would have nothing to fear from exposing all the ramifications of it to the people. They would be able to make their case to the public and they would have a better opportunity to make the public aware of the fairness of this Bill, if in fact they are sincere in what they are saying; but I question that.

However, there is an opportunity for the Government to show its good faith. It need not say that the time factor is of great importance, because there is a considerable period of time before the next election. This Bill could be referred to a Select Committee, the Select Committee could report back when Parliament resumes for the Budget session, and there would still be ample time for the commissioners to investigate and report on any changes and public comment could be made before the next election.
Mr Parker: Will you get the support of the member for Mt. Marshall on this?

Mr STEPHENS: The member for Fremantle should wait and he will find out.

Mr Pearce: So will you!

Mr STEPHENS: It was significant that, in the Chief Secretary's summation, whereas he was able to say it was fair to bring Rockingham into the metropolitan area, he deliberately avoided saying that the same fair approach was not taken with regard to Dale, Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring which are still part of the metropolitan area. They are dormitory regions in the metropolitan area and if it is right for Rockingham to be included, I would think it would be consistent to assume the seats I have just enumerated should be included also.

Perhaps if we had a Select Committee the Chief Secretary would be able to come forward and let the members of it know the reasons that this has not been done.

At this hour of the night I do not intend to labour the point; but here is a wonderful opportunity for the Government to show its sincerity and good faith in allowing this matter to go to a Select Committee so that the public can be involved. The Government could prove its point by having a Select Committee.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [1.33 a.m.]: I gather from the lack of action on the Government side that it does not intend to support this motion, but here is a wonderful opportunity for the Government to show its sincerity and good faith in allowing this matter to go to a Select Committee so that the public can be involved. The Government could prove its point by having a Select Committee.

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At this hour of the night I do not intend to labour the point; but here is a wonderful opportunity for the Government to show its sincerity and good faith in allowing this matter to go to a Select Committee so that the public can be involved. The Government could prove its point by having a Select Committee.
is doing; that is, ensconcing itself in office by fiddling with the electoral system.

What has been said over the years and what was attributed to the member for Welshpool and the former member for Melville is quite true and consideration of the electoral distribution in this State has been necessary, because of its particular nature. However, the Chief Secretary seems to forget that the northern seats were set 60 years ago, in the 1920s, and he fails to admit there has been some change in that time. He then quoted the former member for Melville and completely overlooked the fact that the quotation is now 16 years old. If, on another occasion under other circumstances, the Premier was talking, he would tell us what a great leap forward has been made in the north and, indeed, as a result of this, he would be admitting that we should take a fresh and updated look at the electoral position which exists in that part of the State.

Members opposite overlook completely the passage of time. In one instance it was 60 years and in another it was 16. However, the Government is prepared to rest its whole argument on a couple of statements based on conditions so long ago.

We want to look forward, not back. The Premier is the one who is always looking back and talking about the good old days. We want to look forward to what we hope will be better days and we want to live under a better electoral system, because even you, Sir, would concede there have been changes in distribution of population, communications, and attitudes over the last 60 years. That is all a Select Committee would concern itself with doing. It would bring the situation up to date and ensure this State has a much fairer electoral system than exists at the present time.

We support the motion.

MR BRYCE (Ascot) [1.40 a.m.]: Based on the Minister's comments a few moments ago, very good reasons were submitted to this Chamber as to why a Select Committee should be supported and proceeded with. There are excellent reasons, factors, themes, and concepts which a Select Committee could and should inquire into. The member for Stirling did not make particular reference to the disparities in the north. What better subject for a Select Committee to examine than this disparity between the northern constituencies or the remote area constituencies and other electorates? How can members accept a situation in which there are 12,000 electors in one constituency, 2,000 in another, 4,000 in another, and 9,000 in the Pilbara? What better basis for genuine inquiry involving some public input with a Select Committee sitting in the north, asking for opinions from the people represented in this place by the member for Pilbara? We need public input.

The other matter which concerns me and which I suggest to members could be well and truly investigated by a Select Committee is the fact that, in the Pilbara at the present time as defined on the map in the corner of the Chamber and in the constituency of Kimberley, a significant number of potential electors are not on the roll. That figure could be as high as 15,000 electors in the Pilbara. There could be as many as 4,000 or 6,000 in the currently defined constituency of the Kimberley.

Why is it that the Electoral Department is sitting on its ass? Where are the resources to do the job that should be done? Why are these people not on the roll? Is it simply because the Government has brought in a racist provision to the Electoral Act, as distinct from the Electoral Districts Act, which is designed deliberately to keep these people off the roll, or is it because of the nature of the development in those parts of the State? That in itself is a very valid subject for inquiry by a Select Committee. Who knows the exact answers?

I am disgusted to think that the State Electoral Department performs so badly and is so ill-equipped in this respect. It is a disgrace.

Earlier in the evening I indicated to the Chief Secretary that there are as many as 42,000 Western Australians whose names are not on the roll. When he raises this completely fallacious argument about where the numbers would come from, the allegation that the people in that part of the State would lose representation is false.

If the department under the control of the Chief Secretary was doing its job and accepting its responsibilities, it would ensure that people in that part of the State were on the roll. Does this Government have a vested interest in depriving that department of the resources necessary to do its job? Does this Government have a vested interest in seeing that so many people in that part of the State never get as far as the electoral roll? Is it because their skins are black? Is it because there are a lot of immigrants or is it simply because the Chief Secretary and his ministerial colleagues fear these potential electors in that part of the State may vote for the Labor Party? I wonder what a Select Committee would turn up in that respect.

Another perfectly valid question that a Select Committee could and should investigate is the
leading question so far as this Bill is concerned. It never has been answered by the Minister responsible. If the Minister will not give this House explanations for this deviously crooked line around the metropolitan area maybe a Select Committee is appropriate. If he does not have the moral fortitude or, simply, the explanations to give to this House, to explain why Rockingham should be included in the metropolitan area and why it is not appropriate to include the areas of Kalamunda, Lesmurdie and Mundaring in the metropolitan area which are localities geographically closer to the GPO, then maybe a Select Committee could well and truly inquire into those matters.

Maybe a Select Committee could shed some light on these sorts of issues. There is no doubt in the minds of members on this side of the House that this legislation was brought to this place in a hurry at the end of the session designed to be rammed through this Parliament. It is the mechanism for a whole readjustment of electoral boundaries.

The Minister has introduced this legislation in a way that has left a shroud of secrecy over its basic provisions. On each and every occasion he was challenged to provide the rationale for the substance of this Bill he fell a long way short of doing so. For those of us on this side of the House who witnessed the most pathetic performance in his career when he answered the second reading debate, we must feel sorry indeed as has been the case with the member for Stirling. Maybe a Select Committee could shed some light on these sorts of issues. One way in which the validity of that detachment might be decided is by looking at the substance of this Bill he fell a long way short of doing so. The Minister's action was indicative of the Government's reluctance to have this matter debated. Every member knows the member for Karrinyup has a continuing interest in electoral matters over the years.

If this man's performance tonight was designed to win him a place in the hearts of his Liberal Party colleagues, all I can say is that he will get a big shock indeed.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [1.48 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the National Party. Firstly, the Minister's performance really has been surprising. During the second reading debate he attempted to rise to curtail the debate. I presumed he had just not taken the normal precaution to see whether other members intended to speak. It is true that on the first occasion the member intending to speak was sitting behind the Minister. Perhaps then there was some excuse for the Minister's action, but it was absolutely appalling to see his action on the next occasion someone had an opportunity to rise. Knowing that someone intended to rise the Minister commenced once again to close the debate.

Mr Bryce: They are called political thugs in India.

MR B. T. BURKE: I do not know whether it was the Minister attempting to be smart or whether he believes that business should be conducted in this place according to who can jump quickest to his feet and close the debate to deprive others of the opportunity to speak.

Mr Speaker, I was very pleased to see your decision to recognise the member for Stirling as you rightly should have when he rose to move this motion. Notwithstanding the fact that the member for Stirling had given notice of his intention to refer this matter to a Select Committee during his remarks to the second reading, the Minister once again fought with him for the call in an effort, presumably, to prevent him moving the motion of which he gave plenty of notice.

The performance we witnessed is a very good reason for this matter to be referred to a Select Committee. The Minister's actions were indicative of the Government's reluctance to have this matter debated. No doubt substantial reason exists for that reluctance. Its reluctance was shown by its refusal to debate the matter. Every member knows the member for Karrinyup has had a continuing interest in electoral matters over the years.

Mr Pearce: He had an interest tonight but he was sat on.

MR B. T. BURKE: As far as I know the member for Karrinyup always has contributed to debates relating to electoral matters, but tonight he has barely interjected or spoken.

Mr Bryce: He is obeying the rules.

MR B. T. BURKE: The same applies to other members except the member for Mundaring. The Opposition has a responsibility to ask the Government why it sees fit not to justify its actions. The Minister's second reading speech was very brief and gave few reasons for what the Government proposed. It was quite apologetic in its tone, and the Minister's reply to the second reading debate was even weaker. When challenged repeatedly to say why it was appropriate for various steps to be taken the Minister fell back on the old cliche that it was meant to be so. When questions were put to the Minister he refused to provide answers. His reluctance to say why certain action has been taken is reason enough this matter should be referred to a Select Committee.

It has emerged clearly that the time has long gone for Governments to detach themselves from matters of this sort. One way in which the validity of that detachment might be decided is by...
reference of this legislation to a Select Committee. It beggars belief that the Premier really enjoys going through the sort of experience through which his Government has passed this evening. It beggars belief that the Premier accepts that The West Australian along with other influential sections of the community are involving themselves in carping criticism when they take the Government to task for its action in relation to this measure.

The suggestion I am putting forward is that it is long past the time when Governments should stand at arm's length from matters such as redistributions and others which impinge so heavily on the electoral overtones of political parties.

The time may well be nigh for there not to be a one-vote-one-value system but to still have the system where the boundary of the metropolitan area is drawn up by independent people and the statutory seats in the north of the State have boundaries which are devised by the same independent people. We should allow independent people to tell us when we need a redistribution. Surely that is appropriate, as evidenced by the Government tonight; political parties and Cabinet have decided the criteria upon which we should draw the boundaries of the seats which send us here or deprive us of our membership.

I certainly accept and endorse the proposition that this matter should be sent to a Select Committee. I repeat once again that the Minister's performance tonight was particularly dismal; it was smarmy and smart and lacking in substance.

I do not doubt that the Minister was a little embarrassed when he had to introduce this Bill and say that there is no community of interest between that part of the Pilbara which is to be transferred to the Kimberley, and the existing Kimberley seat.

The Minister failed to answer questions or provide reasons for what is being done, because the Minister is ashamed of the legislation.

That indicates to the Opposition that the legislation requires further study. A Select Committee seems to be an appropriate vehicle through which that study could be provided.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [1.55 a.m.] Whilst a Select Committee would not be as open an inquiry as my colleagues and I would like, it would be the first occasion, as far as my research is able to ascertain, that there had been a public inquiry into this matter. A Select Committee would be an appropriate way to consider the matter. It could be said that the Select Committee could be biased but a minority report could be brought down so we would have available the knowledge and the thinking of the community with regard to the electoral boundaries issue.

Until we have that positive input from the community we do not know the public view and what they contemplate should be taking place in respect of boundaries in the future. We can consider only our own points of view and they have been expressed rather freely this evening.

With a Select Committee we would be able to have people give evidence before the committee under oath, and we would be able to conduct the procedures properly and formulate the ideas presented to us. We may even be able to find out from certain people just where the proposed boundaries originated and whether they were suggestions of the Minister.

If such an inquiry is not made the State will be in a mess. If an inquiry is not conducted to examine the electoral boundaries and the set parameters, then this charade which we have seen time and time again in this Parliament will continue.

We need to have some form of permanent boundary judgment from outside this Parliament and a Select Committee is the only way this can be done. At the moment all the facts, figures, and opinions on this subject are of a political nature.

Mr Pearce: It is disgusting that the Government is not even prepared to speak to the motion. Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 21
Mr Barnett Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bridge Mr McPharlin
Mr Bryce Mr Parker
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Pearce
Mr Carr Mr Stephens
Mr Cowan Mr Taylor
Mr Davies Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Gilr
Mr Grill Mr Haman
Mr Harman

(Teller)
I want to move an amendment to the motion that you do now leave the Chair. I believe I am quite within my rights to do that, and I would like your ruling on it, Sir.

The SPEAKER: The situation was that I was on my feet, and I was well advanced in the course of putting the question, and therefore, there is no opportunity at that stage for the member for Merredin or for any other member to intervene in that procedure. I put the question, I awarded the vote to the Ayes, and I will now leave the Chair so that the Committee stage can proceed.

Mr PEACE: On a point of order, Sir, I believe you should think a moment about what you have just said to the House. Frequently I have stood up to commence my speech only to have you or one of your deputies sit me down. You have then said I will put the question. I have then proceeded with my speech as I know that putting the question is a way of initiating a debate. A Minister will stand up to move a motion, you then put the question, and members rise to address the Chair. After members have contributed to the debate, the Minister will reply if necessary. You then put the question again and ask for the Ayes and the Noes.

Clearly, my observation of the situation was that the member for Merredin sought the call well before you were at the point of getting members of the House to say Aye or No, and putting the question is a lead up to asking members how they vote.

I thought you were further out of order when the member for Merredin tried to get the call before you asked for the vote. You then put the question again. The member again sought the call well before you were at the point of putting the question. If necessary, you then put the question again and members rise to address the Chair. After members have contributed to the debate, the Minister will reply if necessary. You then put the question again and ask for the Ayes and the Noes.

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair in order that the Bill may be considered in Committee.

The SPEAKER: I am putting the question. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Mr PEACE: On a point of order, Sir, I believe you should think a moment about what you have just said to the House. Frequently I have stood up to commence my speech only to have you or one of your deputies sit me down. You have then said I will put the question. I have then proceeded with my speech as I know that putting the question is a way of initiating a debate. A Minister will stand up to move a motion, you then put the question, and members rise to address the Chair. After members have contributed to the debate, the Minister will reply if necessary. You then put the question again and ask for the Ayes and the Noes.

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have put the vote, and I agree, as a vote has been taken on the voices, you may be able to rule that I cannot move an amendment. However, I would like you to tell this House how a person can possibly implement Standing Order No. 264 in the circumstances of such a person being sat down after the question has been put?

The SPEAKER: I will consider the point raised by the member for Merredin. I will leave the Chair until the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 2.08 to 2.16 a.m.

Speaker's Ruling

The SPEAKER: During the brief time I was out of the Chair I took the opportunity to have a close look at the Standing Order to which reference was made, to look at a precedent on 19 December 1930, and also to refer to the Hansard record of the passage of debate leading up to this situation.

I have come to the view that I erred in not hearing the member for Merredin. Indeed, I assumed that he wished to take a point of order, but I was not prepared to allow him to take that point of order whilst I was on my feet. I did not know and could not know it was his intention to move to amend the question before the Chair until the ringing of the bells.

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It is my intention to give the call to the member for Merredin to allow him to exercise his right under Standing Order No. 264.

Debate (as to Committee stage) Resumed

MR COWAN (Merredin) [2.18 a.m.]: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is refreshing after the debate tonight to find some honour and dignity from a member of this side of the House. My purpose in rising is that under Standing Order No. 264 I am permitted to move to amend the question before the Chair, which is “That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole for the consideration of the Bill”. I wish to delete all words after the word “That” with a view to substituting “This House will, on this day two years, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole for the consideration of the Bill”.

I move an amendment—

Delete all words after the word “That”.

Mr Davies: We support 12 months, but not two years.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

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<th>Ayes</th>
<th>Noes</th>
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<td>Mr Barnett</td>
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<td>Mr H.D. Evans</td>
<td>Mr Grayden</td>
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<td>Mr Grill</td>
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(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Hassell (Chief Secretary) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and a division taken with the following result—

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ayes</th>
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<td>Mr Blakie</td>
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<td>Mr Clarko</td>
<td>Mr Nanovich</td>
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<td>Sir Charles Court</td>
<td>Mr O'Connor</td>
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<td>Mr Coyne</td>
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<td>Mrs Craig</td>
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<td>Mr Crane</td>
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<td>Dr Daddour</td>
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<td>Mr Herzfeld</td>
<td>Mr Watt</td>
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<td>Mr P.V. Jones</td>
<td>Mr Williams</td>
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<td>Mr Laurance</td>
<td>Mr Young</td>
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<td>Mr MacKinnon</td>
<td>Mr Shalders</td>
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(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clauses thus passed.

Clause 3: Section 5 substituted—

[Tuesday, 12 May 1981]
Mr DAVIES: Clause 3 seeks to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act to provide for additional members of the Legislative Council. However the Chief Secretary might like in his twisted kind of way to interpret what I have said, I have never at any time even suggested or half suggested the Opposition was in favour of additional members of the Legislative Council. I said earlier that if the Government were hell-bent on extra members of Parliament, I could be in favour of an extra member in the Pilbara and that was taken to mean I was in favour of extra members.

We do not even need the Legislative Council, let alone additional members of the Council, although I must say the Australian Labor Party in its platform has repeated a little and is hoping we might be able to reform the Council at some time in the future. I do not believe the way to reform it is by appointing additional members to that House.

This clause provides for the Council to consist of 32 members until 21 May 1983 and 34 members thereafter. This means the addition of two members, who are to be slotted into the metropolitan area in due course, if the Government has its way and does not see fair play and justice. I cannot see any reason at all for these new members.

I have already stated publicly that the four new members will cost in excess of $300,000 a year, which means that two new members will cost in excess of $150,000 a year. That is a fairly conservative estimate; as I said earlier, it does not include the 3.6 per cent increase granted to members of Parliament as from 8 May this year. We cannot afford them, and they are not necessary. I do not believe there is any justification whatever in appointing additional members to the Legislative Council.

The Opposition opposes the suggested increase of two members in the Legislative Council.

Mr BRYCE: I ask the Minister to explain why the Government considers it necessary, worthy, or justified to increase the membership of the Legislative Council. He has indicated why the Assembly should be increased; but there has been no explanation for increasing the size of the Legislative Council.

Whilst this clause provides for an increase of two members in the Legislative Council, a subsequent clause seeks to add two members to the Assembly. That would bring to 10 the additional members which the Government has sought to add during its term of office—six in this place, and four in the Legislative Council. As these additions have occurred one by one, we have debated the merits of adding two, four, or six members at any one time. The Minister owes the Committee some explanation for this.

Mr HASSELL: In view of the undiluted abuse to which I have been subjected by the Opposition, and the member for Ascot in particular, I am entitled to question the value of entering into debate with him. When I made my response to the second reading, I directed my remarks to the members who had raised some issues. However, on this occasion I will make some response, knowing full well that it will lead to nothing more than further abuse by the member for Ascot, because that is his style.

Presently there are six provinces in the metropolitan area, and 10 in the country and remote areas of the State. It is our view that in making the adjustments it is fair to increase the metropolitan representation in the Legislative Council. That increase can be done only by way of an even number, so our option was to consider two members or none, assuming that we did not want to go to four.

It was not our intention to decrease the representation for the country and remote areas of the State. That, combined with the intention to increase the number for the metropolitan area, produced the result now before the Committee.

Mr BRYCE: In the interests of the taxpayers, there is a valid question. Members who are aware of the electoral malapportionment between the metropolitan area and the rural and agricultural areas know that it is even more exaggerated in respect of the Council than the Assembly. There are 466,000 electors in the city, and they are entitled to six provinces only. In the rural, agricultural, and statutory seats the 246,000 electors are entitled to 10 provinces.

If the Government had the slightest interest in the position of the taxpayer, it could have redressed the balance by taking one province out of the country areas. We are of the view that there ought to be one-vote-one-value; but did the Minister consider the disparity between the two electoral regions? He could transfer a province into the metropolitan area, and still not bring the disparity in the Legislative Council down to the same level as that in the Legislative Assembly.

There is no need to increase the number of members in the Legislative Council. The Minister could take a progressive step forward and reduce slightly the imbalance between the metropolitan area and the non-metropolitan areas.

Mr STEPHENS: We oppose this clause also. When the Minister favoured the Committee with
Mr JAMIESON: For much the same reason I object to this clause. Already in the metropolitan area we have perhaps five contiguous Legislative Assembly seats constituting a province, and in the country we have only three. Surely it would have been easy for the Government to amend the Act to allow the commissioners to have had four instead of three which would mean there was no necessity to increase the numbers. On the other hand, the commissioners would have increased the proportion of the metropolitan area representation in the Council. So the Government's move was unnecessary.

There is no requirement in our Constitution Act or in our Electoral Districts Act which makes it necessary for us to increase the membership of one House every time we increase the membership of the other as is the case in the Federal sphere.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I too want to oppose this clause. Whilst I accept the reasons advanced by the previous speakers for opposing this clause I believe there are other very compelling reasons to reconsider the proposition now before us.

Let us be realistic about the situation. The vast majority the Government has in the Legislative Council consists largely of members who from my observation could not work in an iron lung. As far as I am concerned there is no reason to have a duplication of the cloned people we have already on the Government side in the Legislative Council. If members are worried at all about the strain on the public purse, they have only to consider briefly the tourist business that is being run by the two members of the North Metropolitan Province. If that is not a waste of taxpayers' money I do not know what is.

As far as I can see the purpose of those two Legislative Councillors is simply to conduct guided tours through Parliament House for all and sundry, purely in pursuit of their own electoral gain.

Mr Blaikie: What has that to do with the amendment?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will relate that.

Mr Blaikie: I think you had better.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The point I am making is that if that sort of performance is what we can expect from Government members in the Legislative Council, for the life of me I cannot see why we should be installing two more Legislative Councillors to carry on in that way, to waste taxpayers' money in that fashion, and to augment the massive majority the Government already has in that place.

As far as the Minister's explanation is concerned, whilst I listened carefully perhaps I did not catch the full import of what he had to say. I understood it to be, once again, the worn, tired, weary refrain that because the Government thinks something is appropriate it is self-evidently so. That is not good enough. If the Opposition asks for reasons it does not want the Minister's opinions about the reasonableness, the rightness, or the appropriateness of certain things. We want to know in terms of numbers represented and members elected why it is appropriate we should have two more Legislative Councillors to join the
ranks of the great unemployed who already exist in that place in the Government’s interest.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 27
Mr Blaikie  Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O’Connor
Mr Coyne  Mr Old
Mr Craig  Mr Rushton
Mr Crane  Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour  Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden  Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar  Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell  Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld  Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones  Mr Williams
Mr Laurence  Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon  Mr Shalders
Mr Mensaros

Noes 20
(Teller)
Mr Barnett  Mr Harman
Mr Bertram  Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge  Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce  Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke  Mr Parker
Mr Carr  Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan  Mr Stephens
Mr Davies  Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans  Mr Wilson
Mr Grill  Mr Bateman

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4: Section 6 amended—

Mr DAVIES: We want to say only that this clause continues with the establishment of additional members in the Legislative Council. At this stage of the morning, despite the lack of interest shown by the Minister in giving explanations to questions raised and in view of the fact we might hurt him again if we say anything nasty about him, I will not oppose the clause at any great length. This clause provides for the amendment of section 6 of the Act to provide for 34 members being in their place before 21 May 1983 when there will be 17 provinces. We oppose the clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 27
Mr Blaikie  Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O’Connor
Mr Coyne  Mr Old
Mr Craig  Mr Rushton
Mr Crane  Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour  Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden  Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar  Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell  Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld  Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones  Mr Williams
Mr Laurence  Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon  Mr Shalders
Mr Mensaros

(Teller)
Noes 20
Mr Barnett  Mr Harman
Mr Bertram  Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge  Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce  Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke  Mr Parker
Mr Carr  Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan  Mr Stephens
Mr Davies  Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans  Mr Wilson
Mr Grill  Mr Bateman

Clause thus passed.

Clause 5: Section 8B amended—

Mr DAVIES: This clause amends section 8B which deals with the allocation to city members of electoral provinces in the metropolitan area. Members can imagine how upset some of these members might be if they found they were without a seat.

An amendment was made to the Act in this regard when the number of seats in the Chamber was increased in 1975. I was not a member of the Legislative Council and heaven forbid I should ever be; but I think the member for Welshpool took a very close interest in how the allocation of seats worked out on that occasion and there were some misgivings in that regard.

We were not able to satisfy all members and, therefore, this might be the time to reassess the position and see whether some special action is necessary to ensure there is a fair allocation to members.

This clause is long and it looks rather detailed, but it simply alters the title of the Act and contains a series of dates. I do not want to comment on any of those, because with one exception they are straightforward. I refer to the amendment to paragraph (b)(ii) and the date which appears there as 18 May 1981. That seems to be the date for assessing new-boundaries and electorates. This means, of course, a print-out of the rolls will occur on that date. Therefore, we will be stuck with the position that many people who had not had any warning that the rolls would be used for a particular purpose on that date would not have bothered to get on the roll. This will lead to a situation in which the rolls will get even more out of kilter than they normally are.

We have said already that in the Kimberley area only approximately 47 per cent of the eligible voters are on the roll and there would be no marked increase in the number since those figures were taken out in 1977—and I quoted them earlier tonight. We also said, at the same time in the Pilbara, only about 56.3 per cent of the eligible electors were on the roll. It would be very difficult to obtain an accurate determination
as to how the boundaries should be drawn, ignoring both the Kimberley and Pilbara electorates which we would like to do and will do for the time being—as I remind members, the Government drew the lines in those instances—because the enrolments are so badly down, it is London to a brick on that they are out in all electorates.

Before we start redistributing and drawing lines—if the last situation is repeated once, it is likely to be repeated again, because there is only a limited tolerance over and above the quota—we should look closely at this situation. If the position is going to be repeated, it is quite likely that, within a very short time, some of the new electorates will be under or over quota—probably over quota.

In my electorate of Victoria Park a number of flats were constructed recently and, according to the print-outs from the electoral office, it does not appear as though the people who live in those flats are on the roll. They are certainly living in Victoria Park and yet the Government intends to assess boundaries on false figures.

The Government should set a date, such as 18 June, as the date on which the rolls shall be taken as operative for fixing new boundaries. In the meantime it should spend some money—it will tell us it has not got any—on an advertising campaign designed to encourage people to enrol in order that we obtain as accurate a figure as is possible.

It is quite ridiculous to have the cut-off date in a week’s time when we will say “we will work on this”, because the situation is clearly false. It is no good the Government saying the electoral roll should not be inaccurate, because it is the requirement of the elector to make sure he is enrolled. We are all practical people and you, Sir, know as well as I do—I was nearly going to say as well as the Premier, but he would not know much about enrolments—and a number of other members in the Chamber would be aware that people do not bother about these matters between elections. Much to their sorrow, many people do not bother to enrol until election time and they then find the rolls have closed with only 24 hours’ notice and they have been disfranchised. I agree it is the responsibility of the people to ensure they are enrolled; but I believe also the Government has some responsibility to encourage people who are not enrolled to ensure they do so.

Mr Watt: In fairness it has done so in this State.

Mr DAVIES: In fairness it has not done so. Near election time the office placed a miserable notice in the paper. It was unattractive and miserable, and attracted no-one’s attention.

Mr Watt: It was in news bulletins and in the paper.

Mr DAVIES: The member is more lucky in the country. I do not spend much time listening to the radio unless I am in my car listening to national radio broadcasts. Perhaps the national stations do not want to broadcast such notices. I would like to determine how often these enrolment announcements are made.

The other night when we were debating another motion it was stated that apart from the miserable advertisements that appear spasmodically in newspapers the only other interest the electoral office takes in informing the community is to install itself at the showgrounds. Every time one goes past that stall—once round the showgrounds is enough—always a large number of people can be seen enrolling or checking their enrolment.

An interjection from the Minister was that it is a fairly expensive business. If I understood him correctly, the informing of people will be stopped. I thought it was the only reasonable attempt the Government has made to try to get people on the roll. As I said, as I understood the Minister, the present endeavours will cease. This clause states that 18 May will be the time at which enrolments will be determined and new boundaries drawn; I presume it is in line with these figures that the boundaries will be set and in areas such as Ballajura a 10 per cent variation will be allowed. The date set is too early. The Government should do the decent thing and tell the people there will be a redistribution.

The Government should inform the people that it is essential they obey the law and enrol properly, say, before the middle of June. That would give the commissioners plenty of time to consider the boundaries and determine what should be done. This clause is another example of the Government’s making sure it has its own way. It is another example that the Government does not care whether all people are listed on the rolls.

I suppose the Government’s philosophy or reasoning is that if they are not on the rolls they are probably Labor voters. Nothing would please the Government more than to think there was a whole swag of Labor voters not on the rolls. It is not a matter of which way people vote. It is a matter of having them listed so that electors and areas can be properly apportioned in accordance with law.

If the Government is to use rolls quite out of date because people do not bother about
enrolments then it will commence its distribution from a false point. For this reason we oppose the clause. I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 22—Delete the passage "18 May" and substitute the passage "15 June".

I believe that is a far more reasonable date. The Government could indulge in some advertising. It could tell the community at large that it wants the rolls up to date and that might inspire a few people on their own initiative to enrol, and the Government would have a far more accurate roll from which to work.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 20
Mr Barnett
Mr Bertram
Mr Bridge
Mr Bryce
Mr B. T. Burke
Mr Carr
Mr Cowan
Mr Davies
Mr H. D. Evans
Mr Grill
Mr Harman
Mr Jamieson
Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Melver
Mr Parker
Mr Pearce
Mr Stephens
Mr Taylor
Mr Wilson
Mr Bateman

Noes 27
Mr Blaikie
Mr Charles Court
Mr Coyne
Mrs Craig
Mr Crane
Dr Dadour
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Lourance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr Mensaros
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Sibson
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Trehowan
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Young
Mr Shalder

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 18 substituted—

Mr DAVIES: We oppose this clause because it provides for the addition of two members to this Chamber. That addition will cost at least $150,000 per annum, a cost which this State cannot afford—that is, if we believe the statements of the Premier.

I wonder what sort of production effort we receive from members of Parliament. As I have said, their job is to decide who forms the Government, what the policies shall be and to make the laws. However, here we are into the 19th day of this session and the Government is planning to rise. What chance is there of making laws and for any contribution to be looked at properly?

The Minister, when speaking to the last clause, did not show us the courtesy of saying why 18 May had been chosen as a date. I can only presume that his silence meant that he did not know or did not notice it before. We did not abuse him and did not raise our voices when he spoke; we did try to be reasonable, and perhaps we were too quiet.

I do not know what we can say to make the Minister justify the action the Government is taking on this occasion, especially when he did not respond to our last query. It seems that no matter what we do or say the Government is hell-bent on putting the legislation through and its members believe there is nothing wrong with that action.

I am sorry that we have not been able to convince Government members otherwise because the Western Australian newspapers also have not been in favour of additional members of Parliament.

At the risk of offending under Standing Order No. 142 I wish to repeat what I said earlier: I can find no single person, excepting of course the members of Government, who feels that we need additional members of Parliament.

There is no justification for this increase because for the work the members are required to do, apart from being social workers and messenger boys in the electorate, it does not really matter whether there are 30, 40, 50, or 55 members of Parliament as we have at the present time. There is no advantage whatsoever in having an additional two members.

If those two additional members were members of the Opposition the Government would say that they were a nuisance because they would be contributing to the debate when the Government did not wish them to do so. If they were on the Government side they would be given the word to shut up in case they may be critical of the Government's actions.

As Civil Service governs, together with the Cabinet, it is only reasonable to expect that what we have seen with this Government during its time of office will continue; and that is, that back-bench members are not required to make a contribution. Perhaps if they were to be Ministers we could expect some sort of positive contribution. However, the Government is already embarrassed by its bungling and it is trying to pass the Bill through as a matter of urgency.

During the last session the Government put through legislation to enable the two additional members to be real Ministers and not Honorary Ministers. Now, eight or nine months later the
matter is no nearer to being resolved than it was when Parliament met on 31 July last year.

I do not believe that with additional members, we will have any greater contribution than we have now. We oppose the addition of two members to this Chamber on the grounds that we do not need additional members and we cannot afford them.

Mr COWAN: We are opposed to this clause. The Minister gave no explanation whatsoever of the reason for the increase in the membership of the Legislative Council. I do not anticipate that we will receive an explanation from him now because there is not one.

Mr B. T. Burke: The usual explanation is that it is appropriate.

Mr COWAN: Or proper. During my contribution at the second reading stage I spoke of what may happen in the metropolitan area; however, the Minister gave absolutely no explanation or reason that the peripheral seats surrounding the metropolitan area, as it is now defined, should not be included in the metropolitan area. Perhaps the Shire of Toodyay and all but the Shire of Wanneroo in the seat of Moore could be declared rural and placed in the agricultural, mining and pastoral area but there is no reason that the five peripheral seats should not be included.

With the new boundaries proposed the Government intends to introduce something like 23,000 electors to the metropolitan area. If they were to include five out of the six peripheral areas about 55,000 electors would be brought into the metropolitan area. In the Bill three new seats are provided in the metropolitan area. My proposals would provide five or perhaps six. In relation to seat quotas there would be little difference between the two proposals. The result would be equitable, the only difference being that under my proposal two new metropolitan seats would not be required. This of course would be a great cost saving.

Let us examine what has happened in the metropolitan area under the present system. Something like two quotas are held in the seat of Whitford and the Government will introduce another 5,700 electors from the direct north which means that there will be more than two quotas in that north-western corridor.

I just wonder what is likely to happen to those electorates where the Swan River commences which are grossly under-quota. The electorate of Subiaco is one example. It is surrounded by five seats which are 10,000 electors under quota. The member for Subiaco has a seat which is 1,500 under quota and it seems to me that the commissioners, when they are drawing the metropolitan boundaries, are very likely to add an extra seat into the growth area in the north-west corridor, at the expense of one of the more established seats like Subiaco.

Mr B. T. Burke: My prediction is that Scarborough will become very dicey.

Mr COWAN: No, because the commissioners could not go far enough up the map.

Mr B. T. Burke: I am not saying it would disappear, but it could drop some of Woodlands which is heavily Liberal and pick up some of the southern part of Karrinyup.

Mr COWAN: It may very well do that.

An Opposition member: It could move west.

Mr COWAN: This could be of some benefit to the Liberal Party. I cannot understand why the Minister was not prepared to tell the House the reason the Government will not accept the boundary definitions of the MRPA. If the Government could accept that boundary there would be no need to amend section 18 of the principal Act.

Mr B. T. Burke: The National Country Party had the job of explaining that and the Country Party is out to lunch.

Mr COWAN: We would not need 57 members. I would be grateful if the Minister would explain the reason for two extra members to represent the metropolitan area given that a correct, fair, and above all an equitable adjustment of the metropolitan boundary would achieve exactly the same result as this Government is setting out to achieve with the addition of two members.

Mr BRYCE: I am not really surprised that the Minister did not rise in his place to offer an explanation to the member for Merredin.

Mr B. T. Burke: Don’t abuse him—you know he is touchy.

Mr BRYCE: With the default of the Minister, perhaps I could suggest an answer.

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: There is one very good reason—

Mr Pearce: Why does not the Government—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Gosnells has just come into the House and he has interjected three times in less than a minute. If he is prepared to listen to the debate he will find it is proceeding excellently.

Mr BRYCE: The only valid reason that the Minister will not accept the MRPA boundary for the metropolitan area is that it would not fit his crooked and corrupt little design. That boundary
is much more clear-cut and logical than the proposal put forward in the Bill when it comes to determining what is country and what is metropolitan area. As far as this devious act of deception is concerned, this Minister has brought to this place a crooked little line.

A member: It is not an act of deception.

Mr BRYCE: I am not talking about the Committee. The people outside this Chamber—

Mr Cowan: They see it for what it is.

Mr BRYCE: My point is that the majority of the people will not see it. Most of them will never begin to understand it, and that is the reason this Minister persists with the legislation. He knows he can put one over the people, and he thinks he can get away with it for ever and a day.

Mr B. T. Burke: Ignorance is bliss.

Mr BRYCE: The only trace of an explanation that has been offered to date by any member opposite is that the two seats have been added to improve the balance slightly.

Mr Davies: Negligibly.

Mr BRYCE: Slowly but surely we are recognising the immoral and reprehensible imbalance between the non-metropolitan area and the metropolitan area. If I am correct, 53 per cent of the Legislative Assembly seats will now be metropolitan—despite the fact that nearly 70 per cent of the population of this State resides in the city. Never before has the majority of the Legislative Assembly covered the metropolitan area. This creates a precedent; we have crossed the half-way mark.

We acknowledge that the process of electoral reform will be a long, slow drag, but if the Government pursues this particular form of logic by the turn of the century there could be 90 members in this Chamber.

Mr Davies: They would have to put in a mezzanine floor.

Mr BRYCE: God help us if we ever had a mezzanine floor like the House of Commons where even then all the members cannot find a seat. The Government is saying that it will redress the balance a little bit at a time. The Government may be forced eventually to take action it does not like by virtue of the pressure of public opinion, as in South Australia nearly a decade ago, where the Liberal Party caved in ultimately because its members were not able to hold up their heads in public. They could no longer use the 19th century arguments to sustain their position. Look at what has happened in the last few years; in 1975 we added six members, now we are to add four more. Will we see additional members in 1988, 1992, etc? The Government is adding more members so that its cherished 19th century beliefs are not threatened. We will finish up with 80, 90, or 100 members.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Chamber will be as big as Karratha under the proposal of the member for Mundaring.

Mr Young: In 1972 you voted for 81 members.

Mr BRYCE: I am talking about this Chamber only; I am not talking about abolishing the other place. There would be nothing wrong with a unicameral system such as that operating in the marvellous provinces across Canada.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is a bit sophisticated for the Minister for Health; he is too busy closing hospitals.

Mr Young: He does not forget.

Mr BRYCE: If this formula is implemented, we will have 80 to 100 members here, and 60 to 70 members in another place.

The member for Balcatta referred to the sort of work accomplished by members in another place. God help the taxpayer if that is the sort of return he can expect for his hard-earned dollar.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is mainly what they don't do.

Mr BRYCE: I join with the Leader of the Opposition in voicing my objection to this clause. I do not anticipate we will hear again from the Minister this evening. I take this opportunity to suggest to the Minister that if he wants to be taken seriously in politics, he ought to develop a thick hide rather than sulk during a Committee debate.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I wish to support the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Ascot. I am amazed at the indifference the Premier shows in the face of the delinquency of his Minister. I cannot conceive that the Premier, stickler that he is for dignified and proper parliamentary conduct, can condone the way in which his Minister has carried on. It is not as though the points raised by the Opposition and the National Party have been less than substantial; it is not as though the Minister has not been asked to provide substantial reasons for what are major changes to the law of this State; and it is not as though the Minister has not been given ample opportunity to justify the course on which he intends to steer the ship of State in this regard.

I am concerned that the Premier is losing his grip if he cannot see the disservice that is being done to this institution.
Mr Bryce: I think the Premier treats him as a favourite, and that is why he doesn't expect the same high standard.

Mr B. T. BURKE: He is like the kings of France who married their sisters and then found their toes in their socks when they pulled them off.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: The favourite son hypothesis should not apply to the abuse of the conduct of the proceedings of this Chamber. I do not think on many previous occasions—apart from the Minister for Education in some of his wilder flights of fancy—have we seen the Chamber subjected to this sort of indifference. I know the Premier is always one to reply to an argument; perhaps he does not reply repeatedly, but at least he replies to points made by the Leader of the Opposition or other lead speakers on this side. I wonder what has happened to the Premier.

Sir Charles Court: He knows you are just stalling for time. You have had all the answers you need to have and you know very well you are not really seeking information.

Mr B. T. BURKE: On this point we have had absolutely no answers at all.

Sir Charles Court: I say you have.

Mr Parker: When will we get answers as to why certain areas were excluded?

Mr B. T. BURKE: We have asked repeatedly why in a period of financial stringency we should have extra members of Parliament. The Minister has not told us, and perhaps the Premier will.

Sir Charles Court: The Minister has told you, and you know very well the reasons for it. Nothing we say or do will change your mind or attitude.

Mr B. T. BURKE: With due respect, the Minister has not told us why we should have extra members of Parliament.

Sir Charles Court: If you do not understand the purpose of the Bill by now, you never will.

Mr Parker: We understand it perfectly well.

Sir Charles Court: Well, why do you want another explanation?

Mr B. T. BURKE: We understand the purpose of the Bill; that is what concerns us, and the lack of logical explanation adds to our concern. We presumed that what we understand the Bill to be doing is actually what it is intended to do; that is, to entrench the Liberal Party in power in this State for the foreseeable future. The Minister's failure to give reasons and the Premier's compounding and amplification of the Minister's failure does nothing to relieve our concern.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps it is the Premier's farewell gift.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have no doubt the Premier is winding down his political career, and as he winds it down he is attempting to wind up the Chief Secretary. But I am afraid the Chief Secretary will never measure up to the Premier's expectations, and that is a shame because no-one likes to see a young man fail.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If I may interrupt the guffaws of members on the other side, let me say it is a pity to see that the Minister is unable to defend or explain himself.

Sir Charles Court: He has done very well. His response to the second reading was a masterpiece.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister is unable to defend himself. Apart from roundly condemning the Opposition for abusing him—heaven forbid—we have heard nothing from the Minister of any substance at all.

Sir Charles Court: His response to the second reading was a masterpiece. In view of the abuse from your side, I think he was very tolerant.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I once heard of a man who produced some $10 bills. They were termed to be masterpieces, but they were at once a forgery.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I suggest that the member relate his remarks to the clause.

Mr Pearce interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Gosnells will keep order while I am speaking.

Mr Pearce: I was only helping out.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member will be helping out elsewhere if he is not careful. The member for Balcatta will relate his remarks to clause 6.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Mr Deputy Chairman, I know you would not want me to allow interjections of the Premier to pass unnoticed. Therefore I pause briefly to deal with his interjection that the Minister's reply to the second reading debate was a masterpiece. It was a fake.

Sir Charles Court: His reply was a masterpiece, and it was more than the abuse you people heaped upon him deserved.

Mr Davies: Come on! I did not abuse him; I abused the whole of the Government.
Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Thank you, Sir. If this is a question and answer period, then I am afraid the Premier and his Minister would fail. The truth remains that the Minister has failed to answer questions, and I have never heard the Premier on previous occasions refer to somebody's second reading speech as a masterpiece. I have never yet heard the Premier use such an extravagant term.

Mr Davies: I gave the Minister two out of 10.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Whether the Minister's effort was good, bad, or indifferent—and I suspect it was bad rather than indifferent, and definitely not good—the Premier is not given to heaping that sort of lavish praise on his Ministers. However, I suppose the failed student has to be bolstered.

Let me state briefly why I think the extra seats are being created. I think they are being created to formalise the existing superiority of the Government in this Parliament. One new seat will be created south of the river in that part of the electorate of the Minister for Transport which tends to vote Labor and threatens his existence, and the other new seat will be created in the north, probably between the existing seat of Karrinyup and the existing seat of Whitford. I am not surprised that the member for Whitford has yet to awake to the dangers the measure poses to him. Earlier I heard someone refer to him as "Thick Mick" but I am afraid he needs to be awakened to the dangers involved.

I can see, with the vast influence that the member for Whitford has within the Liberal Party, that the northernmost seat which is the least likely to be Liberal—the one which will be closest to the nuclear power station—will be the one bestowed quickly upon the member for Whitford. He will cavort and frolic and be thankful, and be very short-lived in this place. I am sure that in the northern suburbs the Labor Party will win the seat that will be created and contested by the member for Whitford.

It is time we started to talk about quality of representation.

Mr Parker: It is hardly appropriate to mention that in the same breath as you mention the member for Whitford.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If we are going to have extra members of Parliament we should have members of some sort of quality. Earlier tonight we had the member for Mundaring creating a mass exodus from the city to Karratha. He had 700 people leaving the metropolitan area each day and making their home in Karratha; and as those extravagant claims were being made the member for Darling Range slept on. It is an important point. Throughout this entire debate we have been shown the sort of quality we do not want repeated or cloned in the people sent here as a result of the creation of these extra seats.

Mr Nanovich: Why don't you repeat what you said before?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I find the member for Whitford a large and amiable fellow.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The public have a right to expect some sort of performance from their members of Parliament.

Mr Sibson: You are not sleeping too well tonight.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I suppose quality of performance extends to putting banana peels in differentials. In this debate tonight we have seen a good example of why members of the public have such a low regard for members of Parliament. The silence from the Government back benches has been deplorable. I sympathise with people like the member for Karrinyup who previously has put forward views which, although I disagree with them, he at least has put forward consistently and in a passably coherent fashion. What has happened to him tonight? Are we to have in this place two more sleeping beauties to join the member for Darling Range?

Mr Nanovich: And the member for Maylands.

Mr Nanovich: He is not responsible for achieving a constitutional majority or any sort of majority, for that matter.

Mr O'Connor: Are you making excuses for the member for Perth not being here?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The member for Perth is representing the Leader of the Opposition. In any case, it is not in keeping with the recently good-natured behaviour of the Deputy Premier to visit the sins of one brother upon another.

Mr Nanovich: He is not responsible for achieving a constitutional majority.
and a failure on the part of the Premier to call his Minister to book for that lack of explanation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! Since I have been in the Chair that is the third occasion on which the member has used those words.

Mr Bryce: He was summing up.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I draw his attention to Standing Order No. 142, and seek his co-operation.

Mr B. T. BURKE: No explanation has been forthcoming and the Premier not only has failed to call his Minister—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have asked the member to take heed of Standing Order No. 142.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That failure to explain the situation has left this Chamber without any reason to support this clause. The lack of performance by Government members has engendered in the public a very poor view of members of Parliament generally. At this time of financial stringency, we should not be seeking to swell the numbers of members of Parliament.

Mr PEARCE: I am not as good-natured as some of my colleagues: I see very sinister reasons for these additional two members. It must be pointed out the Government requires an absolute majority for the passage of this legislation. It is no secret there are a number of nervous Nellies on the Government benches when it comes to redistributions. Is the member for Bunbury operating a puppet over there?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I suggest the member for Gosnells address the Chair.

Mr PEARCE: It is very difficult to speak when the member for Bunbury sits there with an inane grin, manipulating his fingers in that fashion.

Point of Order

Mr B. T. BURKE: My point of order is that it is not orderly for the member for Bunbury to make obscene gestures with his fingers. He made them all the way through my speech.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Mr Deputy Chairman, are you ruling it is orderly—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I said there was no point of order.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I seek your leave—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the member for Balcatta to indicate under which Standing Order his point of order is taken?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Under the Standing Order which says it is unparliamentary—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! Which Standing Order is that?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will consult the Standing Orders and take the point of order at the appropriate time.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. I call the member for Gosnells.

Committee Resumed

Mr PEARCE: As far as I know, the member for Mt. Marshall did not make his unilateral declaration of independence before this evening, so the Government would have known it required every vote of its back-bench members to achieve a constitutional majority of 28 votes. The only way to satisfy the nervous Nellies was to make it clear no country seats would disappear in the redistribution and also the position of the member for Subiaco and others in the inner suburban area would be shored up. The only way the Government back bench could be sold the story that no-one would be affected by redistribution to the extent of having their seats abolished and for the country seats to stay much as they are in terms of area in order to maintain the 2:1 balance and also to shore up the position of those Government back-bench members whose electorates were under quota, was to add additional members of Parliament.

Mr Parker: They were sold a pup.

Mr PEARCE: They were indeed sold a pup, and I think the member for Mt. Marshall will be leading the band when the maps come out. None of these members will have any further say once this Bill leaves the Parliament and the maps are drawn. When they find the maps are not quite what they expected, or were told, they will have no chance to withdraw on that point.

The additional two politicians are being pushed on us directly because the Government could not ensure the vote of its own members affected by this legislation to the extent of achieving a constitutional majority unless it was able to protect their position. That seems to me to be a very unfair basis upon which to enlarge a Parliament.

There is a strange side effect to this issue. Members of Parliament will appreciate that the last salary determination before the recent one was a flow-on from the national wage case in
February. Members of Parliament were not paid until 1 April because the Government approached the salaries tribunal and told it there was no money in the State Budget to pay even a national wage case decision for existing members of Parliament. The tribunal rather stupidly bought that argument and the increase was deferred for three months.

However, the latest increase, applicable from 8 May, has gone straight through without the suggestion there is no money in the coffers to pay for it.

Sir Charles Court: You do not have to take it. I can show you a simple procedure whereby the Commissioner of Taxation will not tax you on it.

Mr PEARCE: The whole business of inability to pay has disappeared. Suddenly, we are able to pay not only the existing 55 members of the Legislative Assembly and 32 members of the Legislative Council, but also four new members.

As a corollary to that, because the Government would look stupid if it said to the tribunal, "Defer the 3.6 per cent increase for another three months because the money is not in the coffers to pay the current members", it would appear to be insincere if it persisted with four more members.

We need four more politicians in this State like we need a hole in the head. Australia is over-governed in terms of the members of Parliament in the Federal and State legislatures. Sometimes the increases in members attract a very good type of member. We are very fortunate that the last set of increases in the Assembly secured the member for Dianella and myself; but on the other hand, it would have to be said that there were offset disadvantages on the other side. I could point to those offsetting disadvantages, but everybody knows who they are.

Mr Sodeman: You have just given the best argument against the increases.

Mr PEARCE: Well, the member for Pilbara can vote with us.

Mr Sodeman: I did not say it was convincing. I said it was the best.

Mr PEARCE: The Government cannot afford to pay all of its nurses. It is intending to sack members of the Public Service to make cutbacks. The sole job creation scheme that this Government has been able to come up with is to create jobs for four new members of the Parliament. That is not the sort of thing with which we should involve ourselves.

We are not seeking these extra members so we have equity in distribution. It has a lot to do with the Government's inability to obtain 28 votes here. The Government had to guarantee to its 28 members in this Chamber that it would protect their seats.

Point of Order

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, you will recall that, at the commencement of the comments by the member for Gosnells, the member for Bunbury made some rather rude physical gestures across the Chamber, with his fingers and his hand. When the member for Balcatta challenged, quite rightly, the dignity and the appropriateness of those actions by the member for Bunbury, you insisted that the member for Balcatta draw your attention to the appropriate Standing Order.

That practice by the member for Bunbury did not cease at that point. Rather than interrupting the member for Gosnells, I decided to wait until he had concluded his remarks, to draw your attention to that gesture.

I direct your attention to Standing Order No. 74 which provides—

When the conduct of a Member is of such a grossly disorderly nature that the procedure provided in Standing Order 71 would be inadequate to ensure the urgent protection of the dignity of the House, the Speaker or the Chairman shall order the Member to withdraw immediately from the Chamber and the Sergeant-at-Arms shall act on such orders as he receives from the Chair. When the Member has withdrawn, he shall forthwith be named by the Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, and the proceedings shall then be as provided in Standing Orders 71 and 72...

Those Standing Orders relate to the suspension of a member.

I request you to rule that the undignified gestures by the member for Bunbury were most inappropriate. They threatened the dignity of this Chamber. Under the terms of that Standing Order, it is very dispiriting that this sort of thing should occur. This is the second occasion when it has been done by members opposite. The first one occurred when the now Honorary Minister for Housing did a similar thing. We are wondering what it is in the membership of the Liberal Party that causes people to communicate in this way.

I draw your attention to the existence of that specific Standing Order; and I call upon you to take the appropriate action under the Standing Order, or at least to issue a warning to the member for Bunbury.
Mr B. T. BURKE: On the same point of order, if Standing Order No. 74 is insufficient—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Before the member continues, it might be appropriate to answer the member for Ascot. My answer may be sufficient for the member for Balcatta, unless the member for Balcatta wishes to proceed with a further point of order.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I shall simply draw your attention to Standing Order No. 70, which provides—

If any member has—

(b) been guilty of disorderly conduct.

Then it proceeds to outline what steps may be taken. My point of order is related to that raised by the member for Ascot. However, in augmenting that point of order, I would say that the use of the “fingers up” sign, as the member for Bunbury did—

Mr Nanovich: That is not true. He was not doing that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: He was aiming the gesture at me. That is what it appeared to be. Certainly it is something that should not be countenanced.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In reply to the points of order raised by the member for Ascot and the member for Balcatta—

Mr Sodeman: They are laughing. They are not serious at all.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member for Pilbara will keep order.

Mr Bryce: That is not true at all.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The general nature of the Standing Orders between Nos. 70 and 75, on my interpretation, relates to the suspension of a member from the service of the House. However, I take the point outlined by the member for Balcatta that other objections could be taken also.

I remind both members that an earlier point was taken by the member for Gosnells, who indicated that the member for Bunbury had offended in some way by gesticulation. I said to the member for Gosnells at that stage that I was not aware of the gesticulation, but I suggested that he continue with his remarks, and that I would take action in respect of the member for Bunbury, if necessary, when I saw what he was doing.

Mr B. T. Burke: Check Hansard.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest to members that this is a fairly difficult situation. Words can be taken down; but whether a member gesticulates in one way or another that is offensive to another member is an extremely difficult circumstance. In fairness to the Chair, there would have to be some responsibility for the Chair to see the offence actually occurring. The situation is different from the use of a word, which can be taken down and recorded by Hansard. As yet, we do not have video replays in Parliament House.

I accept the point of order raised; but under the circumstances I rule that I can take no action at this stage.

Committee Resumed

Clause put and a division called for.

Bells rung and the Committee divided.

Remarks during Division

Mr Pearce: The member for Bunbury is at it again.

Mr Parker: Are you watching him, Mr Deputy Chairman?

Mr Bryce: Mr Deputy Chairman, the member for Bunbury is disgusting.

Mr Pearce: The Clerks should be told not to take their eyes off him.

Mr B. T. Burke: It might be funny; but it is ridiculous, carrying on like that.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 26

Mr Clarko Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne Mr Old
Mrs Craig Mr Rushton
Mr Crane Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Crowar Mr Trehowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Laurance Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 20

Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr Melver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan Mr Stephens
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Clause thus passed.
Clause 7: Section 19 substituted—

Mr DAVIES: This clause indicates the State shall be divided into 57 electoral districts—55 until December 1982 and 57 after that. I suppose this indicates the Premier is not thinking of having an election before 31 December 1982. The clause is associated with our opposition to the additional members of Parliament and so we most certainly oppose it.

Mr COWAN: If I were a member of the Government I would be very wary of having a date fixed in this legislation before it came into being. I can recall in 1976 when the Government of the day—this Government—wanted to have an election before the end of December in order to capitalise on some industrial unrest taking place in this State, which as most people would realise is a most favourable situation for Governments of this party.

I remind the Minister that he may be doing exactly what happened then. At the time there was a proposition before the Government parties seeking to amend the Electoral Districts Act in order to allow the election to take place. Naturally enough the National Country Party Ministers accepted this idea, but the party’s back-benchers were not prepared to go along with it. In this instance I am surprised the Minister has written a date into the Bill.

Mr Parker: I think you will find he has covered himself.

Mr COWAN: That may be the case. The Minister decided he would not give any indication to the House explaining why the Legislative Assembly should consist of 57 members. Perhaps he can explain why the State should be divided into 57 electoral districts. There is no reason for this and the Minister knows it. Perhaps he could be man enough to stand and say so.

Mr HASSELL: I believe members are misreading the clause. The clause provides that the State shall be divided into 55 electoral districts until the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly or—there is a separate proposition—until the expiry thereof by the effluxion of time, first occurring after 31 December 1982. That is my understanding of the correct interpretation of this clause. It does not have any effect in relation to what the member for Merredin referred to as calling for an early election.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes 26</th>
<th>Noes 20</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Clarko</td>
<td>Mr Nanovich</td>
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<td>Mr Laurance</td>
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<td>Mr Mackinnon</td>
<td>Mr Shalders</td>
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(Teller)

Mr DAVIES: I move—

That the Deputy Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes 18</th>
<th>Noes 28</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Barnett</td>
<td>Mr Harman</td>
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<td>Mr Bertram</td>
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<td>Mr H. D. Evans</td>
<td>Mr Wilson</td>
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<td>Mr Grill</td>
<td>Mr Bateman</td>
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(Teller)

Clause thus passed.

Progress

Mr DAVIES: I move—

That the Deputy Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes 35</th>
<th>Noes 29</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Clarko</td>
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<td>Mr Young</td>
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<td>Mr Mackinnon</td>
<td>Mr Shalders</td>
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</table>

(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.
Committee Resumed

Clause 8: Section 47 amended—

Mr DAVIES: I have noticed at times when we have been opposed violently to a Bill, the Government seems to get great joy from saying “You could not have been really opposed to it, because you did not oppose a particular clause.” We do not want to disappoint the Government or give it an opportunity to say that in this case. We try to be reasonable, but it is difficult at times. Therefore, on a matter as important as this, we must let the Government know we oppose every clause, including this one.

Mr BRYCE: Clause 8 suggests we ought to delete certain words from the legislation and substitute the following—


If ever anything ought to be renamed and reworded, it is this particular proposition. It ought to be called the “Acts Amendment Gerrymander (Electoral Provinces and Districts) Act 1981.” If ever a deliberate gerrymander has been brought to the Parliament, this is it.

When we examine the line which has been drawn in the northern parts of the State there is no doubt in anybody’s mind that this piece of legislation constitutes a gerrymander. The forefathers of this particular Government seemed to specialise in malapportionment. They did not go in for as many weird and wonderful lines on maps that could be regarded as classical gerrymanders, but this particular piece of legislation does.

Nobody could study that map of Western Australia and deny that a deliberate attempt has been made to gerrymander the boundaries of those statutory seats in the northern and remote parts of Western Australia.

While the member for Gascoyne sits here comfortable in the knowledge that he represents only 4,000 electors, his next-door neighbour sits here in the knowledge that he represents fewer than 2,000 electors. They know their Ministers will protect them, because on this occasion they have drawn this crooked little line in the northern parts of the State to take a great chunk of the seat of Pilbara and, defying all rhyme and reason, having severed the umbilical cord between the inland mining towns and the ports, they have placed them, quite out of character and unnaturally, in the electorate of Kimberley.

Never in the history of the distribution of electoral boundaries in Australia has there been such a deliberate and wilful endeavour to gerrymander, as opposed to constructing malapportionment upon malapportionment.

I suggest this Bill should have been called the “Acts Amendment Gerrymander (Electoral Provinces and Districts) Act”.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I take the opportunity to call upon the Chief Secretary to explain a little more clearly the reasoning that he tried to present when speaking on the distribution which would take place after the Kimberley had been severed. His only explanation was “What are you complaining about?”

With a total of 12,000 electors in the Kimberley, we would have the same figure as was put forward previously in a proposition from this side of the House.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I draw the attention to the member to the clause under discussion. Members have already had a rather extensive degree of latitude in this regard. From my reading, clause 8 amends the figure “1975” and, among other words, substitutes the figure “1981”. There has been some debate already on other previous provisions of the clauses relating to apportionments.

Therefore, I seek the support of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, bearing in mind his experience as a member of Parliament, to assist the progress of the House so that I do not have to remind him again of Standing Order No. 142.

Mr H. D. EVANS: You, Sir, can be assured of my co-operation, but the operative word “gerrymander” was introduced by my colleague, the member for Ascot, and that is why it seems so appropriate at this time, particularly in view of the fact that—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that although the member for Ascot had extreme latitude, that is not going to continue.

Mr H. D. EVANS: As this matter was raised, I wanted to make several references to the conduct of the Chief Secretary which has been consistent throughout the evening. There is no question that the pride and sense of responsibility—

Mr Harman: He is not even in his own seat.

Mr O’Connor: He is in the Chamber.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is attempting to make a very difficult point and I ask members to co-operate and give him the opportunity to put his argument.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The conduct of the Chief Secretary, when compared with that of other Ministers up till recently, leaves much to be
desired. Little attempt has been made tonight by the Chief Secretary to clear up the issues which have been raised.

At the risk of being declared out of order, I shall illustrate some of the aspects of the behaviour of the Chief Secretary so that members will understand the full perspective of the attitude about which I complain.

I have made a careful note of the occasions on which the Chief Secretary refused to comment on the precise reason for redrawing the metropolitan boundaries. He refused also to give a valid explanation for the creation of four new members of Parliament. The Chief Secretary gave a very distorted version of the boundary lines which amount to a gross gerrymander of the Kimberley area.

The conduct of the Chief Secretary has been evident in relation to every clause, including this one. He has certainly broken with the tradition and sense of responsibility of the Ministry in this place. To a large extent also, the attitude of the Chief Secretary, through half explanations and twisted logic, has debased not only the institution of Parliament, but also his Government.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I wish to support the sentiments expressed by the member for Ascot and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If ever anything was warranted it was their descriptions of what is being done tonight. No matter how we try to disguise the actions of this Government behind innocuous sounding titles referring to its action, what cannot be denied is that in the true meaning of the word the Government is involving itself in a massive gerrymander, firstly, in respect of the boundaries of metropolitan electorates.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I trust the member for Balcatta was in the Chamber when I raised a point with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I ask the member for Balcatta to relate his remarks specifically to clause 8 and not to subject matters which have been gone over ad nauseam. Clause 8 proposes to change the figure “1975” and others to “1981”. I do not want to resort to Standing Order No. 182, and I ask for the co-operation of the member.

Mr B. T. BURKE: What I am trying to point out to the Committee with your forbearance is that the change to which you have just alluded in regard to those dates involves a massive gerrymander by the Government. I am attempting to put before the Committee that what is being done should not be disguised by an innocuous change. The Committee has a responsibility to itself and to the public to define what the clause is really about.

I am attempting to make the point that it is all very well to say because a change is minor in literal terms it is minor in all ways. In fact, this clause is a substantial change.

What I am saying and what the member for Ascot and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition before him, and later the member for Ascot restated, is that the Committee has a clear responsibility to show what is happening. What we on this side of the Chamber say is that this change in the clause camouflages what is a massive gerrymander of the electoral boundaries of this State.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Clarko Mr Nanovich
Mr Sir Charles Court Mr O’Connor
Mr Coyne Mr Old
Mrs Craig Mr Rushton
Mr Crane Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar Mr Trehowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Laurance Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 20

Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McLver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan Mr Stephens
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Clause thus passed.

Clause 9: Section 47A substituted—

Mr B. T. BURKE: Clause 9 is a rather long and complex one. I do not want to weary the Committee at this late hour so I will simply ask the Minister if he will take the trouble, notwithstanding the note in the column of the Bill, to explain to the Committee exactly what this clause means and what its effect will be.

Mr HASSELL: An additional province will be created and the purpose of the clause is to ensure that two members are elected to it. Initially one of them will sit for three years which will ensure the province is in sequence with other provinces. On the occasion of the next election two members will be elected to the new province; one will be elected for three years and one for six.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister indicated that this clause is related to the provision of two additional
members of the Legislative Council. Having indicated already in clause 3 that we on this side of the Chamber oppose the principal decision to increase the size of the Council by two members, I indicate that we certainly oppose this clause which now outlines the mechanism by which those additional members will be elected.

Mr B. T. Burke: Do I read that right? Will we have one member for nine years?

Mr BRYCE: No, that is clause 9.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26
Mr Blaikie Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne Mr Old
Mrs Craig Mr Rushton
Mr Crane Mr Sibson
Dr Dadour Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Laurance Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 20
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr Melver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan Mr Stephens
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Baiteman

(Teller)

Clause thus passed.

Clause 11: Section 3 amended—

Mr COWAN: I believe that I may be lucky third time around. Once again, with this clause we have a switch over to the Electoral Districts Act. This clause attempts to amend section 3 of the Act by bringing in 57 electoral districts.

In his second reading speech, the Minister talked about the relative level of representation between the metropolitan area and the other areas in this State. He talked about the actual representation in the country and remote areas of the State and said there would be no diminution of the representation for that area because there would be two extra seats in the metropolitan area. I have explained to the Minister, and I know he understands, that he could have done exactly the same thing with 55 seats if he had been prepared to redraw the boundary of the metropolitan area.

This is the third time I have asked the Minister this question: Would he please explain to the House why the Government did not consider doing as I have said?

Mr BRYCE: I rise to put the same question to the Minister. I am tempted to speak to the Minister in the same way as the member for Morley did in respect of the Minister's behaviour. The Minister did himself no good whatsoever a few weeks ago; he found it was most inadvisable to sit in his seat and refuse to answer questions at question time. I issue the invitation to him again to provide the Committee with an answer; preferably a straightforward answer to a straightforward question which has been asked by the member for Merredin.

Mr HASSELL: I cannot but think that the questions are not really serious because the issue has been explained.

Mr Cowan: It has not.

Mr HASSELL: However, I will repeat it for the benefit of the member for Merredin, bearing in mind that the member for Merredin and his colleagues wish to maintain the system of representation of the country. In a way that is basically in line with the principles we espouse.

Mr Cowan: It is not.
Mr HASSELL: However the member for Ascot and his colleagues wish the policy and system to be replaced with a one-vote-one-value system. It is obvious that our determination was not agreed to by those members I mentioned, but our determination was that the size of the metropolitan area should be increased geographically and in terms of the number of electors to be included in the metropolitan area. A number of options were available and we believe the options which we have put forward to be reasonable at this time. The option adopted was to increase the northern, south, and south-eastern areas and to increase in a small way the north-east area.

It could be argued that other seats could be added. Perhaps the hour is too late to think about it through as clearly as might otherwise be the case. I believe the proposition of the member for Merredin would run contrary to what we said we would do which was to maintain the present representation of people in country and remote areas. He said we could add these other seats without affecting the country representation. I do not see that as an accurate statement of the position.

Mr COWAN: For the benefit of the Minister and any other member who espouses the same philosophy as he, there is no question about the status of seats such as Mundaring, Kalamunda, Darling Range, Rockingham, or the Wanneroo portion of Moore. If the Minister is using the argument that the Government is going to transfer those seats out of the country area, that is fallacious; they are not truly country seats. All the Minister and Government have to do is to recognise that they are not country seats.

It is a rather rare situation that our capital city happens to have some natural boundaries which divide the metropolitan area from the country. Because a seat happens to be designated "country" but it is in the metropolitan area, the Minister cannot sustain the argument and say that we are going to reduce country representation. If he does that publicly, he will be a laughing stock. He knows that, so why should he try to pull that trick in this Parliament? It just does not work.

The Minister is the spokesman for the Government, and if he were man enough he would admit that the reason the Government proposes to introduce these seats into the metropolitan area is that otherwise the Government would lose no fewer than two seats.

To bolster up or to protect all the peripheral metropolitan seats, the Government chose to add two extra seats. Despite the comments of the member for Balcatta, the Government has a strong chance of being able to win the two seats provided for in this clause. If that is not blatant manipulation of electoral boundaries, I do not know what is. The 1983 election will not be won or lost on issues; it will be won or lost on electoral boundaries. For that reason the Government stands guilty of a gerrymander.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26
Mr Blaikie Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Conner
Mr Coyne Mr Old
Mrs Craig Mr Rushton
Mr Crane Mr Sibson
Dr Dedour Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar Mr Trehowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Williams
Mr Laurance Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders

Teller

Noes 20
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr Melver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr Carr Mr Pearce
Mr Cowan Mr Stephens
Mr Davies Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Wilson
Mr Grill Mr Bateman

Clause thus passed.

Clause 12: Section 4 amended——

Mr DAVIES: We want to complain particularly about the metropolitan boundaries. I make another request to the Minister to confide in his colleagues and tell us who drew up the boundaries, and the reason for them. It is a simple question; I am sure he knows the answer and I am sure he can give us the rationale. I know it would not be possible to drive around all the boundaries; from my reading of the map, sometimes the boundaries do not follow a road. However, some of the areas are well known to us. For instance, I am sure the member for Whitford could give us the details of the extension of the northern boundary which will have such a dramatic effect on the Moore electorate, and, as I said, a domino effect on other electorates. Probably it will cause the abolition of the electorate of Mt. Marshall or the electorate of Merredin, or both.

We have some knowledge of some of the areas, and particularly the part of Armadale which the Government wishes to include in the metropolitan
area. From the Government's point of view, this is the electorally adverse part of Armadale. Time and time again we have complained that the metropolitan boundary runs down the main street of Armadale. As the Government is well aware of our complaints, we have thought it would make a determined effort to put the boundary behind the back of the existing housing development so that there would be some community of interest established. After all, if we read from page 141 of our publication Acts, Etc., Relating to the Parliament of Western Australia, with particular reference to the Electoral Districts Act, we find that the commissioners are charged, when deciding boundaries, to give due consideration to community of interest, means of communication, distances from the capital, physical features, and the existing boundaries of districts.

If the commissioners are required to do that when drawing up the individual 55—soon to be 57—boundaries, then the Government also, when deciding on the area to be the metropolitan zone, must pay attention to those four simple little requirements. However, as the Government seems to have ignored them on other occasions, it has ignored them now.

Looking at the map, I am conscious of the fact that as one travels along Albany Highway from Gosnells to Armadale, one side of the road is metropolitan and the other side is country. Probably in some places there are more houses on the country side of the road than there are on the metropolitan side of the road. One would feel that at least the development on either side of Albany Highway would provide a community of interest—the community is not divided by the road. Probably residents from both sides attend the same schools and churches and use the same recreational facilities.

Therefore, I would like to know why at this stage. It is not only a matter of putting the boundary of an electorate down the main highway, but also a matter of weighting the vote on the country side of the highway so that it equals twice the vote on the other side. There is no rhyme or reason in that. I am beginning to despair that we will ever get a proper explanation from the Minister. Someone must draw the boundaries. Who is it? It is as simple as that.

Does the Minister receive assistance from the Electoral Department? Is it done in the Cabinet room? Is it done by a Government back-bench committee or is it done by a Cabinet subcommittee? Or is it done by the powers-that-be in the Liberal Party? Perhaps the boundaries are drawn up in Colin Street? As far as I can see the boundaries have been drawn to advantage the Liberal Party, and the present Government.

I want to know whether, when the boundary for the metropolitan zone was drawn up, the full requirements that the commissioners are charged to take into consideration were considered by those concerned. Secondly, who were the architects of the metropolitan zone and what is the rationale behind the boundaries? If I could get answers to those questions—they need not necessarily be acceptable—I might be prepared to let the rest of the Bill go through uncontested.

Mr BRYCE: I oppose clause 12 on some fundamental grounds. The line of demarcation between metropolitan dwellers and country dwellers in this State is the essence of the malapportionment which is being written into the Electoral Districts Act in Western Australia. We might well argue long and loud about the artificiality of the crooked lines drawn around the metropolitan area—the lines which have been the subject of some considerable squabble between members of the Government forces in respect of who will get what in the carve up, where it starts and where it finishes.

Quite apart from the argument about the morality of the line, the reason that I basically object to the clause is that a line is drawn at all. There should be no line in 1981. There is no justification to draw that line on the map before the commissioners start their work. I suggest to the House that if we had constituencies based on one-vote-one-value with equal numbers of constituents, that infamous line would be erased from the map once and for all.

Therefore I object to this clause on a fundamental basis, because this is the fundamental clause which prescribes that some citizens of Western Australia will be regarded as first-class citizens and others will be regarded as second or third-class citizens. This is the clause which does all the damage in that sense.

South Australia has the same problems of distance and vastness, but it has one-vote-one-value in the 1980s. I suggest that Western Australia could have that system also. I have never heard a suggestion from Premier Tonkin of South Australia that the Liberal Government of that State intends to turn back the clock and reintroduce the "Gerrymander" or the "Gerrymander" of the Liberal Party. If it is acceptable throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, in terms of Federal constituencies, for us to place the people of agricultural areas, the metropolitan area, and the pastoral and mining areas into constituencies
which have as near as possible equal numbers of electors, then it is time we did the same in respect of the State Electoral Districts Act. Not one member of the Government could produce tangible evidence in this Chamber which would demonstrate that the Federal Government discriminates in favour of the metropolitan area as a result of the way the boundaries are drawn under the Federal Act.

Nobody can point to the availability of post offices and even telephone communication systems. I am aware of the differences, but just look at the enormous amount of money which is spent on providing and upgrading facilities for communication in rural areas by the Federal Government, be it Liberal or Labor. The argument simply does not hold water that if we do not have this 19th century system of weighting rural votes we will not get fair and equitable treatment of people in country areas. The Federal Government's track record—both Liberal and Labor—over the last 50 years demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that is so.

That is the reason I oppose this clause, because it provides for this artificial, unreal, pretending line of demarcation. How absurd it is for the member for Mundaring to accept the electorate allowance of a country member and to pretend his constituents are essentially country people. He may have some country people in the more remote parts of his very small electorate, but it is absurd for him to suggest that the people of Darlington are country dwellers.

Mr Herzfeld: Darlington is not in Mundaring.

Mr BRYCE: Well, it was in the Mundaring electorate before the last little adjustment of boundaries.

Mr Herzfeld: Just get your facts straight.

Mr B. T. Burke: We have, don't worry about us.

Mr BRYCE: I transfer my argument to what is left of the member's constituency. Does the member argue that the people in the metropolitan parts of his small electorate regard themselves as country people? The Speaker of this Chamber represents the suburbs of Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda, and Darlington. How could he suggest in all seriousness that people who work in the city, and who relate to the city in every conceivable way and are actually miles closer to the GPO than are the people of Wanneroo or Rockingham, could be logically or reasonably defined as country dwellers?

Members should try calling them country people, and see how they get on. They should try a bit of door-knocking in Kalamunda and suggest to these people they are country people, and see what their reaction is. Members opposite would then have to explain to these people how, for the sake of expediency and more than a modicum of dishonesty as far as the electoral laws of this State are concerned, the Liberal Party had decided that in fact, they were country people. There is no rhyme or reason apart from the fact it is a deliberate, wilful distortion of the electoral boundary system.

This Minister knows he must bear the brunt and the responsibility for this fundamentally crooked, deliberately corrupt decision to pretend that people who live in Kalamunda and Gooseberry Hill are not city dwellers, whilst the people of Rockingham are. He has not lifted his finger in this debate or made one attempt to demonstrate there is a logical reason that he and his colleagues have adopted this procedure. He cannot, because what it amounts to is a simple, straightforward, wilful deception and distortion, and a rorting of our electoral system. That is the only explanation the Minister could make. He has not found the gumption to stand in his place and say "Yes, that is the reason for it: It is simply because we wish to guarantee our chances of re-election at the next general election."

Let us once again take the position of the Minister for Transport. Presumably when this legislation is passed an additional seat will be created somewhere near the territory he represents. I wonder if he is going to go out to Armadale in the near future and tell the people he is no longer impressed with them and that he intends to run for cover behind this crooked line. I wonder how frank he is going to be.

I wonder if there is any doubt in the minds of members of this Committee which particular Legislative Assembly seat this Minister will opt to seek Liberal Party endorsement for. Will it be the one inside that particular line, involving the many thousands of people of Armadale with whom he allegedly has a great affinity, or will he seek to go outside that line? We must bear in mind his constituency originally was considerably closer to the GPO. He would have represented a significant proportion of those people during the course of his career. I wonder which group of people he will seek to represent in the future. I wonder whether there is any doubt he will flee to the other side of that line of demarcation between the city and the country and pretend once again he is, after all, a country member.

How can this Minister, who has represented the Armadale community for so long, realistically describe himself as a country member? In fact, the Minister had his upbringing in local...
government circles in Armadale. Armadale has now grown; it is in the metropolitan area and now the Minister seeks to turn his back on the people of Armadale, all because of a crooked line drawn by some crooked people for a crooked purpose; that crooked purpose is to seek to maintain this Government in office. It will probably be a long time before any of us witnesses anything which is as deliberately crooked as this manoeuvre.

I have a great deal of pleasure in denouncing the motives of the people who have drawn that crooked line; in denouncing the actions of the Minister in bringing this legislation to the Parliament; and, in denouncing the existence of clause 12, which deliberately seeks to create two classes of citizens in Western Australia.

Mr HASSELL: The member for Ascot can go through his routine as many times as he likes but he will not get over the fact that at the bottom of this discussion there is a difference in the philosophical approach of the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Davies: Who drew the line?

Mr HASSELL: I will deal with members' queries. I suggest that the member for Ascot should not attempt to clothe his philosophical stance in self righteous concepts of idealism and attempt to clothe our approach as "corrupt" and all the other things he calls it, because for him to do so is rhetoric; however, it is not rhetoric based on any reasonable approach to the matter.

The member for Ascot and his colleagues do not believe the people of the country areas and remote areas should have more representation in this Parliament than the people of the city areas. If we have that base, it does not matter where the line is drawn because members opposite do not believe in a line; the simple fact of the matter is that they would condemn any line.

This Government believes in a line because we believe the distances, areas, and communities of this State deserve a system of representation which gives to the country and the remote areas a higher level of representation than to the city. The National Party also believes in that system but not, apparently, in the particular proposal which has been put forward.

The Leader of the Opposition asked who drew the line. He knows very well that the lines are drawn as a decision of the Government, and presented to the Parliament in this legislation.

Mr Davies: But who sits down and decides where they will be?

Mr HASSELL: The Leader of the Opposition well knows that in our party system of Government, that decision is made by the Cabinet, having considered the issues involved. The Government then presents the legislation to the Parliament. The Leader of the Opposition really is pursuing what he knows to be a false tack on the matter because it still comes back to the point that it does not matter where the line is drawn; it will not satisfy the Opposition because the Opposition has an ideological commitment to what it calls "one-vote-one-value".

Mr B. T. Burke: There are degrees to that, surely.

Mr HASSELL: Indeed there are, and one of the issues in relation to degree is the fact we have four more members in the metropolitan area, something against which the honourable member has been arguing all night.

Mr PEARCE: I agree with the Minister that it does not matter where the line is drawn, it will not be acceptable to us. As the Minister points out, our commitment to one-vote-one-value means not drawing lines between people, or discriminating against people in regard to the amount of say they have as to who will form the Government. In essence, the Liberal philosophy is to discriminate in that way. Because somebody lives in the country, why should he have a greater say in who forms the Government than somebody who lives in the city? We reject that, because we are in favour of equality and democracy.

We are on the side of the United Nations Charter. We are on the side of the rulings of the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

Mr Sodeman: The United Nations itself does not have that factor in its representation.

Mr PEARCE: Does the member deny that the equal franchise proposition is in the United Nations Charter?

Mr Sodeman: Sure it is; but that is not—

Mr PEARCE: The United Nations is not a country. It does not operate in that way.

Mr Sodeman: Of course it does not operate in that way. Otherwise China and India would run the United Nations.

Mr PEARCE: There are no elections for the United Nations. The member fails to understand the difference between a sovereign nation and an international, co-operative body.

Because of our commitment to one-vote-one-value, it may be not very important where the line is drawn. However, from the point of view of the Government, the Liberals have an ideological commitment to doubling the representation of the country people; and where the line is drawn is very important. It does not matter to the Labor
Party where the line is drawn, because, according to the Minister, we will reject it wherever it is drawn

The Minister says that there should be a double weighting for country members; and that makes the drawing of the line very important. What we have to do is to ensure that all of the country is outside the metropolitan area, and all of the metropolitan area is inside the metropolitan area.

That brings us back to areas like Kalamunda and Kelmscott. Why was the boundary applying to the MRPA not chosen for the metropolitan zone?

Mr Hassell: I have explained several times the basis of that. The basic categories in the metropolitan area, both geographically and in terms of electors, have been met.

Mr PEARCE: There is a clear definition of the metropolitan area, and it is that applying to the MRPA. Would it not be the most obvious metropolitan boundary?

Mr Hassell: There are other definitions under other Acts.

Mr PEARCE: Why is there not some standardisation of the MRPA metropolitan area?

Mr Hassell: There is a different one under the Builders' Registration Act, and others. There is a different definition for the Water Board.

Mr PEARCE: In drafting the Bill, why was the decision taken not to adhere to the same boundaries as under the MRPA Act?

Mr Hassell: A decision was not made not to adhere to them. A decision was made to extend the boundaries, as shown on the map.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister is dodging and ducking for all he is worth. In terms of ducking, he is not doing badly for 5.15 a.m. Nevertheless, that does not explain why an appropriate metropolitan boundary was not chosen. Since that is fundamental to the Minister's philosophy, why do some city people receive a country weighting?

There was no prize for guessing that, when the metropolitan boundaries were drawn, the notorious Forrest Road boundary would be changed. That road runs down the middle of Armadale and it has my 25,000 voters on one side, and the 8,000 or so voters of the member for Dale on the other side. However, the Forrest Road boundary became so notorious that it became clear it would have to change. The new boundary is the South-West Highway, which runs a little more to one side of Armadale.

The situation is even more ridiculous when one looks at the suburb of Kelmscott. Kelmscott is three miles closer to Perth than is Armadale. The bulk of the people of Armadale would fall into the metropolitan area; and they are three miles further out than the main shopping area in Kelmscott, which is on the wrong side of Albany Highway. It is on the country side, so it is out in the country. It seems that whoever is building the massive new Target shopping centre in the country at Kelmscott—

Mr Harman: That is not true, is it?

Mr PEARCE: Certainly it is true. There is an example of a massive shopping centre being built on the western side of Albany Highway, Kelmscott. The Minister should invite guests to have a look at that.

Mr Young: You are subscribing to the view that buildings vote?

Mr PEARCE: Not at all.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr B. T. Burke: Sheep do for you.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister for Health is not remarkably quick at picking up lines of argument. One might expect too much of him. Perhaps I will go slowly so he can understand. I note that some of the Government back-benchers are engaged in wagering on the time we will finish the sitting. Somebody should be flipping through the Standing Orders to see whether wagering is acceptable parliamentary behaviour. The member for Vasse was concerned about my lack of parliamentary dignity or respect; but he appears to be the bag man in this particular operation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): I ask the member to confine his remarks to the clause.

Government members interjected.

Mr PEARCE: That is rather undignified. I am not concerned only about the superannuation fund. I am not concerned about my superannuation scheme; but I am concerned about the metropolitan boundaries.

The Labor-voting section of Armadale will be put into my electorate, and the people will have the best representation they have had for 20 years.

In relation to the huge shopping centre at Kelmscott, I wonder why businessmen would put millions of dollars into the construction of a major Target shopping centre out in the country. However, Kelmscott is not out in the country; it is a metropolitan location which would be more suited to the metropolitan area. Of course, the answer is that it is actually part of the metropolitan area; it is three miles closer to the GPO than is metropolitan Armadale; but the new boundaries will perpetuate the strange inclusion
of the previous boundaries to exaggerate that to a
degree.

Why should it be that people on one side of
Albany Highway are in a metropolitan electorate, and
the people on the other side are in a rural
electorate, in the country? That surpasses all
understanding. Why are the voters of Clifton
Hills, an urban area half a mile from the main
shopping centre in Kalamunda, country voters
whereas on my side of Kelmstown, a mile and a
half from the shopping centre, surrounded by
miles of paddocks, and cows grazing, the people
should be considered part of the metropolitan
area?

It is possible to stand on parts of Albany
Highway on this rural metropolitan boundary and
look out on the rural side and see a phalanx of
houses and then turn to the metropolitan side and
see nothing but grass and cows.

The only way in which this division of
communities can be stopped is for the
metropolitan boundary perhaps to be drawn in
line with the MRPA boundary, which does not
run down the middle of streets separating one
group of citizens from another. We should have a
boundary which encompasses all urban dwellings,
and that includes areas like all of Kelmstown and
Kalamunda and most of the bits and pieces that
make up Darling Range. All these areas then
would be properly distributed on metropolitan
quotas.

The reason the Government will not do that is
that it would lose two seats. The Darling Range
and Kalamunda seats would become one
metropolitan seat, which the Liberal Party would
win, but it would be just one seat instead of two.
It would be one proper sized metropolitan seat.
That is why these boundary fiddles are going
on—the Government is not prepared to lose these
seats.

It is not unfair to say this Government has
relied for its majority in this place on that ring of
half-sized hills seats which are properly in the
metropolitan area but which have country quotas.
The Government sees a need to double up where
the Labor Party vote is strong. I could hardly be blamed if I were to come to
the conclusion that the only reason those
differences occur is that the Liberal Party sees
some electoral advantage in the situation being
like that. One does not have to look very much
beyond the figures I quoted to see that, indeed,
there is an advantage to the Liberal Party in that
sort of strangeness. That advantage can be
summarised as two seats rather than one. That is
why we have these strange boundaries.

If the Government is hopeful that by changing
the Forrest Road boundary in Armadale that
situation will go away, it will simply find another
half-dozen roads which will leap back to haunt it.

Mr Sodeman: You have the same urban and
rural cross-section in areas like Bassendean
Bayswater, and so on, where you have both
residential areas and open paddocks. It is hardly a
criterion for your argument.

Mr PEARCE: Is the member arguing that part
of Bassendean should be taken out of the
metropolitan area? If there is to be a metropolitan
boundary—which we object to as a principle—it
should be the MRPA boundary, or something
which takes in all urban areas. With our corridor
plan there would be some semi-rural regions in
the metropolitan area; but I am saying that it is
ridiculous to count rural parts of the metropolitan
area as rural areas when other metropolitan areas
are being counted as rural areas. All urban areas
should be in the metropolitan area, although we
would say that between some of these areas there
would be fields of sheep.

Mr PARKER: I feel constrained to speak in
order to expose what I believe to be a very
considerable misleading of the House by the
Minister with respect to all the matters covered
by this clause. Last Thursday I asked the
Minister a question without notice, a question
which has also been asked tonight, as to why it
was that for the purposes of this Bill certain parts
of the metropolitan area had been included in the
metropolitan zone and certain areas had been
excluded. Members have asked this question on at
least 30 or 40 occasions during debate on this Bill.

In answer to my question last week the
Minister indicated that these were obviously basic
policy issues relating to the Government’s
approach to the legislation and they should be
debated when the Bill came before the Chamber.
That seemed to be a commitment on the part of
the Minister that when this Bill came up for
debate, as it has this evening, he would debate the
questions asked of him in relation to the basic
policy issues he said were present in the decisions
which had been made as to which parts of the
urban areas of Perth ought to be metropolitan areas.

Despite numerous requests for the Minister to give an explanation, at no stage has he put to this Parliament the reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of certain areas. At best he has been evasive in the responses he has given and at worst he has been dishonest in putting forward the decisions of the Government.

Earlier we heard the Minister give an answer which purported to be an explanation of why certain areas were in and others out. He said the Government had decided to put some areas in here, other areas to the south-east, a lot to the south-west, that it decided to ignore the eastern areas of Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring, although he considered that might not prevent argument for their inclusion, and that perhaps there was argument for their exclusion. If that was supposed to be an explanation, it was far from acceptable. We could read that sort of thing in the Bill. We know from the Bill that the Minister decided to include the north, north-east, south-east and south-west in certain areas. We did not need him to tell us it was the decision of the Government to include some of these areas and exclude others. What we need to know is the basis upon which the Government made its decisions and why it decided to ignore the east, which the Minister said seemed to be a good idea.

One can draw only the supposition we have drawn and as members opposite must also have drawn—and some have made their views public, or at least not kept them to themselves—that the reason the Government reached its decision was to protect the member for Dale or to stop the seat of Rockingham from being divided into two Labor Party electorates. I do not have any objection—I am sure the member for Rockingham has none—to the seat of Rockingham being part of the metropolitan area if there is to be a metropolitan area. I do object that the seat of Rockingham which is 35 kilometres from the GPO is to become part of the metropolitan area, when just 15 or so kilometres away from the GPO the seats of Kalamunda, Darling Range, and Mundaring are not to become parts of the metropolitan area.

At no stage has the Minister ever said why the decision was made except to tell us what we already know; namely, that it was as a result of Cabinet and party room discussions. We all understand that is the way these things happen. However, with most other legislation a passing semblance of a reason is given for the Government making its decisions.

Mr B. T. Burke: We just want the broad, general criteria.

Mr PARKER: We want to know what is so special about Rockingham which makes it suitable for inclusion in the metropolitan area. We want to know what is so special about the seat of Mundaring which makes it a candidate for exclusion from the metropolitan area. Perhaps the difference is that there is now a dual-carriageway running to Rockingham and people can get there quickly.

I would find that an absurd reason, but if the Chief Secretary were prepared to come to this Chamber and say the reason was that there is a dual carriageway to one of these electorates and not to the other, we would at least have some idea of what is in his mind. Does he do that? No; at best, the Chief Secretary is evasive—and at worst he is dishonest—when he puts to this Committee the reasons the lines have been drawn on this map.

The real reason the Chief Secretary will not answer these questions in the appropriate way is that there is no answer to them other than the fact that the decisions were made on the basis of which seats the Liberal Party would hope to win and which seats it would hope to ensure were shored up so that the Labor Party's votes would not be distributed into other areas, as would have occurred had a proper redistribution taken place.

The Labor Party does not believe the provisions in the Electoral Act are particularly good. In fact, it bitterly opposed the last amendments to the Act and, for many years, it has been opposed to the concepts which go into the drawing of the districts under the Electoral Districts Act, because we believe in the concept of one-vote-one-value. We believe people are elected to this Parliament to represent people, not to represent areas.

At least in the past one could say of the Government that, if it accepted its basic premise about the problems experienced in remote areas as far as communications, etc., are concerned—of course, we do not—from then on its argument would become fairly logical.

One could imagine it is logical to say certain areas are in and certain areas are out and some areas should have more and some less; but the Government has destroyed the logic of its own argument. Nothing we could have said or done in the past couple of years could destroy more effectively the logic of the Government's argument with respect to the difficulties of representing remote areas, than the twin aspects of this piece of legislation. On the one hand, the seat of Kimberley will be turned into the largest
seat in this State with approximately 12,000 constituents which is 50 per cent higher than the numbers of electors which are likely to be in the seats of Darling Range, Mundaring, and Kalamunda. In justification for that, the Government says that ultimately the Pilbara will balance the situation.

Mr B. T. Burke: There will be 60,000 people in Karratha in the next month!

Mr PARKER: Of course, we probably ought to transfer the State capital to Karratha, and I am surprised it has not been suggested! So the seats of Pilbara and Kimberley might end up balancing themselves out by the time we get to the next election; but certainly in that case they will each have a population 50 per cent greater than that of the three hills seats. The Government has created this mammoth seat of Kimberley in a way which, as the Chief Secretary conceded, takes no account of the question of community of interest. If one was to bear in mind community of interest, there would be a problem when one talked about one-vote-one-value, because one would be looking at 12,000 voters in the electorates. Therefore, one would need to divide the towns to the north and the towns to the south, because there is community of interest between the towns and the ports; but the way in which the line has been drawn by the Government has resulted in that community of interest being severed totally. Of course, if we had one-vote-one-value, the areas of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre would have to be taken into account also. Nevertheless, by the time the 1983 election is here, those electorates will have 12,000 voters and the members for Kalamunda, Darling Range, Geraldton, and Albany will be representing pocket-handkerchief electorates by comparison, which will have far fewer electors than the huge electorates which will be represented, in particular, by the member for Kimberley, after the next election.

At the same time that the Government says Kimberley can have 12,000 electors, and can take up most of the north of the State and include areas as diverse as Wittenoom, Shay Gap, and Kununurra, it points out that the electorate of Kalamunda which is within a 20-minute drive of Parliament House, cannot be in the metropolitan area. It is so close to the city that the member for Kalamunda has his electorate office in Parliament House and frequently has constituents here for supper and drinks, because it is so easy for them to get here.

Mr Cowan: Most of the members in statutory seats have their electoral offices down the road.

Mr PARKER: That is true, but vast numbers of their constituents cannot come down to Parliament House and have supper with their members as can the constituents of the member for Kalamunda.

Mr Bryce: He does not overdo it though like the two members for North Metropolitan in another place.

Mr PARKER: It is possible that those two members will be asking that their seats be declared country electorates!

Mr B. T. Burke: I hear they are asking for extra postage to send out their letters. They should be called "Swingaway Guided Tours".

Mr Pearce: I am surprised they are not asking for a great increase in their salaries because of their expertise in showing people around Parliament House.

Mr PARKER: I suggest the business of this Parliament would be very well served if the two gentlemen at the main door were to become the members for North Metropolitan Province and the members for North Metropolitan Province were to become the doormen. That would be a vast improvement in the work of this Parliament.

Mr Harman: I think the two men on the door would be much better.

Mr PARKER: I believe this Bill is a travesty which can be explained in one way only and that is, the Government is seeking to shore up its electoral majority and because that is the only explanation, it is the reason the Minister has consistently refused to give any other explanation for the reasons behind some of the facets of the Bill such as those contained in this clause and the reasons for his evasiveness and dishonesty in dealing with the legislation.

I strongly oppose the clause.

Mr COWAN: The section of the principal Act this clause seeks to amend contains the whole basis for the use of a weighted vote in this State. It may be expected the National Party would support any clause which relates to vote weighting; but regretfully paragraph (a)(i) refers to the "Metropolitan Area as the area consisting of the portions of land described in Schedule 1 to this Act". Of course, schedule 1 contains all the wording that is necessary to make the changes which have been illustrated on the map in the corner of the Chamber.

We get back to the argument which has been referred to in the Chamber throughout the night. There can be no reason for that boundary to be drawn in the manner in which it has been drawn,
other than to secure some electoral advantage for the Liberal Party. That is exactly what it does.

Whilst we support the weighted vote, there is no way in the world we can support the part of clause 12 which deals with the metropolitan boundaries. Paragraph (b) defines the north-west Murchison-Eyre and we have no argument with that provision, because it provides the boundary on which the 1977 and 1980 elections were fought. The changes to that boundary are not referred to until a later stage of the Bill.

Mr Bryce: Clause 14.

Mr COWAN: I cannot support anything which manipulates metropolitan boundaries as much as paragraph (a). For that reason we will oppose the clause.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I, too, join the throng of members who to date have opposed this clause.

If we were to leave this Chamber now and, perhaps, espy a burglar on his way home from work we would probably see that he carried a bag. In it would be his tools, and if we opened it to examine the tools we would determine what sort of burglar he was. We would probably find he had a jemmy, a set of skeleton keys, and a wire or two to slip a latch or three. I liken this clause to the burglar's tools.

It is in this clause that we find the instruments by which the Minister will bring about the completion of his foul deed. It has been emphasised time and time again that he has failed to provide solid answers to questions raised. We have said that is simply not good enough, and that the reason for the Government's doing something is that it just is not good enough. Time and time again the Minister has given us that reason.

Mr Parker: He has left the Chamber.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes, the Minister has left the Chamber. The Minister failed to answer because, simply, he does not know his stuff. He does not know his work.

Mr O'Connor: He knows it thoroughly.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Yes, I told the Chamber the Minister is a bloody burglar.

Withdrawal of Remark

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): The member will withdraw that remark.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I withdraw it.

Committee Resumed

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Minister simply does not know his stuff. It is not good enough for the Minister to say the Government's reason is that it did it.

Mr Parker: The Premier probably slipped a few tools into the bag that the Minister didn't know were there.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier appears to be one of the Minister's staunch defenders in regard to this matter. He likened the Minister's reply to a masterpiece, but it was shabby and did not answer any of the queries raised during the long second reading debate.

Mr Parker: Do you think that masterpiece will be shown to be a fraud just as the paintings were frauds and for which someone had to go into gaol?

Mr B. T. BURKE: It might be a pup. Those paintings were less than what they appeared to be.

Mr Harman: Malcolm Fraser sold the Premier a pup the other day.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Malcolm Fraser sold him a pup without delivering him even a mongrel.

I will refer to another matter which relates specifically to this clause. During the second reading debate I went to some lengths to point out to the Minister it was idle of him to refer blatantly to the matter of representation when he defended his opposition to the concept of one-vote-one-value.

Members will recall my explaining to the Minister, who is still absent from the Chamber, that one-vote-one-value does not necessarily mean having equal-sized electorates regardless of their location or distance from the capital city, the difficulty of communication attaching to them, or their size. What one-vote-one-value means is that the power assigned in this place to each electorate represented by a member should be as equal as possible.

I explained to the Minister and to the Chamber that it was possible, for example, if an electorate had 20,000 voters, to decide that the member should have a voting factor of two in this place; and the representative of 10,000 electors might be assigned a voting power of one. In that way all the problems to which the Minister referred would be overcome, and they are the problems of distance from the capital city, size, difficulty of communication, and community of interest.

All the problems the Government cited to advance its argument against equal electorates—that is, one-vote-one-value—are not acceptable and could be accommodated by the proposition of attaching to the member who represents an unequal sized electorate the voting power for the people he represents. With that system there could be no excuse at all for there not being equal representation, and on that basis
the Minister was not able to answer the Opposition’s arguments.

The Opposition’s arguments defeated the attempts the Minister made to bolster the gerrymander of electoral boundaries of this State. When the Minister gave his type of explanation he reverted to his point that the Government does something because it is doing it.

Mr Harman: He and the member for Pilbara are gloating over this.

Mr B. T. BURKE: By next election the member for Pilbara will have an electorate of 78,000 voters.

Mr Jamieson: That will trim his wig.

Mr B. T. BURKE: He will have the smile wiped from his face.

In briefly attempting to explain the point, the Minister said there is an ideological gulf between the position adopted by the Opposition and that of the Government. As was said by the member for Gosnells, that is a proposition we can accept. I would assume that, were there not an ideological gulf between me and the Minister, something was wrong. I accept we have a divergence of ideology on this matter, and as I pointed out to the Minister a question of degree arises in the practical expression of that ideology.

Mr Bertram: Give him the third degree.

Mr B. T. BURKE: He expressed the ideological difference in a markedly discriminate way which was not acceptable to the Opposition. As far as we are concerned, if the Minister wants to maintain he is separated from us by some ideological gulf, that is all right by us and we will endorse that separation and stay at arm’s length. What we will not do is accept the proposition that the Minister can use that sort of rationale to explain the cruelty and unfairness of the Bill which he is trying to force upon the State of Western Australia.

If members think back to the defence emanating from the Minister in his brief contribution to the debate on this clause they will recall he told us that country electorates should have a weighting. We believe they should not, but he believes they should. However, he neglected to tell us why the Kimberley electorate should not have a weighting. Perhaps the Premier in the absence of his Minister can explain why country areas should have a weighting but the Kimberley district should not.

Mr Davies: That is not unreasonable!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I will repeat the question in case the Premier—

Sir Charles Court: I heard it all. You have had the explanations time and time again. If we give them again we will be accused of tedious repetition in trying to answer.

Mr Davies: The explanation is non-existent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Premier has misunderstood the question because it is not one I have previously put. It is this: If we accept the ideological difference between the Government and the Opposition, and accept that gulf is expressed in a weighting given to country seats—the Minister consistently says the reason for the weighting to country seats is the ideological difference—then why should there not be any weighting to the seat of Kimberley? Once again the Premier is unable to answer.

Sir Charles Court: The Premier can answer. You have had the answer so often.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Why does the Premier not explain why the Kimberley electorate does not have a country seat weighting?

Sir Charles Court: You know the northern seats for such a long time have been statutory seats.

Mr B. T. BURKE: According to the criteria advanced by the Premier in 1975 in regard to the population and the area, Kimberley, out of any representation—by reason of its being removed from the capital—deserved to be classed amongst those seats most warranting a weighting.

Sir Charles Court: You have had your explanation and there is no more one can say.

Mr H. D. Evans: It is not valid; it is tripe.

Sir Charles Court: If you do not accept it, it is your choice.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course it is not acceptable. We are dissatisfied with the poor explanation put forward by the Premier. Within this clause, we see the crux of the Government’s intent which is to draw the parameters within which the electoral commissioners can draw up the electorates. It is interesting to note that these parameters have been drawn by the Government. The Premier demands the additional seats and says that the electoral commissioners draw the boundaries. This is simply untrue; the electoral commissioners do not draw the boundaries, particularly for those seats which border the metropolitan area.

What the Premier fails to tell us is that when he says the electoral commissioners draw the boundaries, he is not talking about the northern seats. This illustrates the fact that the Premier has failed to mention the truth of the matter.

Mr Harman: Are you saying that the Premier is dishonest?
Mr B. T. BURKE: I am saying that other people can make a decision.

I believe the Premier and truth are comparative strangers.

With this clause we should recognise the tools used by the burglar. In this clause we can see how the Government will set about maintaining its quite legal and immoral stand.

Even the best laid plans of mice and men sometimes go astray. I have seen cases where plans which were made have not materialised. Even with our rigged and gerrymandered electoral system there will be a number of members on the other side of the House who will not be returning after the next election. I may not be here either, but some members on the other side of the House, who have been mercilessly conned by this Government, will be absent. I would be very surprised to see the member for Subiaco sitting in his seat. We all know of the animosity between the Minister for Health and the Premier and wonder whether he will still hold the seat he has now, after the next election.

The seat of the member for Whitford will be plunged into some doubt and the good-natured bonhomie of the member for Whitford may no longer be with us if another seat is created in the northern corridor.

It is possible, on the basis outlined by the member for Merredin in respect of the seat of the member for Subiaco that the Deputy Premier's seat may disappear. We all know that he now lives in Karrinyup and he will be nominated for the new seat in that area which is a very Liberal one. I oppose this clause.

Mr JAMIESON: Reference has been made to the crooked line and I am not sure whether this message has got through to the Minister. The line is crooked from a political point of view and we are not worried about the fact that it zig zags; although that is important, too. If this line were to be considered a respectable one surely it must be drawn whilst taking into consideration the local government authorities and their particular areas. It would have been relatively easy for that procedure to have taken place.

It would have been some improvement on what is proposed now, but of course that was not to be the case. How can one justify not including the local authorities of Swan, Mundaring, Kalamunda and Armadale within the area outlined? The Cockburn Shire Council has been included in the metropolitan area for a long time. Someone said earlier that areas which can be classed rural cannot be included.

I suggest to members that an area such as Mandogalup which has a considerable amount of rural pursuits—although they are not as lucrative as in the northern sections of the metropolitan area—is included in the metropolitan area and is serviced by the member for Cockburn.

There is no reason that the line should not be drawn along the streets and roads, and if the areas were defined by the method used by the local authorities there would be less likelihood of criticism.

It is quite apparent to the Opposition that the Government is being dishonest in its approach to redistribution and it is on that basis we oppose the definition of the metropolitan area as shown in schedule No. 1.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

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(Teller)

Clause thus passed.

Progress

Mr H. D. EVANS: I move—

That the Deputy Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

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(Teller)
to the next clause, I will just repeat that we oppose this clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 18
Mr Barnett  Mr Harman
Mr Bertram  Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge  Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce  Mr Melver
Mr B. T. Burke  Mr Parker
Mr Carr  Mr Pearce
Mr Davies  Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans  Mr Wilson
Mr Grill  Mr Bateman

(Teller)

Noes 27
Mr Blakie  Mr Nanovich
Mr Clarko  Mr O'Connor
Sir Charles Court  Mr Old
Mr Cowan  Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne  Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig  Mr Sodeman
Mr Crane  Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden  Mr Stephens
Mr Grewar  Mr Trehowan
Mr Hassell  Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld  Mr Williams
Mr P. V. Jones  Mr Young
Mr Laurance  Mr Shalders
Mr MacKinnon  Mr Nanovich

(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.

Committee Resumed

Clause 13: Section 6 amended—

Mr DAVIES: Our opposition to this clause will be brief, members will be delighted to know.

Mr Pearce: You wait until we get to 14.

Mr B. T. Burke: Clause 14 is the crunch—we expect to amend 14.

Mr DAVIES: This clause will amend the number of seats in the metropolitan area and in the country. It will delete one of the country seats, reducing them from 24 to 23. Despite that, the clause does not overcome the ideological difference—as the Minister put it—between the Government and the Opposition in regard to the line dividing the metropolitan zone from the country zone.

We are far from satisfied with the attempted explanation. We do not believe this delineation was made in good faith. We believe it is a gerrymander, and in the absence of any other information, the Minister's explanation confirms our earlier comments.

The seat of Rockingham is to be included in the metropolitan zone, and with the two additional seats that the Government is hell-bent on creating, there will be 30 metropolitan seats. The number of country seats will be reduced by one. As I said earlier, the Government is not, as it said, approaching cautiously an equalisation between metropolitan and country seats because the ultimate difference is practically negligible. Because we will have a great deal to say in regard

Clause thus passed.

Clause 14: Section 7 amended—

Mr DAVIES: This clause deals with the four statutory northern seats of Kimberley, Pilbara, Murchison-Eyre, and Gascoyne. We have had no satisfactory explanation as to why the seat of Kimberley has been grossly loaded in the way it has from something like 6,000 voters to in excess of 12,000 voters. The Government says it has some consideration for distance, for community of interest, and for the electors who live in the distant parts, and it has tried to keep country electorates as small as possible in order that electors might be better serviced. I do not want to canvass again all the arguments we presented during this debate in respect of other ways in which members can better serve the electors rather than by having small electorates in the country. I am sure members opposite are well and truly aware of the suggestions we have made.

We are aghast and amazed at what the Government has done with these four seats. They have been in existence since about 1922 and one would have thought after 60 years the Government would have a realistic look at the position and try to find some fair and just manner of apportioning the people in that part of the State into four equal seats. However, the Government did not do that.

We are concerned that the Government has done nothing to adjust the boundaries of
Murchison-Eyre. We are aware the Government had some trouble in the party room because of that. The figures I have are those available in mid-March of this year, and the situation might have altered marginally since then. At that time Murchison-Eyre had 1941 electors, and a great deal of rocks and saltbush. I do not know how many sheep it had.

Mr Harman: One to 100 acres.

Mr DAVIES: There is no doubt it is a vast electorate, but a great deal of it need not be covered. Indeed, it would be physically impossible to cover much of the area and in any case there are no electors in much of it, anyway. The electors who were enrolled in mid-March are situated in clearly-defined centres. I know the member for the area regularly goes through his district and he sees most of his electors personally.

Mr B. T. Burke: They eat grass by the roadside.

Mr DAVIES: I wish I could get to see my electors once a year. I try to walk my electorate once a year, but that is not always possible. However, the member for Murchison-Eyre is able to see most of his electors each year and it is to his credit that he does that. I am certain the load he has to carry is not unbearable, and that he could cope with more electors. Indeed, he pointed out that some 70 additional electors have been enrolled since mid-March, and I suggested that none of them is Aboriginal. The fact remains that the Murchison-Eyre roll now has 2016 electors and I still say that is not such a large number of people that it is impossible for him properly to serve them. I believe he can do that easily.

It does not matter where one's electorate is, one always has some electors whom one does not get to see. However, at least the member can be contacted whenever he is wanted: and any member worth his salt advertises his whereabouts throughout his electorate. I believe a member servicing an electorate even as vast as Murchison-Eyre would be able easily to cope physically with more than 2 000 electors.

Mr Harman: He has only nine community centres.

Mr DAVIES: I thank the member for that information.

Mr Grewar: You have only one.

Mr DAVIES: I looked at the map and noted that probably one trip out along the trans each year, and then a trip to the other centres would suffice for that member.

Mr Harman: Under the new boundaries Kimberley will have 38 communities.

Mr DAVIES: I am aghast that no attempt has been made to shift some of the load from the Pilbara into the electorate of Murchison-Eyre. I am just as aghast that no attempt has been made to shift some of the load from the Pilbara into the electorate of Gascoyne. At least some slight difference would have been made had the line been drawn straight across, instead of its going in a slant up to Exmouth. But, no, the Government decided the Pilbara electorate was too big; I acknowledge it is unfair that it should not be considered in the same class as a country electorate.

If the Government wants to reduce the number of electors in the Pilbara it should stick by its philosophy and reduce the electorate by appointing an additional member. That might have been more acceptable to me. However, instead the Government reneged, and it did not shift electors to Murchison-Eyre or Gascoyne. Goodness only knows why the Government did not do that, because the Gascoyne electorate certainly is nowhere near as big physically as the present Kimberley electorate; yet the part that will be added to the Kimberley electorate will be approximately the same size as the present Gascoyne electorate.

Where is the substantiation of the Government's argument in respect of that? Why are we left with 12 000 electors in Kimberley, about 9 000 in Pilbara, about 3 700 in Gascoyne, and 2 000 in Murchison-Eyre? Working on the figures to which I referred earlier, in mid-March the four north-west seats had a total of 26657 electors.

Acknowledging that it is not possible to divide them exactly into four, I wish to bring to the notice of the Committee that if it were possible, there would be 6 664 electors in each electorate. I believe that, even coping with the distance, isolation, and communication problems which members in the north face, any member worth his salt would be able to properly service that number of electors.

It is to the credit of the member for Pilbara that he gets widely around his electorate. The Pilbara now is to be reduced to something like 14 centres, whereas there will be 38 centres in Kimberley.

Mr Bryce: Some of those centres in the Pilbara could have been placed in the Gascoyne electorate.

Mr Sodeman: There is no community of interest.

Mr DAVIES: The member for Pilbara interjects to say "There is no community of
interest.” Some of those centres could have been placed in the Gascoyne electorate. Where is the community of interest between places like Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Mt. Newman, and Kimberley? There is no community of interest at all. I have already explained how the transport arrangements are almost impossible. It is not a matter of a member simply situating himself at Hedland or Karratha as he currently is able to do and shooting out to the large iron-ore towns. It is a matter of having to stay overnight at these towns, return to the main centre and travel to another mining town, and so on, right across the Kimberley electorate. We know the further one gets from Perth, the more difficult it is to get around because the less frequent are the air services.

The Government is not taking into consideration means of communication, and the distance from the capital city; it is not considering the physical features of the area; it is not considering existing district boundaries because if it did, it would have made a more genuine and honest attempt to divide those four northern seats into something approximating four equal seats. What would have been fairer than that? Surely the member for Gascoyne would not have grizzled about that. Is he prepared to selfishly sit on his few voters, while he sees another member struggling to cope with another 6,000 electors—almost double what he has?

Mr Bryce: Treble, in the case of Kimberley.

Mr DAVIES: Is the member for Murchison-Eyre happy to retain his 2,000 voters while three times that number of electors are added to the Kimberley roll? I can understand their performing and complaining. When all is said and done, is there not some justice, comradeship, mateship and understanding of what the members themselves must put up with, and a realisation that they should not load the lot onto one member? Is it not time—after 60 years—the Government took a realistic look at the policies applying to the north of this State to see whether something could be done to ease the position? It is totally unfair, unjust, and unacceptable.

As far as I am concerned, I want the Kimberley area to remain the same, and to hell with the rest. Let us adopt the same attitude that the Government has obviously adopted; namely “We will look after ourselves. Let us shove the rest onto Kimberley.” Let us do exactly what I am complaining about and say “You can have it all back again.” The way to do that is to amend clause 14, and I foreshadow that, at a later stage of the debate, I intend to move an amendment which will have the effect of leaving the Kimberley electorate as it is today. Then let the Government work out what it is going to do in a fair and just manner, not capriciously, not concerned only with survival of its numbers and not concerned only with trying to do what, in its quaint way, it might consider is a just job for its own members.

It is not being just to members of Parliament on both sides for the Government to try to coddle its own members. There is not the slightest reason the expansion which has taken place in the north should not be shared equally amongst members in the north. It is for that reason I intend later to move my amendment.

Mr HARMAN: I join with my leader on this issue because I have had some experience in Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, and Murchison-Eyre, and I know some of the problems which would confront a member in that area in endeavouring to service his electors. I was quite surprised to learn last Thursday that the electorate of Kimberley was to be extended south to take in a number of towns in the Pilbara region. I was also surprised the areas of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre were not affected. It seems very strange. I cannot really accept the argument which says “We shall extend Kimberley and take in parts of the Pilbara, but we will not touch Murchison-Eyre or the Gascoyne.”

For the life of me, I have not been able to establish from the Government why the boundaries of Kimberley have been changed. They have been changed by the Government, not by the commission. the Surveyor General, or the Chief Justice. If the Government is to change the boundary, it should be required to give us some explanation. It is quite a different thing if the commissioners change a boundary; it is set down in the Statute, and is based on population.

Under the proposed boundaries, the Kimberley electorate will have in excess of 12,000 electors and 38 community centres which the member must visit.

Take the Pilbara. Under the new boundaries, it will have 9,000 electors, and only 14 communities. All of those communities extend down the coastline from Port Hedland to Onslow, in a region extending approximately 100 miles from the coast.

Take the Kimberley electorate. It will extend from Wyndham, through Kalumburu down to Pannawonica and Mt. Tom Price.

Let us consider the other two statutory seats which have not been changed by the Government—Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre.
Gascoyne will have something like 4,000 electors in five communities.

Mr Bryce: I wonder that they left them alone.

Mr HARMAN: The member for Gascoyne admits that he will have five communities only. He is closer to Perth than the member for Kimberley, who will have 38. The member for Gascoyne, or whoever takes his place, will have five.

Mr Bryce: Perhaps he was in on the corruption.

Mr HARMAN: Let us look at the Murchison-Eyre electorate. That member will have nine community centres to visit, with 2,000 electors only. He would know them by their first names. He would be able to use the stamp allowance, with which we are provided, to correspond with all of those electors without any problem.

Mr Bryce: He should know the names of the family dogs.

Mr HARMAN: The availability of the member for Murchison-Eyre to his electors will be far greater than my situation in Maylands.

Mr Grewar: That is your one square mile of country, against his.

Mr HARMAN: They are all on the phone. If they are not on the phone, they have access to the phone.

Mr Grewar: No, they are not.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! The member will address the Chair.

Mr HARMAN: The member for Roe has not been up there, so he does not know the situation.

Mr Grewar: Where is the telephone in the Warburton Range?

Mr HARMAN: There is a radio. The member has access to at least three radios.

The point is that the member for Pilbara, the member for Murchison-Eyre, and the member for Gascoyne have more opportunity for contact with their constituents than the member for Kimberley. They are closer to Perth. They can travel their electorates in a shorter time than the member for Kimberley. They have access to their constituents at a far better time than the member for Kimberley.

The Government has said “We are going to place a greater burden on the member for Kimberley. We are going to make him responsible for 38 communities and 12,000 electors; and we will give him that added responsibility because he is the member at the furthest distance from Parliament House in Perth.” At the same time, the Government is saying to the member for Murchison-Eyre, “You can have 2,000 electors, and nine communities; and at the most you are 600 or 700 miles from your constituents.” The Government is saying to the member for Gascoyne—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! If I can assume what the member is going to say, he should be prepared—

Mr HARMAN: You cannot assume anything.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If he is embarking on points he has already made, he is starting to become repetitive in his argument. I draw his attention to Standing Order No. 142. I seek his co-operation; and the Chamber would be delighted to receive it.

Mr HARMAN: I was going to expand the argument a little further by quoting the times that the members would travel. Under the new electoral system, the member for Kimberley would take a total of 28 days by car to visit his 38 communities. The member for Gascoyne, with his 4,000 electors—

Mr Bryce: He would be part of the corruption.

Mr HARMAN: —and with five communities only, would take four days to visit those community centres. The member for Murchison-Eyre, with his nine communities and 2,000 electors, would take five days by car. Under the new boundaries, the member for Pilbara, with 14 community centres, would take five days to travel to visit his constituents. No-one can convince me that that is fair, just, equitable, and a system we ought to support. I do not want to be part of it. It would take a long time for the Government to convince me of the justification for that.

Mr JAMIESON: If the Government had wanted to do anything with the north-west-Murchison-Eyre area, it would have been justified in going back to the old seat of Roebourne in 1947. This would have allowed the area to be divided on a more equitable basis, having due regard for the associated seats of Kimberley and Gascoyne. That option would have been acceptable, to some degree. The towns of Mt. Newman and Goldsworthy could have been attached to Port Hedland; and the other towns with access through Karratha, Pannawonica, and Paraburadoo could have constituted the Roebourne seat.

The seat of Roebourne was abolished in an endeavour to be rid of a Labor man. The man who represented Roebourne was Mr Rodoreda, who was later the Speaker. There was a Mr Bill Hegney, who represented the then seat of Pilbara. There was also a Mr Coverley, who represented Kimberley. Further south, there was Mr Wise, who represented Gascoyne.
So because of that the McLarty Government set about getting rid of one of those seats. It did this effectively by setting the area for the commissioners to determine three seats as equally as possible.

There could have been some justification to move in there and replace the Roebourne seat. But there has been no justification for adding on to the furthest seat from the metropolitan area a large area that has already been added to. It is already hard enough to cover all the area at present. The seat already has Telser in its south-west corner and it is difficult to get there without trying to encompass these areas intended to be included in the Kimberley electorate.

I oppose this clause for the way the Government has gone about doing things. If it did want to divide the area there are other ways of doing it. This could have been done without bothering to form new seats we can ill-afford. The Government’s move is certainly not the answer to the problem. I oppose the clause.

Mr GRILL: I wish to join with my leader in opposing this clause, which allows for the specification of the boundaries of a statutory seat. I would like to go back to the situation which applied in England in the early part of the 19th century. At that time in England, in what was perhaps the most democratic country in the world, where Parliament had a role in governing what was a monarchy, there grew up what were called “rotten boroughs” and “pocket boroughs”.

As most members would know, those rotten boroughs were in most cases pocket-sized seats of Parliament where the electors had moved away for one reason or another, mainly due to demographic changes and to the dispersion of people because industry had gone away from an area. The rotten boroughs were those seats where there were only a handful of electors left. Pocket boroughs were those controlled by one landowner or baron.

It became obvious in the first part of the 19th century that those rotten and pocket boroughs were a complete misuse of the parliamentary system as people knew it. At the beginning of 1832 the great and famous reforms of Parliament began and slowly but surely those pocket and rotten boroughs were done away with until, in the early part of this century, a full adult franchise allowing women to vote was established in England.

Clause 14 of the Bill will entrench in Western Australia what are the equivalent of the English rotten boroughs.

Mr B. T. Burke: Hear, hear!

Mr GRILL: Our rotten and pocket boroughs—because our boroughs are controlled by one man, namely the Premier of this State—are the seats of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre. If the Premier feels proud about controlling rotten boroughs and pocket boroughs as his predecessors did in England in the latter part of the 19th century, he is one of the few people to feel that way.

Mr Bryce: He is with them in spirit.

Mr GRILL: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): The member should be talking about electoral districts.

Mr GRILL: I am talking about rotten boroughs.

Mr Bryce: We are not talking about four-legged animals, Mr Deputy Chairman.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the member is drawing a long bow if he feels he is dealing with the clause when relating back to the previous century. I ask him to talk to this clause as it relates to 1981.

Mr GRILL: The Tories of that latter-mentioned era vehemently defended those rotten boroughs. If we look at those old debates in the English Parliament we see that they spoke in the same vehement terms as the Government has used here on occasions.

Mr Bryce: Like the member for Mundaring.

Mr GRILL: Yes, that political troglodyte.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that unless the member relates his remarks to the clause I will put the question.

Mr GRILL: One of the criteria for deciding on the boundaries for these rotten boroughs, if I may call them that, is community interest. If we look at the map of the various statutory seats we can see that if the Government were hell-bent on amending their areas, the way to do it would have been along the lines of a community of interest. It has been adequately pointed out by two or three speakers before me that the amendment of the Kimberley electorate boundaries simply does not agree with any community of interest when the East Pilbara section is included in the Kimberley electorate.

If we look at the seat of Murchison-Eyre we can see it is basically divided into three areas: The Murchison area, the north-east goldfields area, and the area known as Eyre. That area includes the trans.-line roughly from Kalgoorlie to the border, and the Eyre Highway roughly from...
Norseman to the border. That is an area which I do not think the present member for Murchison-Eyre has ever visited since he has held the seat. He may have made a passing visit.

Mr B. T. Burke: You will notice that he does not contradict you.

Mr Grill: If that area were hived off and joined on to the Yilgarn-Dundas or Kalgoorlie area where there is a community of interest, there would be no loss at all to the seat of Murchison-Eyre. There is a real community of interest between the people of Norseman and those who live further out on the trans-Line. They have a natural centre which is the township of Kalgoorlie. That would be a natural hiving off and there would be some community interests if that area were attached to the area of Kalgoorlie or Yilgarn-Dundas.

I would suggest as an obvious amendment that we should unite those two rotten boroughs of Gascoyne and what would be left of Murchison-Eyre after we took out the Eyre part of it and make one seat. That one seat would be made up of about 1,900 electors from the Murchison area and something slightly less than 4,000 people from the Gascoyne electorate. This would make approximately 6,000 electors, which would be a respectable number.

The boundaries of the statutory seats could be amended in a further way to create two seats out of the present seat of Pilbara. The manner in which that would be done could be left to the electoral commissioners; but in doing that we could create two seats of approximately 7,500 electors and there would be a respectable number in each. That would leave the Kimberley seat untouched, as it should be. It would divide the 26,600 electors in the four statutory seats into four new statutory seats which would all have approximately the same number of electors. Obvious improvements could have been made and I can see from the way the Premier is looking at me that he is impressed by my suggestion.

Sir Charles Court: I am not impressed.

Mr Grill: Perhaps I was mistaken.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Premier is looking a little glassy-eyed.

Mr Harman: He is in his dotage.

Mr Grill: This particular provision is one of the more scandalous in the legislation. It brings no credit to any member on the Government side and it certainly brings no credit to the Premier or the Chief Secretary who is probably another aspiring pocket borough holder and one of the best things the Committee could do tonight would be to defeat clause 14.

Mr Harman: I put up a proposition to the Committee to which I hoped the Chief Secretary would reply.

Mr B. T. Burke: He has been asleep.

Mr H. T. Burke: No, he has not.

Mr Harman: If the Chief Secretary is not prepared to reply, that is all very well. A previous Minister who sat in approximately the same seat as the Chief Secretary, used to look up without saying a word when he was challenged on one occasion after another to justify his stand on the issue. He had a great reputation in the Chamber for just sitting there. I do not know whether he understood what was being put to him or whether he knew the policy of the Government or the decision the Government had made; but he certainly did not get to his feet to respond to any queries or challenge by the Opposition. In the same seat we now have the Chief Secretary who does not respond to the challenges which have been made by the Opposition in regard to the reason that the statutory seats have been changed to some extent whilst others have not been changed at all.

We have pointed out the problems which would confront a member for Kimberley. We have pointed out also some of the less onerous tasks that the other members in the seats like Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre would experience compared with those which would confront the member for Kimberley and we have asked the Minister to justify the reasons for the statutory changes—not the changes made by the commissioners, but changes made by the Government. The Chief Secretary sits pat, not prepared to get off his seat and explain to the House and the electors in the four seats to which I have referred the reasons that changes have been made in one area and not in any of the others.

Mr Hassell: You have had the answer several times tonight.

Mr Harman: I have not heard the Chief Secretary justify the manner in which the member for Kimberley will have to service the needs of all the communities I mentioned whilst the member for Gascoyne will service only five communities and no change will be made to his electorate.

If the Chief Secretary does not want to respond to that, that is okay: but he should let the people of Western Australia know that the Government makes a decision and does not attempt to justify it. That is a disgraceful situation. At least when the commissioners make a determination on
electoral boundaries they set them all out and indicate they adopt certain criteria.

Mr B. T. Burke: And there is an objection period.

Mr HARMAN: However, this Government is prepared to change the boundaries without indicating to the public of Western Australia why it has taken that action.

It is a disgraceful situation and it leads me, on occasions, to wonder whether I ought to be part of what happens here. When I see the dishonesty and corruption that takes place before my eyes, when a political party manoeuvres seats in Western Australia so that it remains in office for perhaps the next 10 years, I wonder whether I should be here. Government members say we live in a democracy; but this State is not a democracy. Over the years I have endeavoured to tell the new members of Parliament that they should not go along with the comments made by their leader to the effect that it is great to live in the democracy of Western Australia, because it is not a democracy. People do not have the opportunity to elect the Government democratically.

Mr BRYCE: We are a little surprised that the Chief Secretary should refuse the invitation to justify the reasons behind the changes made to the seat of Kimberley whilst no changes are made to the electorates of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre. How could this man ever aspire to lead the Liberal Party into battle? If the Premier really thinks this man will take over the reins, one could be led to believe that the Premier will be here into his nineties while he waits for his apprentice to achieve his journeyman's skills in this sophisticated art.

Mr B. T. Burke: It would be a case of adult education.

Mr BRYCE: The Committee has lost track of a couple of very important principles and you, Sir, will be pleased with this particular new principle, bearing in mind your interest in Standing Order No. 142. I should like to point out to the Committee that altogether too much emphasis has been placed during the course of this discussion on this clause on the role of members of Parliament as social workers. When are we going to appreciate our fundamental charter when elected to Parliament is to form a Legislature to consider legislation to implement the political will of the people of Western Australia and to form Governments?

Why should we concentrate our attentions on the exclusive aspect of the argument as to how easy is it for this member or that member to meet his constituents? Is the inference that members are interested in establishing the opinions and feelings of their constituents? Of course it is not. Members opposite have not said it yet, but they are talking about the PR aspects of their jobs and the case with which they can ingratiate themselves with their constituents to ensure their re-election.

Our fundamental charter, the reason this legislature exists, is to consider Statutes, and I suggest that should be foremost in our minds when we consider the structure of our electoral system, the voting power of members and methods of electing representatives to this Chamber.

We are not social workers. We should not aspire to be social workers. We should talk in terms of legislators. Far too little of our time is devoted to the consideration of legislation and far too much of it is devoted to the parish pump application of the job.

We spent something like four weeks in this Chamber tied up with inconsequential Address-in-Reply speeches. At the closing stages of this phase of the session we have been inundated with important legislation on one hand and, certainly, controversial legislation on the other. Our priorities are quite wrong, and I believe it is reflected in the attitude perpetuated by the Minister and his colleagues; in particular, in regard to this clause because it is the one the Government will use to justify the blatant gerrymander of constituencies.

As it so often does it is talking about access to members, convenience and the ability of members to get around the State. Those things are important, but should not be seen to be the most important part of a member's responsibility. I ask members to bear in mind that for generations Federal representatives were sent from this State to Canberra and, particularly in the early stages, had to go by ship via the Great Australian Bight, or by train, and reside in Canberra for many months. Those days were days when there were no STD telephone communications between Canberra and members' constituents and homes.

How could one say to those members of the Federal Legislature that the most important facet of their jobs was to be in contact with their constituents? I am not saying contact is not important, but for God's sake, let us get our priorities in order. We are legislators, not social workers.

This Government has set about the task of giving the member for Kimberley 12,000 constituents. My colleagues have borne down heavily upon the conscience of the member for
Mr B. T. Burke: That would be a bit beyond him.

Mr BRYCE: I suggest to you, Mr Chairman, we have one certain way of establishing the number of electors to enable us to join together sufficient enrolments for those seats. The Minister is in charge of the State electoral office which is negligent in the establishment of such numbers. This Minister knows that thousands and thousands of Western Australians, many of them living in the Pilbara, the Kimberley and, presumably to some extent, in the Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre areas, are not on the rolls.

Many of them are listed on Federal rolls but not on State rolls. That is part of the answer and the Minister knows that, but because many of those people are black, illiterate or from European countries, this Minister and this Government have not the slightest interest in those people as electors. That is why an amendment to the Act was brought to this place a couple of years ago to make it difficult for those people to enrol. That is why that piece of legislation will have its impact on this piece of legislation.

Mr B. T. Burke: It all fits together like a jigsaw.

Mr BRYCE: If a Government introduces legislation designed to place obstacles in the path of people wanting to be placed on the electoral roll and then introduces legislation such as this to change electorate boundaries, that Government begins to juggle the entire mechanism of democracy. In that regard this piece of legislation fits in with the other.

Unfortunately the disparity between the total number of Western Australians on the State roll compared with the total number of Western Australians on the Federal roll will increase inevitably with the passage of time. That is the deliberate intent of this Government; so much for the suggestion of the Minister that we can establish equal or equitable electorate districts in the north-west and the Murchison sections of this State. The people are there to be found, and it may be necessary to change the southern and eastern boundaries of statutory regions in a slight way.

Now that the member for Gascoyne has returned to the Chamber perhaps I can pose to him this basic question: Does he believe that what has been done in respect of this clause and his constituency constitutes fair dinkum democracy?

Mr Laurance: The boundaries of Gascoyne did not upset F. J. Wise or Dan Norton.

Mr Jamieson: They were pre-jet days.

Mr B. T. Burke: There were not so many people in the Pilbara then.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Gascoyne avoids the issue.

Mr Coyne: Not at all.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Gascoyne is not bold enough to say he believes what the Government is doing in any way resembles democracy.

Mr Laurance: It hasn't changed since 1890. I do not see why it should change tonight.

Mr BRYCE: There lies the indication of where this member stands in terms of a few fundamental principles related to equitable distribution of electoral power within the community.

When we compare this with other parts of the State, there is no rhyme or reason for it.

Mr Young: In 1953 the Labor Party introduced a Bill which provided for a leading factor of three to one in these northern seats.

Mr BRYCE: How far back does the Minister wish to go?

Several members interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Is the member for Scarborough intending to wait until the end of his political career before deciding to do what Steele-Hall did? Is the member not prepared to accept the fact of change or accept that the rest of the world is beginning to look at Western Australia and view it through antediluvian eyes? Thirty years is
a sizable proportion of one's life and the tremendous shift in the thinking of the people who occupy the few democratic countries in this world would be amazed that we are sitting here and debating this sort of corrupt rubbish in 1981.

The actions of Government members are deliberate and wilful and those members who are sitting here now with smirks on their faces will have recorded in history that they brought in such legislation in 1981.

Mr Young: You are now talking about how history will judge us but you were not prepared to allow me to judge the ALP on an historical basis.

Mr BRYCE: The member will have an opportunity to jump to his feet and follow me in this debate and pass judgment on the ALP. However, it is obvious the member for Scarborough is under the same instruction given to the rest of the Liberal Party; and that is, that they shall remain silent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: An hour or three ago I explained to the Committee that if members left this Chamber and journeyed outside they may well come across a burglar. Now with the passage of time if we were to step outside we would perhaps come across not a burglar but a more sophisticated image of the same thing. I am talking about the white collar criminal who would not have a burglar's bag but probably a microfilm in his pocket with which he could surreptitiously confiscate millions of dollars which belonged to other people.

I was talking about a burglar when we were debating another clause because I felt it was appropriate then but it is even more appropriate now when we are talking on this clause that I should remind the Committee of the corporate criminal. This criminal has become even more prevalent but he is rarely detected. In the same way, the Minister will probably succeed in getting away with the fine tuning of the corporate criminal which is represented in this clause.

We note that the sections of the Act, which are to be amended by this particular clause, are related to the Electoral Districts Act and that two subclauses relate to the schedule attached to the legislation. We all know that it is not possible to amend a schedule so the Minister, as a corporate criminal, will tinker with the same sophisticated gadgetry I mentioned previously, in order to ensure that this legislation is effective. He has used his own sort of fine tuning to impose his will upon this Parliament.

The member for Maylands presented a reasonable and coherent proposition to the Minister in an effort to obtain some explanation from him.

The CHAIRMAN: I think one would not have to stretch one's imagination too far to note that tedious repetition may be about to be embarked upon. The Minister was asked to comment on a number of clauses previously and I ask the member to not stray too far from the debate.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I was simply saying that the member for Maylands made out a case that, because of its coherence and relevance, relieves me of the task of putting forward the same case myself.

The member for Murchison-Eyre was asked to explain how he relieved himself of the obligation to explain his position. He is to be left with 2 000 voters while 12 000 voters will be foisted onto the member for Kimberley.

When the member for Ascot called upon the member for Murchison-Eyre to make some explanation it was obvious that he did not know that he has had difficulty in explaining his actions some of the time. I have been told that when he was asked why he had voted in favour of the Government's Mining Bill he responded "I guess I am stupid."

Mr Coyne: I did not say that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I was told that the member said that at a meeting but the member now denies that.

Mr Coyne: Yes, you have been listening to too many rumours.

Mr B. T. BURKE: So, if that is true, despite the denial, then the member for Ascot holds a rather faint hope that the member for Murchison-Eyre will explain the position which will pertain in his electorate.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, two parts of this clause contain the crux of the argument against what the Government is attempting to do. Those two parts show by comparison that there is a complete contrast in the way in which this Government treats its districts, firstly in respect of Murchison-Eyre and secondly in respect of Gascoyne.

The Government has said that there is a need to change the boundaries so this change will foist upon the member for Kimberley the task of representing 12 000 electors.

Then if we move further down to subparagraph (iii) we can see clearly that the member for Kimberley will be forced to represent these extra people. The member for Pilbara is to be relieved of the task of representing even as many people as he represented previously. It is simply not good
enough for the Government to think it can do this sort of thing without bringing upon itself the criticism of the Opposition.

In this particular case the criticism of the Opposition is reinforced by the contradictory action being undertaken by the Government, and in the unfair way it is making fish flesh of one and fowl of another when considering the merits of different representatives in this place and the merits of different constituencies outside this Chamber.

Mr DAVIES: When I spoke initially to this clause I said I would move an amendment at a suitable stage. I did not want to stifle debate, and I hope I have not stopped any member who had something to say. If by some chance the Government does not agree to the amendment—and I do not think it will do that—I think it will see reason on this matter—we can return to debating the clause. I move an amendment—

Page 8, lines 24 to 26—Delete the passage “together with the portion of land described in Schedule 2 to this Act”.

The reason for our amendment is apparent. We do not believe the situation should be altered. As the previous speaker said, the Government is making fish flesh of one and fowl of the other in trying to load its problem onto the Kimberley electorate. The problem is that the Government wants to retain the special statutory provisions in regard to the other three seats so that they are safe for the Liberal Party, and that is completely untenable and unacceptable to us. Especially in regard to this provision, the Government’s attitude is completely contrary to everything it is supposed to stand for, and to everything else it has proposed.

The Government is trying to justify its stand by saying that this will provide for one-vote-one-value. The Government is clutching at that explanation and it is saying that the number of electors in the Kimberley electorate will then approximate an equal division of the population by the number of electorates. That may be a good enough reason for the Government, but it is not good enough for us. We want to see some electoral justice.

The Government is confronted with a problem, and it does not have the gumption or the intestinal fortitude for its Ministers to stand up in the party room and say to its own members “You have to take a share of our problem”. The Government was not in a position to do that, so it decided to get rid of the whole problem by heavily overburdening a remote seat that is held by the Labor Party and one that is likely to stay with us. We cannot accept such a proposition under any circumstances.

The effect of this amendment is that the Kimberley electorate will remain exactly as it is. If the Government wants to come to terms with us, let it bring forward a proposal to produce something like equality in these four statutory seats. Members on this side of the Chamber are fair enough to acknowledge that there are some problems. The member for Boulder-Dundas has explained that some of the load could be taken off the Kimberley electorate and loaded onto the Pilbara electorate. Then some of that electorate could be taken into the electorate of Murchison-Eyre. There would be a community of interest in such a seat, and better access to transport than exists at the present time.

We can find no rhyme or reason for the proposal other than the fact that the Government wants to off-load its problem. Certainly it is not a reasonable approach to the problem. We refuse to accept the Government’s problem, but we are prepared to concede to some rearrangement to provide better electoral justice.

Of all the gerrymandering that has been achieved in this place, this provision takes first prize. I did not think any Government would be blatant enough to introduce a provision which would result in a remote electorate having 12,000 electors. The highest number of electors for the seat of Kimberley should be 6,000.

No attempt has been made to provide for an equal apportionment of electors, and we have been given no explanation at all. We refuse to be the whipping boy because the Government cannot control its own members in the party room. It is as simple as that. It does not matter to which political party any future member for the Kimberley belongs, if we have any sympathy for this person most certainly we will not go along with the Government’s proposition. I commend my amendment to members.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Whilst there has been a great deal of discussion about the change in the boundary of the Kimberley electorate, no-one has paid much attention to the feelings of the constituents there. I have no doubt that people in the Kimberley electorate and some of those in the Pilbara electorate will feel very strong resentment about this legislation. We must bear in mind that the two sections of the Kimberley are separated by about 1,000 miles of desert. One would have to go to impossible lengths to suggest that a community of interest could exist between these two areas.
The purpose of the amendment is to delete from the Bill the reference to portion of the land described in schedule 2. I do not know whether you heard the earlier debate. Mr Chairman, but Opposition members described the criteria on which the Government considered the electoral boundaries should be based. In case you missed the remarks, I will reiterate the criteria so that there is no misunderstanding. This will then be recorded in Hansard so that anyone who wishes to analyse the Opposition's attitude to this matter will be left in no doubt.

The CHAIRMAN: As members know, we have been discussing this clause as a whole for a long time, and in some areas we are bordering on the repetitious. I am not suggesting anything specific. The proposal before the Chair is to delete certain words and it is incumbent upon the member to maintain very carefully the relevance of the argument, which has to do with the addition of another area from the East Pilbara to the Kimberley area. I ask the member to confine his remarks to that.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mr Chairman, you are perfectly right as you usually are when in the Chair, and I am happy to concede that.

The point that has not been made is that if you, Sir, were a resident of that area and were confronted with a major change of this sort your reaction would be strong, and you would consider it a source of worry; and you would be pleased that an alteration is proposed to maintain the status quo. That is what we are doing when we are determining the fate of the ½ lines of the Bill which are the subject of the amendment.

Imagine a person trying to get in contact with his local member, knowing the distance he must cover and knowing the member has only one office. That is the sort of problem the average elector in the new Kimberley seat will be faced with unless we carry the amendment. The problem in regard to contacting one's member of Parliament is in knowing where he will be at a specific time. The Government has not suggested that it will extend concessions to the member for Kimberley so that his constituents will be able to avail themselves of their proper right and have access to their representative. Surely that is a concession which should be made.

It is not a case of an electorate with 12 000 voters such as Mundaring or Kalamunda. Surely members would accede the distinction is most marked, because a constituent in Mundaring could almost walk to Parliament House to see his representative. In the case of the Kimberley, knowing that it will have 12 000 to 24 000 more electors will not exactly improve the service. Perhaps many of those people are not on the roll, and that is something else for which the Government must bear some responsibility. Nonetheless, the problem of constituents in the Kimberley is exacerbated by distance and by the fact that this Government has not done its job, and it will disadvantage and do a disservice to 24 000 constituents in the Kimberley.

The situation could have been made more equitable. I am sure the member for Murchison-Eyre would not mind his electorate being increased by 100 per cent, which would take his constituents to almost 4 000. He could still write to each of them every week on his stamp allowance. Even that would change the situation of the Kimberley only a little.

It is all very well to feel sympathy for the member for Kimberley because he has a very difficult job. With a little more effort on the part of the Government his job could have been made impossible.

The problems of covering the distances involved in the Kimberley electorate to maintain contact with the constituents are vast. Travel is virtually impossible in certain months of the year, and once the wet season starts the problem is increased manifold.

For that reason I could not agree more with the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I was going to say his amendment is symbolic, but it is more the visual aspect of rectifying the entire problem that I have outlined, not only for the parliamentary representative, but also for the constituents he represents—constituents to whom this Government certainly does not give much thought. If those constituents show any resentment in the only manner constituents can show it—and do not forget everybody up there has relatives in other electorates—the Government will ultimately pay for what it is doing.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the Minister speaks I want to point out that a great deal of discussion has taken place on the clause and the amendment. I notice that repetition is becoming much more prevalent. Standing Order No. 142 was drawn to my notice at the beginning of the last speech, and I have taken the opportunity to have a close look at it. I advise members that I have reached the stage where I wish them to comply with Standing Order No. 142. They should avoid repetition of points which have been thoroughly canvassed already.
Mr HASSELL: It will come as no surprise to the Opposition that the Government does not accept the amendment.

Mr Davies: It does surprise us; we thought you were fair.

Mr HASSELL: Members opposite know full well the basis upon which this proposal has been put forward—

Mr H. D. Evans: You bet we do.

Mr HASSELL: —which is to make an adjustment between two of the statutorily defined seats in the north-west and Murchison-Eyre region. As I said in my second reading speech, all sorts of different adjustments could have been contemplated, and many different arrangements were considered. I do not pretend there is a community of interest within those areas any more than there is in the Murchison-Eyre electorate. An increase in the size of the Gascoyne electorate would destroy the community of interest within that constituency. An increase in the size of the Murchison-Eyre electorate would make it even more impossible, unrealistic, and difficult to service.

Mr Davies: But not as blatant as you are doing.

Mr HASSELL: An increase in the size of the Kimberley electorate in the way it is proposed would give the same result as the application of the Opposition’s one-vote-one-value principle, because it would be virtually impossible to draw the boundary for a seat of 12,000 people in any other way. It is also a fact it is in two distinct parts which can be serviced from distinct bases. I am not suggesting it will be easy to do so.

Also, our view was that servicing the Pilbara, with its immediate growth prospects, was in the realm of the impossible as it stands and the result of producing the two seats of Kimberley, with approximately 12,000 electors and Pilbara, with approximately 9,000 electors will be an evening out of those numbers because in the relatively short term there will be significant growth in the Pilbara.

Mr Bryce: What about Kimberley?

Mr HASSELL: I believe there will also be considerable growth in Kimberley, but in the longer term. That is why I was careful in my second reading speech to say that the whole question of the representation of those areas would need to be further considered in due course—perhaps sooner than the adjusted boundaries of the metropolitan area and the country area will need to be considered, bearing in mind significant growth patterns are developing in the State which will inevitably distort whatever boundaries may be set at any time.

Mr Bryce: Why then did you make the numbers in Kimberley so much more than for agricultural seats, also taking into consideration the vastly increased enrolments in Kimberley? Why should Kimberley have 12,000 electors, when there are so few in Darling Range and Mundaring?

Mr HASSELL: The honourable member continues to talk about these vast potential enrolments in Kimberley. The first knowledge I had of that matter was when the honourable member suggested it. I do not know why he maintains there are so many more people not enrolled in that area than in other areas of the State, if that is what he believes.

Mr Davies: It has been repeated a number of times in different lectures.

Mr HASSELL: That does not make it right.

Mr Davies: The figures I quoted came from the Federal Parliamentary Library. It indicated only 47 per cent of the potential voters were enrolled in Kimberley as at the 1976 census, while only some 56.7 per cent of the potential electors of Pilbara were enrolled. Nothing has occurred to suggest the figures have changed significantly. If the Minister has any evidence to the contrary, he should present it to us.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I deliberately allowed the Leader of the Opposition to expound on that point because I felt it was relevant to the argument. We have now heard that argument three times and I think that probably concludes the point as to why greater efforts are not made by the Government in a certain direction. The Leader of the Opposition has now set out statistically areas of concern, which concludes that debate. Members will be aware we are debating the deletion of certain words which, in effect, is the argument against the increase in the area of Kimberley or, if one likes, the excision of East Pilbara. I have allowed the Minister some latitude on the point but I think everybody must come back to the subject before the Chair.

Mr HASSELL: The amendment would negate the intention of the Government to adjust the boundaries between Pilbara and Kimberley as has been announced and determined by the Government as an appropriate adjustment to be made.

Mr BRYCE: The effect of the amendment will be to take the section at the end of schedule 2 out of the electoral district of Kimberley. If the Government were dinkum about establishing some equitable system in respect of those
statutory seats, it would not say "At some future time—perhaps sooner than later—we will have to adjust them again." If it were dinkum about establishing some form of equitable representation in those seats, it would have done it on this occasion. It is an easy matter.

The member for Welshpool has already suggested one constructive alternative to this proposition. Rather than take this great slice from the end of schedule 2 and put it into Kimberley, he suggested the seat of Roebourne could be re-established as it was many years ago, taking in, say, Roebourne itself, Wickham, Karratha, and Dampier. If the expectations of growth in that area are real, that would have been a clear and sensible alternative and it would have been eminently more sensible than the proposition contained in this clause to place this great section of the Pilbara in the electorate of Kimberley.

The Minister did not explain the rationale behind the decision to allow the electorate of Kimberley to grow to that extent. I do not accept the rationale—whatever it may be—because I believe in one-vote-one-value. Had the Minister said that this Bill would establish the future seat of Kimberley, which would be the same size as electorates represented by the members for Greenough, Darling Range, Mundaring, Roe, Albany and others, all of which have an agricultural weighting, one could begin to understand the Government's rationale.

We know there is going to be significant development in Kimberley. We have drawn the Minister's attention to the potential for increased enrolment. It would appear that by taking this section out of Pilbara and placing it in Kimberley, the Government will create an extraordinary situation where, within the space of a few years, both the Kimberley and Pilbara electorates will be laughing at the enrolments of their neighbouring seats of Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne.

If the Government had been really dinkum about equitable distribution, it could have included Mt. Newman in the area represented by the member for Gascoyne or the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Mr O'Connor: A gift.

Mr BRYCE: It would not be a gift, by any means. If the matter comes before us again on some future occasion we will hear the same old squabbles between the members for Gascoyne, Murchison-Eyre and Pilbara about who gets what in the carve up.

I make two final points: I challenge the members for Gascoyne, Murchison-Eyre and Pilbara to name any other electorate in the State in which people have 300 per cent or 1 000 per cent additional political power in this Chamber. People do not come up to members of Parliament in the streets of Carnarvon, Exmouth or any of those centres and say, "We believe as residents of this community we should have a vote which is 1 000 per cent more valuable than the people in the metropolitan area."

We have heard that, but not from the people who live in those constituencies. We have heard it from the parliamentary representatives. They are the only ones who talk about the need for rural weighting. Even in the agricultural constituencies, the story is the same. It is an argument that is trotted out by members of Parliament in an endeavour to establish a basis for retaining their own jobs—self preservation on the part of members of Parliament. I know nobody in Pilbara, Kimberley, or any of the other seats who sustains that view seriously.

The Government has made the decision to transfer this part of the Pilbara electorate. I hope the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition is carried in one sense; and in another sense, if it is not carried, the Government has made a very big mistake. Every now and again, Governments make blues—errors of judgment which they regret for a long time. The decision of the Government to incorporate this area, which is defined in schedule 2—a massive section of Pilbara—into the Kimberley constituency gives the lie to all of the arguments used for generations to justify the "pocket boroughs" in the remote parts of this State.

The Government can never publicly, in this place or outside this place, in the columns of newspapers or on the hustings, justify the position it has occupied for generations. The Government has created a monster in the form of this new constituency of Kimberley, by comparison with the seats adjoining it.

I acknowledge that the seat of Kimberley would have 12 000 electors if there was a one-vote-one-value system. That is why I am not prepared to say it would be impossible to represent it. It would be difficult—a lot more difficult than some other seats. I concede that.

Mr H. D. Evans: A lot more difficult than Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne.

Mr BRYCE: In this context, where there are 2 000 in Murchison-Eyre, 4 000 in Gascoyne, and 9 000 in Pilbara, the Government has created a monster. It is a precedent that will be used by everybody. It will be used by all who are associated with electoral matters in this State.
They will hang their hats on it to demonstrate the insincerity of the Government's decision.

Mr DAVIES: I am in somewhat of an invidious position. I do not want to let the comments of the Minister go unanswered, in case he thinks I accept them. Most certainly, I reject them wholeheartedly and roundly.

I could be in some danger of tedious repetition; but I will try to confine my remarks, and keep them concise and brief. I am certain we want to say other things about this Bill.

The Minister said that the Government considered the matter, and it thought that there should be an adjustment between two seats. Why two? Why not four? Why did not the Government decide that it wanted to revamp the four statutory seats completely? After 60 years, why did not the Government decide, with the passage of time and the changes of population, that better consideration be given to the matter? The Minister has not given us any indication at all. Why not do that now?

The Minister said that the Government might have to do this in the not-too-distant future. It may have to revamp the four seats at some suitable time—perhaps before the rest of the State is redistributed.

The Minister did not say how he would overcome the truculence of the members who have already proved a little difficult for the Government. If he cannot do it now, how does he propose to do it next year or the year after? His clear indication is that the Government is not satisfied with the matter. It has been forced into this position. The Minister is left with no alternative but to take the chance and go on with it as soon as it possibly can.

I want to know why the three members who hold those seats at present have been allowed to let self interest come in. Why has the Cabinet indulged them in that way? Was it because of the threats that if they did not have their way, something drastic would happen? It is quite apparent that they have said that they would not vote for the legislation. The Government would not have its constitutional majority; therefore the Government could not put through the other rorts it has worked in the metropolitan area and the country districts. It is as simple as that.

I do not want to labour the point. I want the Minister to know that I cannot accept the fairly feeble explanation he has given. I am surprised that a Cabinet which is supposedly as strong as this one has buckled under so easily to a couple of members from the north.

Mr HARMAN: On this issue, I can assure members that the member for Gascoyne will support the amendment. Earlier this morning he said that one of the reasons the seat of Gascoyne should not be changed was that the boundaries had been the same since the 1890s. He relied upon that decision of the Parliament, that the seat of Gascoyne should remain the same today. One can be assured of his support for this amendment.

The Government is trying to alter, by a Statute, the whole of a decision of this Parliament on the boundaries for those four seats. If the member is fair dinkum about that, he would join us in this amendment.

If the Government is really concerned about its image as a democratic Government, if it is really concerned about the image it portrays that the seats are determined by the commissioners—the Chief Justice, the Surveyor General, and the Chief Electoral Officer—why does it not have those four seats distributed by the commissioners? One could not ask for anything fairer than that. Why has the Government still retained the right to decide the boundaries of those seats, when it did not decide the boundaries of the seats in the metropolitan area?

One could take the argument a little further and say that the commissioners should decide all the boundaries in the State—that is, determining the blue line. One can stand on the steps of Parliament House and physically see the housewives in the electorate of the Speaker hanging their washing on the line. That is how close they are—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I find that a most expressive description, and I remember it very clearly, because you used it before. During your brief absence, I pointed out how we have canvassed a lot of material on a number of occasions. I pointed out that I would have to take a firmer line in regard to repetition. In particular, I urge you to confine your remarks to the amendment before the Chair, which is to delete certain words.

Mr McLver: You would think they would have dryers in Kalamunda.

Mr HARMAN: Mr Chairman, I accept the ruling but the very point I make is that if the Government is really dinkum about electoral redistributions being made in a democratic fashion so there was no hint at all of Government intervention, why does it not say after all these years that it will dispense with making the boundaries for the statutory seats and hand that responsibility over to the electoral commissioners? The commissioners decide the seats in the country
areas within the boundaries laid down by the Government. So what sort of argument can the Government mount not to allow the commissioners to determine those four statutory seats in an area which is now becoming a focal point in the history of Western Australia?

Mr H. D. Evans: Do you think it might be that the commissioners are fair and just?

Mr HARMAN: There is no doubt about that.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member to proceed from that point because he has mentioned this matter before and some of his colleagues have mentioned it a couple of times when he was away for a short time.

Point of Order

Mr PEARCE: I hate to criticise the Chair at this time of the morning, but that is the sixth or seventh time you have made that point, and that seems to be tedious repetition on the part of the Chair. Under Standing Order No. 142 I do not think that is the sort of thing we should expect from the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I take the humour in that point of order, but the Standing Order does not relate to the Chairman.

Committee Resumed

Mr HARMAN: I would like some response from the Government to indicate why it will not allow the commissioners to determine those four statutory seats.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 19

Mr Barnett
Mr Bertram
Mr Bridge
Mr Bryec
Mr B. T. Burke
Mr Carr
Mr Cowan
Mr Davies
Mr H. D. Evans
Mr Grill
Mr Blaikie
Sir Charles Court
Mr Coyne
Mrs Craig
Mr Crane
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V. Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr Mackinnon
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Sibson
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Trewoban
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Young
Mr Shalters
Mr Nanovich

Noes 25

(Teller)

Mr DAVIES: We always say we are doing something new in Parliament and this is the first time I have ever interrupted my breakfast to move an amendment. I move a further amendment—

Page 8, lines 35 to 37—Delete the passage “with the exception of the portion of land described in Schedule 2 to this Act”.

This means that the Pilbara electorate would remain exactly as it is at present.

We can find no excuse whatsoever for altering the present situation. I have listened carefully to the explanations given by the Minister and I have waited for either the member for Pilbara or the member for Murchison-Eyre to explain their stand, but to no avail. In view of the absence of a logical explanation, the Government's move is illogical. We do not want to upset a situation which has existed for quite a number of years. We do not want to upset the community of interest which has emerged in this electorate. We do not want to disappoint the people on the eastern side of the electorate by taking away from them the current member for the area. If the boundary change is accepted by Parliament, to all intents and purposes the people in the area would not have a member looking after them. That is hardly fair. It is hardly fair that the member for Kimberley should look after them, because the boundaries do not take effect until after the next election.

Mr Sodeman: I will put your mind to rest. I will shoulder the responsibility until the next election.

Mr DAVIES: Is that a fair thing?

Mr Sodeman: It just seemed to be a concern of yours I wanted to put to rest.

Mr DAVIES: I am pleased to hear that, but human nature being what it is, and with the alleged problems of the remaining Pilbara electorate developing as we understand they are developing, despite the fact the Minister will not let us see the report about the way the Karratha area is growing, I am not really satisfied.

I am certain the member's time will be taken up well and truly with the problems which exist at the moment. He will also find his time is taken up trying to overcome the ALP candidate who has recently been endorsed for the area, because she will give him a bit of curry. Most of his time will be spent seeing how she is doing and how she is emerging.

Mr Sodeman: She has been doing that for three years now.

Mr DAVIES: She is dinkum now.
Mr Sodeman: Do you mean she has been insincere in the past?

Mr DAVIES: She was only doing it on a casual basis previously.

Mr Sodeman: I hear she is being paid now.

Mr DAVIES: It is not casual now. At the present time she has the endorsement and there is a world of difference in application, which the member will notice. If this Parliament ever rises and the member goes home at the weekend, I am sure he will notice some of the developments which are taking place already. It will be difficult for him to police properly the whole of his electorate, particularly when he will shed a large part of it. Therefore, I believe we should not give him the right to shed it.

If what the Chief Secretary said is correct and before very long the Government will, after 60 years, have a look at these four statutory seats—it could well be it is examining the position already, because it certainly plays its cards very close to its chest and even when we ask questions the answers to which should not create any problems, we still do not receive answers—it seems Government members would rather be cussed than cooperative.

However, as I have said several times and I repeat it for the last time, we believe the Pilbara electorate should remain exactly as it is and, therefore, the best thing the Committee can do is to accept my amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

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Amendment thus negativated.

Mr DAVIES: I just want to draw attention to the position which will exist with regard to the Legislative Council seats in the electoral districts of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre, and the Kimberley and Pilbara. Why has the Government chosen to deal with it in that manner? Members should look at the imbalance which will be created. Currently it is estimated there are 12,000 electors in the Kimberley electorate and 9,000 in Pilbara; that is, 21,000 electors in that Council seat. In the other Council seat there will be the electorate of Murchison-Eyre with 2,000 electors and Gascoyne with 3,700; that is, 5,700 electors in that seat. We find that completely unacceptable.

It would be far better had the Government reversed the situation so that the seats which would be amalgamated were Kimberley and Murchison-Eyre, and Gascoyne and Pilbara. We would then have a situation of approximately 14,000 electors in one seat and 12,500 to 13,000 in the other. I ask members: Is that not a better distribution of electors?

Therefore, I believe I should move an amendment to test the feeling of the Committee in that regard.

Mr B. T. Burke: I will support you.

Mr Young: That is one.

Mr DAVIES: I am sure we will get one supporter from the other side. This imbalance is completely unacceptable. If members look at the community of interest, they will see there is greater community of interest between Gascoyne and Pilbara running down the coast and between Murchison-Eyre and Kimberley. When it comes to a matter such as this where the areas are contiguous, the fairest action we can take, if the Government is concerned that representation for people in areas distant from Perth should be made as easy as possible, is for the Parliament to assert itself and say that the Legislative Council seats in the Upper North should consist of Pilbara and Gascoyne, and Kimberley and Murchison-Eyre.

I move an amendment—

Page 8, line 40—Delete the words “Murchison-Eyre” with a view to substituting the word “Pilbara”.

I then intend to move an amendment to line 1 on page 9 to delete the word “Pilbara”, with a view to substituting the words “Murchison-Eyre”.

We would have roughly the same number of electors in both those council seats. For the life of me I cannot think why the Government did not do what I am suggesting now.

Mr B. T. Burke: They are not as bright as you.
Mr DAVIES: What I have suggested is the only possible answer to the problem if the Government wants to implement its policy.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I find myself compelled on this occasion to support the Leader of the Opposition because, quite simply, the argument he put forward makes excellent sense.

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr B. T. BURKE: It seems to me much fairer to aim to create Legislative Council provinces that are more equal in size than those proposed by the Government. On this occasion the amendment moved and the amendment foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition as far as I am able to determine will not detract in any way from the philosophy and thrust of the arguments put forward by the Government in support of its original legislation.

It would be interesting to hear the Minister speak on this particular clause bearing in mind that the proposal put forward by the Leader of the Opposition will create provinces much more equal in numbers. We could perhaps be more interested in the problems of representation than those proposed by the Government. On this occasion the amendment moved and the amendment foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition as far as I am able to determine will not detract in any way from the philosophy and thrust of the arguments put forward by the Government in support of its original legislation.

It seems to us quite likely that a province which would be created if the amendment succeeded would contain the areas of Murchison-Eyre and Kimberley and be won by the Labor Party, while the other which would contain the districts of Pilbara and Gascoyne would be won by the Liberal Party. I doubt the political aspects would not be of interest to anybody, let alone the Minister. However, if the Minister were prepared to accept the proposition not on the basis of politics he would see that what was proposed by the Leader of the Opposition makes good sense. Politically there would be no danger to the Government’s position. Of course, I am the first to concede that the Minister pays not one whit of attention to political matters!

By way of this sensible amendment two provinces equal in size would be created. We know the Minister is obsessed, preoccupied, and concerned with the problems of representation! We put to the Minister that in terms of population at least the problems of representation in that area would be made much less difficult by the acceptance of this amendment. Instead of having such terribly lop-sided provinces, we would have a situation by which equal numbers of electors would be represented by Legislative Councillors.

This amendment will test the Government’s sincerity because it offers no danger to the political thrust of the Government’s argument—not that it is important. At the same time there would be an obvious reassurance of the Government’s position in respect of representation. I cannot see why the Minister will not jump to his feet when I resume my seat so that he can signify his intention to accept this amendment. I know some harsh things have been said about the Minister.

Mr Blaikie: Uncharitable things.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That is right. I am glad the member for Vasse noticed them too. The Minister is shaking his head in despair because it is not very nice to be abused roundly for 18 hours.

Mr MacKinnon: By a roundly bloke.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It appears the member for Murdoch is on the same old course—interjecting from his seat.

Mr MacKinnon: I am.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The seat of his pants will be worn out, but we hope he will rise to his feet so that we can see the difference in his height.

The Minister should not take all this criticism personally. We expect that on this occasion he will with some alacrity accept our amendment. I suggest if he accepts it he will go a long way towards restoring himself in the eyes of the Opposition.

Mr Bryce: I think there had better be a Caucus meeting on that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I did not say he would succeed in restoring himself in the eyes of the Opposition; I said he would go much closer to being held to the bosom of the Opposition.

Several members interjected.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Why is it that everyone has come alive?

Mr MacKinnon: Ham and eggs.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Very shortly I have no doubt we will hear from the member for Darling Range!

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the member for Balcatta of the question before the Chair.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am being distracted by the interjections. As at the marriage of Cana the best wine was left to last, and I am sure on that basis we will soon hear a discourse from the member for Darling Range at which time we can all adjourn.

(62)
I will repeat the fundamental proposition the Opposition has placed before the Committee on this occasion. We have said that if the Minister considers the proposition in detail he will realise that from the political point of view it offers no danger to the Minister’s thrust—not that that is important. If we were to believe the Minister and forget all the harsh things that were said about him—certainly they were true, and we don’t believe him—we would accept that he is obsessed with equal representation.

We could then give him a chance to bring into force his views on equal representation for these two provinces.

I have not spoken for my full time; I realise I have two periods left on this clause. However, I intend to signify my sincerity by resuming my seat, notwithstanding the nine minutes I have left, to allow the Minister time to restore himself in our eyes.

Mr HASSELL: I regret to advise the member for Balcatta that the improvement of my proximity to the bosom of the Opposition is not one of my objectives.

Mr B. T. Burke: Everyone needs a friend sometime.

Mr HASSELL: Furthermore, I must advise the member that we cannot accept the amendment for a couple of reasons. The basic reason is that it is not our objective to alter the present situation concerning the constitutions of North Province and Lower North Province.

Mr H. D. Evans: Why?

Mr HASSELL: There is no need to make that change because it would not alter the system in any way. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, it would increase the size of the more eastern province to ridiculous proportions. The amendment, as it is moved, would be technically deficient because it would not provide for the existing members to be nominated as their representatives in this new province.

The amendment is not acceptable for the reasons I have stated. It does not improve the position regarding the representation of the region. In all sincerity I believe we have degenerated to the position where amendments are being moved merely for the sake of delay and obstruction.

Mr H. D. EVANS: To use the vernacular, this Bill is probably the greatest load of codswallop ever introduced into this place. Even the most elementary mathematician could see that, in total, the areas of the Pilbara and Kimberley will add up to 21,000 electors, if those electorates become a single Legislative Council province.

When we look at the electorates of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre we note the sum total of electors is 5,724; that is, 4½ times fewer than the area I have just quoted.

Last week the Minister for Agriculture indicated that Kununurra had no greater acreage of crop grown and surely this indicates that there will be an increase in the activity around Kununurra. Even if the water in the Ord Dam were let out in order that people may scrape for diamonds, the increase in population would be great. It has been said that 12,000 voters is less than half the number of voters who could be expected to be enrolled in the Kimberley area.

So, looking at the situation, how can the Minister justify 21,000 electors in one electorate and 5,724 in another electorate? He gave two reasons: One was community of interest and the other was technological.

The Government has based its consideration of change on these boundaries. If we place the electorate of Pilbara with the electorate of Gascoyne, the sum total would be 12,783 electors for the province and if the same were done with the Kimberley and Murchison-Eyre electorates, the total would be 13,941. The disparity is approximately 1,000 as opposed to 16,000 proposed by the Government. That is the difference and the Minister tried to claim that it was some sort of equality and that it would serve the people.

How can he make that statement and expect this Committee and the people of Western Australia to swallow it? I repeat that it is a load of codswallop and for that reason I have indicated the straightout statistics which give the lie to the claim of the Government.

If the Government is sincere, it will receive every co-operation from the Opposition to ensure that every technical and procedural action is taken in the other place.

Mr BRYCE: At this hour I would like to appeal to no less a figure than the Minister for Education, the grandfather of this Parliament, a man with many years of political and parliamentary experience, to resume his seat alongside this fledgling Minister and point out to him the true sense of this amendment which he is unable to discover. The Minister for Education needs to take him aside to explain a few political facts of life.

The fundamental political fact of life is that it is eminently more equitable, fair, decent, and honest when drawing electoral boundaries to have
two adjoining provinces with electoral populations which are roughly equal.

There is no reason for the action to deliberately create, in 1981, a provision whereby electorates adjoining one another have a vast degree of disparity. The Minister suggested that the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition did not meet the situation. I think he said it was not necessary.

I agree wholeheartedly with the view of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that it is a load of codswallop to talk about community of interest over such a vast and diverse region of the State stretching from Kununurra in the north down to the southernmost extent of Murchison-Eyre.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): May I suggest to the member that the area of "community of interest" for these four electorates has been quite thoroughly canvassed and I ask him to relate his comments to the amendment.

Mr BRYCE: We are dealing with two provinces and these two provinces are made up of two separate constituent parts.

How can the Minister raise his voice in this place and suggest that we are concerning ourselves with community of interest when he brings such legislation to this place which contains boundaries which incorporate places such as Tom Price, Mt. Newman, Goldsworthy, Wittenoom Gorge, Kununurra, and the Ord River. How can he say that this Government has the slightest concern about community of interest?

So let us dispense with the need to establish community of interest, and allow me to say why I believe personally that the provinces would be grossly under quota. The position that has been advocated by the Leader of the Opposition is so much fairer, more sensible, and logical than that contained in the Bill. How can the Minister argue that it does not improve the situation so far as representation is concerned? How can anyone argue that we cannot improve the terms of representation by changing the boundaries to establish a more equitable distribution of the population.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, if we unite the electorates of Kimberley and Murchison-Eyre, the combined electorate would have approximately 14,000 constituents. If we change the location of the boundaries and associate the electorate of Pilbara with the electorate of Gascoyne, the result would contain approximately 13,000 constituents—it would be nearly equal to the other province. There is no rhyme nor reason for the Minister to say this amendment is not an improvement. Clearly it is an improvement, and it is a great pity the Minister has not been able to understand in the most basic, simple, and straightforward terms what an improvement it would be.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Members will understand how disappointed I was at the refusal of the Minister to accept what is an eminently reasonable amendment.

Mr Barnett: Why don't you pause now and ask him why he refused it?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I would do that, but of course the Minister is not here.

Mr Barnett: He is not here? What a disgrace.

Mr Bryce: In the heat of battle he has deserted his post.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is no way for the Minister to conduct a Committee. It is certainly not paying you, Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Watt), the reverence you deserve.

Mr Barnett: What is the use in making all these points during the debate when the Minister is not here.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am afraid it is typical of the behaviour of the Minister during this debate.

Mr Bertram: The misbehaviour!

Mr Shalders: That is not true. He has spent more time in his seat than you.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I can hardly accept that is true, but the member for Murray is perfectly entitled to his point of view.

Mr Bryce: The member for Murray has been heard snoring audibly outside the Speaker's office, in symphony.

Mr Shalders: It is not in Hansard.

Mr Bryce: Well it ought to be now.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am glad to see that the Minister has recognised his responsibility and has returned to the Chamber at the same time as the Minister for Education leaves it.

I wanted to say that I was upset at the way in which the Minister concluded his reply to my invitation that he join with us this once in supporting our eminently sensible amendment. What happened? The Minister turned on the Opposition and said that the debate had been reduced to a farce.

Mr Hassell: I did not.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I was paraphrasing the Minister's remarks. He said that the Opposition was conducting an exercise to waste time and to hold up proceedings. I understood that to mean the debate was a farce, but I will stand corrected if that is not so.
Government members: Ah!

Mr B. T. BURKE: Oh come on; do Government members think this is an important piece of legislation or not? Government members should be happy to be here and to stay here.

Mr Young: We are here.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If they are prepared and happy to stay here, they should stop moaning.

Mr Old: Who is doing the moaning?

Mr B. T. BURKE: All the Government members were just moaning in tune or out of tune.

Mr Old: That was in sympathy.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): If the member for Balcatta will confine his remarks to the amendment, we will be able to proceed.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is very difficult when confronted with that sort of chorus.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it would help if you directed your remarks to the Chair.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In this instance I feel I have a hope of convincing the Chair. The Minister had no right to end his contribution in the way he did. The amendment, of its nature, appeals as one which was not hastily thrown together but which was the result of consideration over some period of time by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bryce: And his committee.

Mr Shalders: Yes, all of 45 seconds.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Whether it was thrown together hastily is not the point. The point is that it is a sensible amendment which will do what the Government says it tries to do when it redistributes boundaries to look after the problem of servicing an electorate. On this occasion I could have believed that the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister moving the amendment because his comments reminded me a great deal of the Minister's comments when he introduced the Bill.

The Minister said it was important to consider population and to ensure that we do not give members too great a task by asking them to represent too many people. The Minister said that this was one of the criteria laid down, along with area and distance from the capital. We now see the Minister doubling back on the ground he has covered because suddenly it is not important to consider the number of people in a particular province. Not only is it not important to consider that, when applied to in a gentlemanly and reasonable fashion the Minister, in his supercilious way, accused the Opposition of time-wasting.

Mr Young: You are even starting to break up yourself.

Mr Hassell: He can't keep it straight.

Mr Barnett: He is not the one who cannot keep it straight, it is you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: Thank you, Sir, for your protection. It is a burden to have to attempt to be sensible in the face of this stonewalling by the Government. Of all the amendments we intended to move, and the ones we have still to move, this was the one we felt sure the Government would accept. The Opposition is aghast at the Government's decision not to accept this amendment. I would say the refusal to accept this amendment is a signal of the Minister's insincerity. In the framing of this amendment we catered for all the things the Minister told us were important. This now means we cannot believe the Minister. He will lead us on and say, "If you agree with the criteria, it will be acceptable to me", but when we are concerned particularly about the criteria he tells us are important, what does he do? With his hand on his hip, in a supercilious fashion, he accuses us of time-wasting.

Mr Bryce: You are imitating the Minister.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That is right, that is how the Minister carried on. Sometimes he even puts his coat behind his hand.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: That is the impression the Minister gives. If he is not in a fit of pique, he is carrying on in a supercilious fashion about the amendment which fits in with what he said was so important. I can see that the Premier is embarrassed. If I were in the Premier's position, I would not allow the Minister to backtrack on what he has said is important. The Minister has elevated the unimportant to a position of importance, and the important to a position of unimportance. If there is any loser in this whole debate tonight—apart from the public who are definite losers—it is the Minister. That is unfortunate, because we all watched with interest the way this man was being promoted, and, as time goes by and someone develops feet of clay, it is sometimes sad to behold. Nevertheless the Minister is a relatively young man and I am sure he may come again.

Mr COWAN: The member for Balcatta is correct when he says that the Leader of the Opposition, when moving the amendment, put
forward all the arguments which were advanced by the Minister when he introduced the Bill. That is the very reason we oppose the amendment. There is some merit in the Opposition's trying to bring about some equality in numbers between the two provinces, but we believe community of interest takes precedence over that.

Mr Bryce: From where are you dredging up community of interest?

Mr COWAN: There must be some community of interest between the Kimberley and the Pilbara.

Mr Bryce: A few mountains and a fair bit of desert.

Mr COWAN: The point I make is that it is of much more importance to have these boundaries than it is to carry a fiddling little amendment which will change the provinces. I believe a complete re-examination should be conducted of all the statutory boundaries. However, it is far too early in the day to start fiddling with small matters like this.

Mr Bryce: Let's have a Select Committee.

Mr COWAN: We oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

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Clause thus passed.

Clause 15: Section 8 amended—

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Clause thus passed.

Clause 16: Section 9 substituted—

Mr DAVIES: Clause 16 shows what can happen when we start to meddle without taking the changes through to their ultimate conclusion. It provides for some alteration of representation in that there shall be seven electoral provinces in the metropolitan area where previously there were six, and those seven provinces will be shared amongst 30 metropolitan seats whereas previously the six provinces were shared amongst 28
metropolitan seats. However, the position in regard to representation is roughly the same. The legislation will provide that five seats can constitute a province for the Legislative Council, and there is not a great deal of change for the Assembly.

I wish to draw attention to the position which will exist in regard to agricultural, mining, and pastoral seats. There are to be eight electoral provinces in those areas, which is exactly the same as it is today. However, they are to be shared amongst 23 Assembly seats instead of 24. The legislation states that, as far as possible, the provinces shall consist of two or three contiguous electoral districts; this is understandable, because eight does not divide conveniently into 23. Therefore, one province will have only two Assembly seats.

Mr B. T. Burke: No doubt it will be a Liberal one.

Mr Davies: Most country provinces are held by the Liberal Party or by what is left of the National Country Party. Therefore, of those eight country provinces, seven will have three Assembly seats containing approximately 27,000 voters and one will have only two Assembly seats comprising about 18,000 voters, some 9,000 voters less.

The Government keeps saying it is trying to provide greater representation for the people in the country who are faced with the problems of distance, isolation, and the like. Yet here we have the Government pursuing this absurd proposal. This is a matter of some concern and highlights the fact the Government introduced this Bill urgently and did not think the matter through. The difficulty is in resolving this problem ends and, no doubt, to make certain of a little bit of gerrymandering to ensure existing members are slotted in to suitably convenient provinces. It has the scope to do this by combining the other two or three Assembly seats, provided they are roughly the same area. The commissioners are charged with doing that.

We have drawn attention to what happens in the provinces in the area of the four statutory Assembly seats. There is no need for me to comment further on that. We oppose this, because it is quite absurd. Once again, it does not do what the Government consistently claims it is doing.

Mr H. D. Evans: The Leader of the Opposition has revealed just how tattered around the edges parts of this measure are. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of new section 9 are relatively simple. It is a matter of increasing from six to seven the number of electoral provinces in the metropolitan area, which shall consist of contiguous electoral districts. The problem is that eight provinces have to be distributed amongst 23 electoral districts. The difficulty is in resolving this problem.

What concerns me—and there has been no reply by the Minister—is the question of the two electoral provinces in the north, in the statutory seats. With the east-west arrangement, I quoted figures of 9,000 and 12,000, and 3,783 and 4,100 respectively.

The Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie): That argument has been expanded ad nauseam by a number of speakers. I have frequently sought the co-operation of the member; and I thought he would realise the extent to which his members have already touched on this matter. I am aware...
of the hour of the morning; and the sitting has been long. I expect the member's co-operation.

Mr H. D. Evans: And you have had it in the past, as you know.

Mr Bryce: Without question.

Mr Young: And you will get it again!

Mr H. D. Evans: Members of the Government are becoming unfair now. I know it has been a long night; but they are being completely unfair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition ignores the members of the Government—

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: —and addresses his remarks to the Chair.

Mr Bryce: The Deputy Chairman says to ignore the Government.

Mr B. T. Burke: We have tried to, but they have too many members.

Mr H. D. Evans: The essential point—and you may have missed this essential point, Sir—is that we have in paragraph (c) the mechanism by which there can be a readjustment of the statutory seats in terms of the provinces that will result. I do not want to move an amendment—it is a little late for that—but it would be fair and reasonable if I did so.

Surely an explanation is due. The Minister made some utterances on an earlier clause; but when he sat down, he still had not indicated any fair reason that the amalgamation of the two Assembly seats could not be on a north-south basis instead of an east-west basis, as is the proposal at the moment. There is absolutely no reason not to do that. The differential which would apply would be 1000, as compared with 16000 under the present arrangements. That is certainly worthy of some explanation.

I trust the Minister will give a reasonable explanation of why this will be bulldozed through in the manner on which the Government seems so determined.

Mr Bryce: Mr Deputy Chairman, I shall accept your advice, against my better judgment; and I shall ignore the Government, and address my remarks to you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): In order to clarify the comments I made earlier, they were related to the interjections by Government members.

Mr Bryce: You would appreciate how thick and fast those interjections have been in the last 20 hours, Sir. Most members of the Government managed to hold ranks for the first 15 hours in a reasonable way; but then the member for Karrinyup started to interject.

Mr Clarko: They might have been fast, but certainly not thick!

Mr H. D. Evans: If only the member for Swan had been here!

Mr Bryce: If this has proved nothing else, it has proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the Government members are incapable of accepting instructions from their leader to remain quiet during the course of a debate, and not to interject on members opposite.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr B. T. Burke: The only one who has managed to say nothing at all is the Minister.

Mr Jamieson: And the member for Darling Range.

Mr B. T. Burke: He is mute.

Mr Bryce: I know the member for Karrinyup would not mind if I were to borrow one of his favourite phrases—

Mr B. T. Burke: Croak!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the member for Ascot relate his remarks to clause 16; otherwise, I will be obliged to call another member.

Mr Bryce: Most assuredly.

In the terms of the member for Karrinyup, this clause is the very quintessence of the most grotesque electoral gerrymander, probably anywhere in the world.

Mr B. T. Burke: He would not have said that!

Mr Bryce: All the member for Karrinyup would have referred to would have been the word "quintessence". I have selected his phraseology to demonstrate the point I am making.

I challenge any member of this Chamber to point to any parliamentary system in the world where the degree of electoral malapportionment—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Ascot—

Mr Bryce: Mr Deputy Chairman—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Ascot is not debating the malapportionment of electoral areas. I hope he is speaking to clause 16.

Mr Bryce: Right.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee has been deliberating this Bill for many hours. Members are being tested sorely. The Committee will make progress if the member contains his
Mr B. T. Burke: Their votes have been stolen.

Mr BRYCE: The Liberal Party, in its collective corporate sense, is the receiver of stolen goods, because it does steal the electoral power from people in the metropolitan area. This is the very provision of the Electoral Districts Act which builds in malapportionment.

Mr Clarke: Are you not "malapportioned"?

Mr BRYCE: Quite the contrary! On the other hand, the 246,000 electors outside the metropolitan area—because this Minister and his Cabinet colleagues have deemed it fit and proper—have 20 representatives in that other place. There is no fairness or justice in that situation.

We do not seek to amend this proposition. That is why I said at the outset that I intended to ignore the members of the Government. I have given them up as a hopeless cause but I trust I do not have a hopeless cause in you, Mr Deputy Chairman. There is some hope for the voice of Vasse.

Mr B. T. Burke: It sounds like a radio programme. It would have to be short wave.

Mr Clarko: No, that is what the member for Bunbury was doing.

Mr BRYCE: The Leader of the Opposition has said we do not intend to set about the task of trying to amend this proposition, but we are going to marshall a brief on this occasion by virtue of the power of good and constructive argument.

Not one member on the Government benches has raised his voice in an endeavour to justify this clause. This is the most extreme form of political electoral gerrymander that I know of in the entire western world. It is even worse than the gerrymander in Victoria.

Mr B. T. Burke: Or Uganda.

Mr BRYCE: I do not classify Idi Amin's Uganda as part of the western world. The net effect of this clause however is to reduce us to the status of Idi Amin's Uganda because it means there are mendicants in another place who have to be wound up like clocks and told what to do when there is a conservative Government in office. This is where the rubber stamp situation is made possible when conservative Governments are in office. It is all the result of this clause, which effectively ties up and suffocates the electors of the metropolitan area into only seven provinces. At the present time there are six provinces.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! That is the third time the member has related that matter in seven minutes.

Mr BRYCE: Whilst I said I had given up hope with the Government, I was in the process of changing my mind. I thought there was a glimmer of light on the Government back benches and I thought it was possible that some of those members might see the light of day so far as my argument was concerned.

This is the very nub of the gerrymander the conservative political forces in this State have used for generations to ensure they continually win election after election for the Legislative Council, quite often in defiance of popular will, by the election of members to the other place. There have been 39 victories out of 39 starts because of the corrupt and crooked electoral boundaries which have been manipulated and corrupted for one express purpose.

Mr B. T. Burke: The retention of power.

Mr BRYCE: That purpose is to prevent the possibility of the will of the people becoming manifest in any real and meaningful way through reform Statutes that can be brought in at this end of the Parliament. The member for East Melville thinks that is a little humorous. We will have time
to teach him a few lessons if that is the level of his thinking.

Mr COWAN: The purpose of this clause is to bring about the changes to the Legislative Council wanted by the Government. We have two objections to it. Firstly, it increases the number of provinces, and we are opposed to any increase in the number of members of Parliament. Secondly, it does very little to redress some of the imbalances which, by the Premier's own admission, exist in Western Australia.

Mr Bryce: An imbalance of 1 700 per cent.

Mr COWAN: The point I would like to make is that it is completely unnecessary for the clause to be couched in these terms. Had the Government been prepared to examine the system of proportional representation for the Legislative Council; had it been prepared to declare just three provinces and then determine the number of members to be elected to them, there could have been some redress of these imbalances the Premier is so keen to talk about.

I am quite certain that had this clause contained some indication the metropolitan area was to be one province, the agricultural, mining, and pastoral areas were to be another province, and the statutory seats were to be another province, and had the Government used a number of members for each province, it could quite easily have resolved some of the imbalances that exist. Of course, that defeats the purpose behind this Bill.

It has been stated many times and it will be stated again that the purpose of this Bill is not to bring about electoral reform but to bring about boundaries upon which this Government can win an election regardless of the issues. I would not be very proud of this clause if I were a member of this Government.

Mr JAMIESON: There appears to be no rhyme or reason for this clause. The Government has seen fit to put a majority of the electoral seats for this Chamber in the metropolitan area; that is, 30 seats in the metropolitan area to 27 seats outside that area. That seems to be doing the opposite to what the Government says it is wanting. If the eight electoral provinces were pertaining to the metropolitan area and the other seven were pertaining to regions outside that area, I could see some sense for the Government to be in unison with the other changes made.

Mr H. D. Evans: Do you think it is to control the upper House?

Mr JAMIESON: Of course. But the Government countermands any action it has taken in what it claims is an improvement in metropolitan representation. The Minister made great play of that matter when he introduced the Bill. Any good the Government thinks it might get will be lost if it does not face up to the absurd fact that because of the population ratio, it has established a majority of Assembly members in the metropolitan area. But it is still forcing through a clause that will see a majority of the Legislative Council members elected from outside the metropolitan area.

Mr BERTRAM: We simply do not need any additional members of Parliament. However, if a member who participated in this debate simply placed that statement on record, he would be barely discharging his obligations. This Bill seeks to and will amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I suggest that the remarks made in the Committee at this stage be related to clause 16.

Mr BERTRAM: I am endeavouring to do that. The provisions in the Bill will alter the Constitution Acts Amendment Act in this State. In those circumstances, it is strange that we should have such amendments before us now when they were not mentioned in the Governor's Address to Parliament.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I will be obliged to call another member unless the member relates his comments specifically to clause 16. I trust the member has understood clearly what I have said.

Mr BERTRAM: Perhaps you, Sir, would be good enough to give me some directions in this regard.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are on page 9, clause 16.

Mr BERTRAM: It appears to me that clause deals with the procedure by which additional members are elected to this Parliament. I have the strongest objection to the clause. The State does not need extra members of Parliament and, thanks to the actions of the Premier, it cannot afford them.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! May 1 suggest to the member for Mt. Hawthorn that six members have already made the same point on a number of occasions. I ask the member to realise that the Committee is trying to make progress and I am not prepared to allow repetitious argument. I call on the member for Mt. Hawthorn to bring forward new material, otherwise I shall either call another member or put the question.
Mr BERTRAM: It has been a long debate and I have to confess that, like other members, there have been occasional moments when I have been out of the Chamber or asleep.

Mr Bryce: There is the most honest member of this Chamber!

Mr BERTRAM: This is one of the few ways in which Oppositions, at least during the time I have been a member of this place, have been able to make a point. They do so by the unusual process of sitting for extraordinarily long hours when people would normally be asleep and are certainly not functioning at their best.

However, the point to which I wished to return relates to the fact which I do not believe has been mentioned by anybody else and that is the stand taken by The West Australian in its editorial of 30 April. That was prior to the introduction of this legislation and I do not believe The West Australian would have known the details of the Bill. Under the heading “No reform” the following comment was made “West Australians need four more politicians in State Parliament like they need extra taxes.” Further down in the editorial it says—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order! I have asked the member for Mt. Hawthorn on a number of occasions to relate his remarks to clause 16. The member will either relate his remarks specifically to that clause or I shall put the question. That is the last time I shall ask the member for Mt. Hawthorn to do so.

Mr BERTRAM: I am trying desperately to oblige it is rather difficult to do so bearing in mind the length of time during which the debate has proceeded. However, I shall conclude by repeating what I have said in a few words, because I do not want to abuse the Committee in the same way that this Bill abuses the Parliament.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr WILSON: The purpose of the clause is to add two new members to the Legislative Council. Many hours ago the cost of adding two new members to the Legislative Assembly was dealt with very adequately by other members of the Opposition. I rise at this point to broach the issue of the cost as it applies specifically to two new members of the Legislative Council. In that connection, I pose the question: What is the need for two more members in that House?

It must be common knowledge to many members of this House that the two representatives of the largest province, the North Metropolitan Province, in the Legislative Council have so much to do and are so busy that they spend most of their time acting as the highest-paid parliamentary guides in any Australian Parliament or, for that matter, in any other Parliament in the world.

Mr O'Connor: Of course, they are looking after pensioners and showing them the House.

Mr Bryce: It is not just pensioners, you know.

Mr O'Connor: What do you have against pensioners?

Mr WILSON: At what cost is this being achieved and at what cost will two more members be elected to this House? Presumably if the two new members are like the two members referred to earlier and can find nothing better to do with their time, they will be added to the staff of guides at Parliament House.

Mr B. T. Burke: The next thing is they will be buying a bus with one of those microphones in it.

Mr WILSON: Well may we ask at what cost. On our reckoning, two extra members of that House—

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr H. D. EVANS: I feel the member for Dianella is entitled to a little bit of protection from the Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I was calling the Committee to order whilst there was a barrage of interjections from members. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition cared to look at the member whom I had the greatest difficulty silencing while he was attempting to make his point of order, he would have found it was one of his colleagues.

Committee Resumed

Mr Davies: You will have to hurry, because Mr Pike and Mr Wells will be in here soon.

Mr B. T. Burke: With the 10 o'clock tour!

Mr WILSON: On my reckoning, the cost of these two new members will amount to approximately $150,000 a year. Who really will bear the additional cost of $150,000 a year? Where else might we look for value for money in terms of that expenditure? Even many Government members are aware of the need—I believe they made representations regarding this need—for additional speech therapists. At $150,000 a year—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Once the member continues with speech therapists no doubt other members will be encouraged to refer to a host of other subjects. I ask him to speak to
clause 16, otherwise I will be obliged to call another member.

Mr WILSON: I am trying to make an analogy. I am attempting to cite an equivalent area in terms of expenditure where this expenditure of $150,000 of taxpayers' money could be used fruitfully. I think that is a fair point and one which should be allowed to be pursued. It is a question of value for money. I would like to go further and suggest that for that amount it would be possible to employ another 10 speech therapists or another 10 teachers.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member has made his point. I suggest to him he not pursue it.

Mr H. D. Evans: He is elaborating it beautifully.

Mr WILSON: I seek some understanding of my attempt to pursue the point further. I believe it is legitimate and should be allowed to be pursued.

Mr Pearce: It has not been made before.

Mr WILSON: The Minister and the Government should not be protected in the way you appear to be protecting them, Sir.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: My ruling would be that the member certainly can make such a point. However, it would not be my intention to allow the member to continue to pursue the point because that would give credence to any other member's pursuit of points along the same lines, bearing in mind that in the course of the debate in all stages of the Bill the point the member raised has been alluded to in a general nature time and time again. So, I ask the member not to pursue the subject.

Mr WILSON: It may have been pursued in a general way, but I am making the point specifically which has not been done before; so I will attempt to persevere with my point because I think it is legitimate. This matter must be of concern to the public of Western Australia—the taxpayers. Surely it is a legitimate point. I ask: What is the public likely to receive in value from two extra members of the Legislative Council compared with what the public might receive in terms of value for money by way of valuable community services which I think the community would regard as far more valuable than extra members of Parliament?

Mr B. T. Burke: They are tourist guides around here.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr WILSON: After all, the Minister took great pains to make the point that in the apportionment of representation by way of providing extra members of Parliament and drawing electoral boundaries great emphasis should be placed—almost a major emphasis—on the need for people to be represented and have their interests cared for properly. Who is more capable of dealing with such social problems to which members of the Opposition have referred? Who would be the people most capable? They would be speech therapists, professional social workers, teachers and others who would help people finding it difficult to pay their SEC bills, distressed persons and people suffering at the lower end of the income scale. With extra people in social work the underprivileged would have more access to assistance.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I suggest the member has made his point to the Chamber.

Mr WILSON: May I make one final point with your forbearance for one more minute. If the $150,000 was not spent on two members of Parliament but made available as an allocation for further education endowment grants to needy students in high schools we could provide that assistance to another 800 children. I would rather see those children in needy circumstances in our high schools receive $160 each than see the money go to waste on two more members of the upper House to act as guides to visitors to this place.

Mr Pearce interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member for Gosnells will keep order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I rise also to oppose the clause under consideration. I will take a new tack—up till now—in considering the subject matter before us. Mr Deputy Chairman, you will recall that the member for Ascot very ably referred to the disparity between representation provided to agricultural areas and that provided to metropolitan areas.

What I want to impress upon the Committee is that it is possible to define the position even further by considering more closely the parts of this clause covering representation and what was broadly referred to by the member for Ascot as the agricultural, mining or non-metropolitan areas. If it is possible to say a gross malapportionment has occurred with representation provided to people living in the metropolitan area, compared with those living outside the metropolitan area, then I would direct the attention of members to the more gross malapportionment that is able to be perceived
when one considers the third part of this clause under paragraph (c) which deals with the areas comprising statutory Legislative Assembly districts.

In the two provinces representing the area of those four districts it is possible to see that the provinces will contain at least in one case more electors than it is possible to find in any of the agricultural Legislative Council provinces. I invite any member of the Chamber if he is able to point out to me a Legislative Council province within an agricultural area of the State as outlined in this Bill that will have as many electors as will have the province that will comprise the Pilbara and Kimberley Legislative Assembly districts.

Mr Grewar: What about South Province?

Mr B. T. BURKE: South Province certainly will not have 29000 electors. I will stand corrected if the member is right.

Mr Hassell: What about the Kimberley?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The Kimberley will have 21000 electors.

Mr Grewar: It will be 27000 in South Province.

Mr Hassell: With the redistribution country provinces will have an average of 27000 electors.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I appreciate the Minister's interjection because what he says shows that the thrust of my claim is worth while. It is important to pay some heed to the distribution of population in provinces. I put to the Minister that a discrepancy will exist.

That discrepancy will exist in the Kimberley and Pilbara Legislative Assembly districts and should be compared with the population that will exist in the Assembly districts of Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre. The Minister has said, by way of interjection, he agrees with me that it is important to consider the population of the Legislative Council districts.

Mr Hassell: I only gave you figures; I did not discuss the issue.

Mr B. T. BURKE: My impression from the Minister's performance, though deficient it has been in terms of presence, was that he considered the population to be one of the prime determinants.

Mr Hassell: It is obviously a factor to be taken into account, and that is what I have said throughout the debate.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I would like the Minister to explain how this is taken into account.

Mr Hassell: You are simply re-hashing an argument which we have heard presented in many ways during the last two hours.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If the Minister will answer my query I will not mention this matter again. How does the Minister marry into the criteria the discrepancy in population which exists firstly between the two provinces within the statutory areas and secondly the general tendency to compare the remoteness and other factors in respect of the population of the statutory council provinces with those in the agricultural areas. If the Minister will say that he is able to explain that and does explain it, I will not raise the matter again.

Mr Hassell: It does not matter how many times I explain it, it does not satisfy you because you do not like the explanation. Let me simply repeat to you that we are not proposing to change those provinces and we are not proposing to upset the existing arrangement. At the same time, I draw your attention to the comment I made in my second reading speech that there is no overall situation, in that region, which is not directly comparable with the agricultural, pastoral, or mining areas.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I appreciate the Minister's attempt to explain his reasoning and I ask him whether he can go one step further and explain why it has been found necessary to interfere with the existing situation in so far as the metropolitan area and the country or agricultural areas are concerned but not in so far as the northern seats are concerned.

Mr Hassell: That is not correct with the northern seats. We believed that this adjustment is the best that could be made in this situation.

Mr B. T. BURKE: As I understand it, the Minister by way of interjection said that when discussing this clause a change had been made to the Legislative Council provinces in the north-west.

Mr Hassell: No. I said in the northern seats. I said that an adjustment is to be made by this legislation in relation to the Kimberley and Pilbara areas but there is no change to the provinces.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Perhaps I was not specific enough when I was discussing the matter in the context of the clause. My point is that no change has been made in respect of the Legislative Council provinces in the north-west of the State. If I am correct, the Minister agrees with me on that point.

Having already appreciated the Minister's explanation that it is not the Government's
objective to change the Legislative Council province in the north, why has it not been necessary to make a change with regard to the Legislative Council provinces but it has been necessary to change the provinces in the metropolitan area and the country area?

I am asking whether because of the population, the area, the communications or the distance from the capital, or community of interest changes are required in the north-west.

Mr Hassell: There is an obvious explanation. There has to be a redistribution of districts in the metropolitan area and in the agricultural, pastoral and mining areas which by necessity require a consequential redistribution of the provinces.

There is also the fact that we are increasing the number of provinces in the metropolitan area and there is an adjustment resulting from the transfer of one seat which determines there has to be a redistribution and change in those areas. That is not the situation in the north where the distribution between two adjacent seats in the Assembly is being changed without any alteration to the boundaries of the provinces.

Mr B. T. BURKE: If there are valid reasons for changing the boundaries of the Legislative Assembly in the districts of Kimberley and Pilbara, presumably, because, on the Minister's own criteria—the ones I have previously outlined—there was a need to change the boundaries of those seats, why was it not necessary to change the boundaries of the Legislative Council provinces?

Mr Hassell: It does not necessarily follow when the outer boundary is not being changed. I still have to go back to the point I have made on so many occasions, and it must bore me to hear it again. In my second reading speech I made the point that we acknowledge there are difficulties in relation to the representation of the whole of the region. We regarded this change to be the best for the time being and that it will not last forever, particularly in view of the pending developments for that region.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am gladdened by the Minister's explanation of the fact that what is being done will not last forever; it is a temporary measure. However, if this is what the Government is proposing on this occasion, God help us when problems develop on the political front and another redistribution is considered necessary. I can see that within a few years if what the member for Mundaring has suggested will occur does occur, and 50,000 people will be living in the Pilbara, the member for Kimberley will have to represent 100,000 people.

That is what will occur if we have an inordinate increase in the population of the north-west. The member for Kimberley will have shoved onto his shoulders the job of representing X-thousands of electors in addition to those he now serves so well.

The Opposition rejects this clause for the reasons outlined so adequately by the members for Ascot and Mt. Hawthorn. As far as we are concerned there is no call to increase the numbers of the members of this Parliament.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Seventy one years ago, in 1910 when a similar piece of legislation was dealt with the debate terminated at 9.14 a.m.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I suggest the member has made his point.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It seems to me that the member who resumed his seat was spot-on when he said that quality of representation was the all-important point.

It seems to me that were the Government honest and sincere in its attempts it could have studied some way to consider the area covered by these four Legislative Assembly seats as a single entity and, as happens in the Senate, provided for some form of proportional representation. The disparity in the weighting now is such that the situation can be regarded only as ludicrous. You, Mr Deputy Chairman (Mr Blaikie), would be the first to acknowledge this. Surely proportional representation from that area would be preferable to the grotesquely lopsided arrangement of a disparity of something like 4.5:1.

This matter has not been raised before, and I am inquiring earnestly as to the reason it has not been introduced. I assure the Chamber it is not because I have just thought of it.

The Minister said a number of alternatives were canvassed, but this alternative was not referred to. If it did nothing else, it would give far greater equality of representation than the present legislation envisages, and it would involve only slight adjustment to the technical aspects of the legislation. Surely that is a reasonably simple query, and one which merits a reply from the Minister.

Mr Old: I have heard it all before.

Mr H. D. EVANS: When did the Minister hear it all before?

Mr Old: About four hours ago.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister is reflecting on the Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I will be reflecting also very shortly.
Mr H. D. EVANS: The Minister's interjection is untrue. The matter may have been considered by the Minister but he has given no indication of that. I am curious to know whether it was considered, and if not why not, because it would be so much fairer, more just and reasonable, than the distortion we have confronting us in this measure.

Mr SHALDERS: I move—
That the Committee do now divide.
Opposition members: The gag!
Mr H. D. EVANS: On a point of order—
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): The Ayes have it. I now put the question “That clause 16 be agreed to”. I think the Ayes have it.
Opposition members: Divide!
Bells rung and the Committee divided.

Remarks during Division.
Mr Davies: Did you put the question, or did you put the question “That the Committee do now divide”? I think you messed it up. Had you only known it, that was the last speaker from this side.
Several members interjected.
Mr H. D. Evans: We offered to report progress several times.
Sir Charles Court: You have had a fair go.
Mr O'Connor: We wanted to let your record run down.
Mr Davies: You are weeping crocodile tears.
Mr B. T. Burke: The pressure goes on and you crack wide open. Now the gag.
Mr Bryce: First the electoral system and then parliamentary procedure.
Mr B. T. Burke: What has happened to the dignity of the House?
Mr DAVIES: On a point of order, have we decided what we are voting on now?
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Committee is voting on clause 16.
Mr DAVIES: Not “That the Committee do now divide”?
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That question was put and resolved.
Mr DAVIES: On a point of order, you said the question is “That clause 16 be agreed to”. I heard that distinctly. If you want to mess around with the rules, make certain you play with them fairly.
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is “That clause 16 be agreed to”. Lock the doors. Those in favour will pass to the right of the Chair—
Mr DAVIES: On a point of order—
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: —and those against will pass to the left of the Chair.
Mr DAVIES: Point of order.
Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I appoint the member for Murray teller for the Ayes and the member for Canning teller for the Noes.
Mr DAVIES: A point of order.
Mr Pearce: Move no confidence.
Mr DAVIES: A point of order. A point of order.
Mr H. D. Evans: Move for no confidence in the Chair.
Mr DAVIES: A point of order, Mr Deputy Chairman.
Mr Pearce: No confidence.
Mr DAVIES: A point of order.
Mr B. T. Burke: We have only voted once, you know that.
Mr H. D. Evans: We have only voted once.
Mr B. T. Burke: We have only voted once—just check Hansard.
Mr DAVIES: Can't you recall what has happened?
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member will resume his seat while we are waiting for the tellers to record the votes. I trust the tellers are recording the votes.
Mr Davies: On what?
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question was that the Committee was to divide. I put the question.
Mr Davies: No you did not, with due respect.
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I put the question and it was resolved in the affirmative.
Mr Pearce: And a division was called.
Sir Charles Court: It was not.
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!
Mr Barnett: Three-quarters asleep!
The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No division was called. The question was then passed. As far as clause 16 is concerned, the Committee is now dividing and the tellers are telling.
Mr DAVIES: I move—
That the Deputy Chairman's ruling be disagreed with.
That is the only thing I can do. If the Government is so anxious to get out of this Chamber, the easiest and quickest way to do that is to play the game. Although you may be tired, Mr Deputy
Chairman (Mr Blaikie), and you may not be aware of the sharp barbs that are going on, we expected an impartial decision from you. However, we did not receive that decision. You gave the call to the member for Murray and he moved "That the Committee do now divide".

In your indecent haste to put that motion, you distinctly said "The question is that clause 16 be now agreed to". I heard that distinctly and absolutely.

Mr Hassell: You missed it because your own members were yelling in the corner.

Mr DAVIES: I was sitting right here, much closer to the Deputy Chairman than the Chief Secretary is at the present time.

The Government has the numbers, and it knows that it can carry what it likes.

Mr Barnett: Can we have the doors unlocked?

Mr DAVIES: It was quite stupid, with due respect to you, Mr Deputy Chairman, to suggest that that motion had been put.

Mr Jamieson: Check Hansard.

Mr COWAN: Mr Deputy Chairman, on a point of order, I would like you please to advise me what stage we are at. We have some disputation about the question that is before the Chair. The Leader of the Opposition has taken a point of order and I was under the impression that that point of order is being considered. I came back to my place in order to take part in that debate, but I would like to know exactly what stage we are at.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I will restate the position. The member for Murray moved "That the House do now divide". The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, and no division was called.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question was then put—"That clause 16 be agreed to".

Mr Barnett: That is true.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A division was called and tellers were appointed. That is the stage we are at now.

Mr Barnett: No, we are not.

Mr Pearce: The Leader of the Opposition has moved to dissent.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Gosnells will keep order. The tellers had been appointed at that stage because I was not aware of, nor did I hear, any call for a division. The Committee is now dividing on clause 16.

Mr Davies: It is not.

Mr Pearce: We are dealing with the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr COWAN: On a point of order—

Mr H. D. Evans: Let the Leader of the Opposition finish his point of order.

Mr Davies: I am on a motion.

Mr B. T. Burke: This is a complete shambles.

Mr Carr: Just check the Hansard report.

Mr B. T. Burke: Just because you want to use the gag.

Mr COWAN: As I understand the situation you, Sir, were in the process of conducting a division and during that division the Leader of the Opposition moved to dissent from your ruling. May I ask whether you are considering that motion or continuing with the conduct of the division? I am vitally interested to know because I am opposed to clause 16 and I would like to take part in the debate if there is going to be one. I cannot debate the matter from the other side, although I can certainly record my opposition to the clause in the vote. I want to know exactly what stage we are at.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): Precedent has been established in this Chamber to the effect that, in the first instance, a point of order cannot be entertained after the tellers have been appointed. Perhaps members may care to check Hansard, page 2509 of 6 November 1963. I have appointed the tellers. I advise the Committee that I have appointed the member for Murray and the member for Canning as tellers. If the member for Canning is not prepared to act as teller the Speaker may count the votes of the Opposition.

Mr B. T. Burke: But the point of order was taken before you appointed the tellers.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not prepared to take points of order.

Mr JAMIESON: Mr Deputy Chairman, I want you to look at Standing Order No. 165 which states—

If any difficulty arise on any point of order during a division, the Speaker shall decide it; subject however, to the ultimate decision of the House.

It is specific: You must report to Mr Speaker.

Mr Pearce: That is right. Let us have a bit of order in the place.
Mr H. D. EVANS: I move—

That the Deputy Chairman do now report progress and ask leave to sit again.

We need someone to clear up the mess.

Mr Barnett: Mr Deputy Chairman, you are not the Speaker; you are not even a real Chairman.

Mr Bryce: I think we have seen another falling star.

Mr H. D. Evans: A falling log.

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 25

Mr Clarke
Sir Charles Court
Mr Coyn
Mrs Craig
Mr Crane
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Rushton
Mr Sibson
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Trehowan
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Young
Mr Shalders

Noes 28

Mr Blairie
Sir Charles Court
Mr Cowan
Mr Coyn
Mrs Craig
Mr Crane
Mr Grayden
Mr Grewar
Mr Hassell
Mr Herzfeld
Mr P. V Jones
Mr Laurance
Mr MacKinnon
Mr Herzfeld
Mr Nanovich
Mr O'Connor
Mr Old
Mr Rushton
Mr Sibson
Mr Sodeman
Mr Spriggs
Mr Stephens
Mr Trehowan
Mr Tubby
Mr Watt
Mr Williams
Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Motion thus negatived.

Clause 17: Section 10 amended—

Mr Davies: I spoke earlier on another clause in respect of which 18 May was set as a starting point for the calculations made by the electoral commissioners in respect of the Legislative Council. I suggested that was not a reasonable date and that it would be more acceptable if it were changed to 15 June. The Government has yet to demonstrate it wants to do the decent thing. We saw a demonstration just a moment ago of how the Government does not want to do the decent thing. Here is a chance for it to show it has some concern for the electorate and would like to see every possible elector on the roll, or at least encouraged to be on it. However, it is doing nothing about it.

Mr Hassell: You know that is not true.

Mr Davies: It is now the 13th of the month, which means that in five days' time which is next Monday, the rolls will be ruled off and the print-out will be handed to the commissioners as the basis upon which they will make their calculations.

Mr B. T. Burke: Probably even before the Act is proclaimed; it will be retrospective legislation.

Mr Davies: That would be true. I doubt the Act will be proclaimed by that stage, yet the Government will take advantage of the legislation to do certain things. Is it unreasonable to leave the rolls open for a short time and to start an intensive campaign to encourage people to check their enrolments? I believe that, despite the fact it has been made more difficult for people to enrol initially, or to re-enrol if they have been dropped off the roll for any reason, a lot of people would want to be included on the roll as a statistic for the making of future calculations.

Mr B. T. Burke: Probably even before the Act is proclaimed; it will be retrospective legislation.

Mr Davies: I do not think the holding open of the rolls for an
additional fortnight after 18 May would be unreasonable. Many members do a lot of enrolling work themselves. In fact, I used to do a lot of it but I do not have the time now. I used to find it quite humiliating to say to a person who was changing her address "I can witness your card because you are only changing from one address to another; however, you daughter is enrolling for the first time and I am not able to witness her card. My signature does not carry the necessary authority." That is the shameful position in which this Government has put members of Parliament.

The Government is trying to discourage people from getting on the roll and is doing nothing to encourage people to maintain correct enrolment. I have read the interjections made earlier by the member for Albany to the effect that the Electoral Department is doing a lot in this regard. That may be so at around election time.

Mr Watt: That is what I referred to. You commented on how the rolls closed with 24 hours' notice.

Mr DAVIES: That only confirms what I said. People become aware an election is coming up and often check to see whether they are properly enrolled. If the Government is to use the current rolls as an accurate basis for what the electorate may represent, those rolls should be as accurate as possible. The Government could easily institute an advertising campaign to encourage people to become correctly enrolled. If not we are going to start off from an incorrect point by using the rolls as at this date. It makes a farce of the whole exercise if the very first move the Government makes is based on wrong information.

Mr Jamieson: Mr Chairman—
Mr SHALDERS: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—

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<th>Ayes 26</th>
<th>Noes 20</th>
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<td>Mr McPharlin</td>
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(Teller)

Clause thus passed.

Clause 18: Section 12 amended—

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

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(Teller)
Government has made no attempt to justify its stand, while the adjoining electorate will have something like 12,000 electors miserable. Murchison-Eyre has 1941, the same miserable number. Someone will connived to do in this regard. The electorates of other two electorates. Not one of the members has bothered to defend himself on what he has said. We do not believe him, of course.

We protest most strongly at what is being done to the seat of Kimberley. It is completely unfair, undemocratic, and unjust for any member to find that suddenly his electorate has been doubled to meet the whim of the Government, because the Government is not able to contain several of its own members—one Minister and two back-bench members—who would normally be expected to take their share of any apportioning of extra electors. That has not happened in this case. We have the ludicrous position of one electorate to represent 12,000 persons. That electorate will certainly have many extra electors in it over the next three or four years.

The Pilbara electorate will be cut down from about 16,000 to about 9,000. The Government says that it will have a great increase in the next three years. The member for Mundaring said it would have something like 60,000 additional electors during the next three years. We do not believe him, of course.

Then we have the ludicrous position of the other two electorates. Not one of the members has bothered to defend himself on what he has connived to do in this regard. The electorates of Murchison-Eyre and Gascoyne will be completely unsathed—no change, and not one alteration to their boundaries. They remain with exactly the same miserable number. Someone will go outside now and say that I called the electors "miserable". However, I am calling the number of electors miserable. Murchison-Eyre has 1,941, while the adjoining electorate will have something like 12,000 electors. What a scandal! The Government has made no attempt to justify its moves in this regard.

The member for Murchison-Eyre has made no attempt to justify the stand he has taken. I have to congratulate him for putting the Government over a barrel, and apparently keeping it there. At least the Premier should have seen how unjust the whole business was. He should have demanded that some of his members take some of the surplus. Imagine the Premier leaving a man with 2,000 electors to look after. He would have 10,000 to 12,000 to manage for himself, I suppose.

Sir Charles Court: It is not new for Murchison-Eyre to have that character.

Mr Davies: It is certainly new for Kimberley to have its number doubled. It has no community interest, no direct communications, and nothing to associate the two inhabited parts of the proposed new Kimberley electorate. Members should not forget that the Government drew the line on the map. It cannot blame the commissioners, or the Chief Justice, or anybody else.

Between the two parts of Kimberley there are 1,000 miles of desert. How does the Government get over that?

Mr Hassell: There are two separate areas with community of interest, and there is an effective transportation system between the two.

Mr Davies: There is no direct communication between the top end of Kimberley and the towns of Paraburdoo, Tom Price, and Newman. That shows how little the Minister knows.

There is no sense, justice, or fairness in the redistribution. At least one would think the Government would try to be a little fair. Even if it were rigging the boundaries, one would think it would be not quite so obvious. However, the Government has come here quite blatantly and arranged to have at least three of the four electorates made safe for it on a continuing basis.

After 60 years in which that system operated in the north, there was no attempt to rationalise the position. That falls in with the Government's general thinking, as it is 60 years behind the time.

The other night I was reading a volume from the library, and I found that north of the 26th parallel in the 1920s there were only about 500 people. One would be able to know them pretty well. One would write to them every week, practically. Now something like 26,000 people live north of the 26th parallel.

In the Kimberley seat, only half the people who should be enrolled are enrolled. No attempt is being made to enrol them. In the Pilbara seat as it exists now, it is assessed that only 56.3 per cent of the eligible voters actually voted. Those voters...
will move into the new part of the Kimberley; so we will have an escalation of voters when it is possible to do a proper enrolment.

As far as the Government is concerned, those people will never be enrolled properly because the Government cannot activate itself to have that done. It will not encourage people to go onto the roll; and certainly it would not encourage them to vote.

Mr B. T. Burke: Black Australians are denied the vote.

Mr DAVIES: I have stated all my reasons before; and I will not recap all of them. I have said enough to indicate that what I said proves that the legislation is dishonest, immoral—

Mr B. T. Burke: And corrupt.

Mr DAVIES: That has been proved to be correct during the whole of this debate since three o'clock yesterday afternoon.

The Government has done nothing whatsoever to redeem itself.

I indicate to the Government Whip that I will go on for only another three minutes or so. I will give him a signal so he can charge to his feet to do the Government's dirty work. That is the worst part of being a Government Whip.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to come back to the clause before the Chair.

Mr DAVIES: We are disappointed with the Bill. We thought there would be an element of decency that would shine through somewhere amongst Government members, but the several back-bench members of the Government who are concerned with these two northern seats have remained silent. The Government has indulged its whims and bowed to these members' wishes because the Government could see it was on the rocks. The Government did not have the decency to say that rather than do the rotten thing which it is now doing it would sacrifice the legislation. If it had been reasonable legislation and had not been rushed through this Chamber it would have had our support, but there is nothing reasonable about this measure. The Government is gerrymandering the electoral districts in the worst possible sense and it is taking advantage of every possibility to make certain it remains in office.

I guarantee we will relay this message to the electorate. It will be a good issue on which to start the Kalgoorlie by-election—this and other matters which the Government finds embarrassing. As we go about the State and up to the Kimberley we will tell the people how false the regard of the Government is for the distance the people are away from Perth and how false the Government's regard is for the lack of communication. We will tell them the Government is prepared to give one member 1,941 electors to represent and give another member in an adjoining electorate over 12,000 people to look after.

These are things of which the Government should be ashamed. Surely there is one member of the Government who is awake who feels ashamed. I am quite certain the electorate will assess the position as we have done and find that the Government has been intemperate and dishonest.

Mr SHALDERS: Mr Chairman—

Mr Pearce: Sit down you little flea. I was up before you.

Withdrawal of Remark

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the member for Gosnells to withdraw that remark.

Mr PEARCE: Let us have a little negotiation first. I was on my feet long before the Government Whip.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Gosnells has been here long enough to know there is no specific requirement for a Chairman or the Speaker to call a person in terms of who was first up and who had the loudest voice. It is common practice when we deal with questions without notice that the first call is given to the Leader of the Opposition even though he may not have been first to his feet.

Mr PEARCE: Yes there is.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the member for Gosnells to withdraw the remark.

Mr PEARCE: Which remark?

The CHAIRMAN: The member referred to the member for Murray as "a little flea".

Mr PEARCE: The member for Murray is not a little flea in my view.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the member please withdraw unqualifiedly?

Mr PEARCE: That seemed to me to be an adequate withdrawal, but if you say it was not, I give an adequate withdrawal.

Committee Resumed

Mr SHALDERS: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and a division called for.

Bells rung and the Committee divided.
Remarks during Division

Mr Barnett: I would like to take a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I will not entertain a point of order now.

Mr Barnett: When will you?

The CHAIRMAN: After the question is put.

Mr Barnett: Why do you not direct your attention to Standing Order No. 115 which says the Speaker shall call upon the member who in his opinion first rose in his place?

The CHAIRMAN: There is another practice which we follow.

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 26

Mr Blaikie  Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court  Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne  Mr Old
Mrs Craig  Mr Rushton
Mr Cranc  Mr Sibson
Mr Grayden  Mr Sodeman
Mr Grewar  Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell  Mr Trethewan
Mr Herzfeld  Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones  Mr Watt
Mr Laurance  Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon  Mr Young
Mr McPharlin  Mr Shalders

Noes 21

Mr Barnett  Mr Harman
Mr Bertram  Mr Jamieson
Mr Bridge  Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce  Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke  Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke  Mr Pearce
Mr Carr  Mr Stephens
Mr Cowan  Mr Taylor
Mr Davies  Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans  Mr Bateman
Mr Grill  (Teller)

Motion thus passed.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Blaikie  Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court  Mr O'Connor
Mr Coyne  Mr Old
Mrs Craig  Mr Rushton
Mr Cranc  Mr Sibson
Mr Grayden  Mr Sodeman
Mr Grewar  Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell  Mr Trethewan
Mr Herzfeld  Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones  Mr Watt
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Mr B. T. Burke  Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke  Mr Pearce
Mr Carr  Mr Stephens
Mr Cowan  Mr Taylor
Mr Davies  Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans  Mr Bateman
Mr Grill  (Teller)

Motion thus passed.

Clause put and passed.

Title—

Mr BRYCE: The title of the Bill which is printed on the document we have considered for the last 19 or 20 hours is "A Bill for an Act to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899-1980 and the Electoral Districts Act 1947-1975." With the greatest respect, can I suggest
the title of the Bill should be "An Act to gerrymander the State's electoral system to protect the seats of various unworthy Government members and other suspect purposes"? There is no doubt that is the conclusion we, on this side of the Chamber, have reached after 34 or 35 divisions, approximately 19 or 20 hours of debate, and numerous questions posed to the Chief Secretary responsible for the Bill who has been unable, unwilling, or simply not prepared to provide the detailed answers to the queries from this side.

As to the reasons the Government has chosen to do what it has done with this particular Bill—

Mr Hassell: That is not accurate and you know it is not. You just don't like the reasons which have been provided.

Mr BRYCE: The Chief Secretary knows the difference between a reason and an explanation. Not for one minute has the Chief Secretary sought to provide an ounce of rationale to the basic questions—questions such as the ones concerning an explanation for the gerrymander in the north-west of this State that places 12,000 constituents in actual terms and 25,000 constituents in potential terms, in the seat of Kimberley, whilst alongside it geographically there will be 2,000 constituents in the seat of Murchison-Eyre.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I believe the member has strayed from the question before the Chair, and that is that this shall be the title of the Bill and I ask him to confine his remarks to that question. As the member is aware, that greatly limits the scope of the debate.

Mr BRYCE: I accept the constraints on this stage of the debate. However, I wish to point out to the Committee that, in the view of members on this side of the Chamber, we are opposed to the title of the Bill and believe it is totally inappropriate. The real title of the Bill should be "A Bill for an Act to gerrymander the State's electoral system to protect the seats of various unworthy Government members and other suspect purposes."

If I may conclude briefly, I shall do so in this way: there has been an extraordinary gerrymander in the north-west of the State. There has been an extraordinary gerrymander with the manipulation and construction of a crooked line to define the metropolitan area. We suggest the title of the Bill should include the words "a Bill to protect the seats of various unworthy members". I suggest that those unworthy members are the members for Pilbara, Mundaring, Dale, Kalamunda, and Darling Range—and, in fact, all the members who benefit positively and directly from this little piece of manipulation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I again ask the member to return to the specific question before the Chair. As he will appreciate, I have given him some latitude.

Mr Pearce: It is an alternative proposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the member for Ascot to confine his remarks to the question before the Chair which does not allow him to roam to any extent. I have given him some latitude and I ask him to relate his remarks to the question before the Chair.

Mr BRYCE: I shall conclude my remarks within the space of two minutes; that is all I require to demonstrate that we regard the definition of "other suspect purposes" as a general reason for this Bill being brought to this place—purposes which would include a deliberate intention to thwart the will of the people. The Chief Secretary is quite happy with that prospect. He set himself about that task when he introduced the Bill which will bring the system of government in Western Australia into disrepute.

Mr Hassell: That is false!

Mr BRYCE: Whilst the Cabinet Ministers can sit here and perpetrate this act of deception, what right do they have to ask the citizens of this State to observe the Statutes which a crooked Parliament will then proceed to pass?

Finally, Mr Chairman, the real purpose of this Bill—its suspect purpose—is to enable this Government which is on the run to act in a politically reprehensible fashion. The guilty men have been recognised as the Ministers who were responsible for preparing the legislation, and standing shoulder to shoulder with them are the guilty men who stand to benefit as a result of this sizeable piece of political corruption.

Mr SHALDERS: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result—
Ayes 28
Mr Blaikie Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan Mr Old
Mr Coyne Mr Rushon
Mrs Craig Mr Sibson
Mr Crane Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell Mr Trethowan
Mr Herzfeld Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Watt
Mr Laurance Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon Mr Young
Mr McPharlin Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Ayes 28
Mr Blaikie Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan Mr Old
Mr Coyne Mr Rushon
Mrs Craig Mr Sibson
Mr Crane Mr Sodeman
Mr Grayden Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell Mr Trethowan
Mr Herzfeld Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Watt
Mr Laurance Mr Williams
Mr MacKinnon Mr Young
Mr McPharlin Mr Shalders

(Teller)

Noes 19
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jameson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McJver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke Mr Pearce
Mr Carr Mr Taylor
Mr Davies Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Bateman
Mr Grill

(Teller)

Noes 19
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jameson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McJver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke Mr Pearce
Mr Carr Mr Taylor
Mr Davies Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Bateman
Mr Grill

(Teller)

Motion thus passed.

As to Third Reading

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcarta) [11.10 a.m.]: I seek leave to proceed forthwith to the third reading of this Bill.

Question put and negatived.

Leave denied.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary) [11.11 a.m.]: I move—

That the third reading of this Bill be made an Order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 29
Mr Blaikie Mr Nanovich
Mr Clarko Mr O'Connor
Sir Charles Court Mr Old
Mr Cowan Mr Rushon
Mr Coyne Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig Mr Sodeman
Mr Crane Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden Mr Stephens
Mr Grewar Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell Mr Tubby
Mr Herzfeld Mr Watt
Mr Herzfeld Mr Williams
Mr P. V. Jones Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon Mr Shalders
Mr McPharlin

(Teller)

(Teller)

Noes 19
Mr Barnett Mr Harman
Mr Bertram Mr Jameson
Mr Bridge Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Bryce Mr McJver
Mr B. T. Burke Mr Parker
Mr T. J. Burke Mr Pearce
Mr Carr Mr Taylor
Mr Davies Mr Wilson
Mr H. D. Evans Mr Bateman
Mr Grill

(Teller)

Title thus passed.

As to Report

The CHAIRMAN: The question is “That I do now report to the House.”

Division taken with the following result—
BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Superannuation and Family Benefits Amendment Bill.

2. Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association Bill.
   Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier)

[11.15 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. today (Wednesday).

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.16 a.m. (Wednesday).
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

MINING

Western Mining Corporation

1108. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Mines:

(1) Have one or more temporary reserves, under the Mining Act, been granted to Western Mining Corporation in the area south of Boulder and north of Kambalda during the last three months?
(2) What is the exact location of the reserve or reserves?
(3) What is the size of the reserve or reserves?
(4) For what minerals was the reserve made?
(5) Is the reserve or reserves in a gold mining area?
(6) In which goldfield is the reserve or reserves situated?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) No—but WMC Ltd were granted occupancy rights over Temporary Reserve 8153H to commence 30 January 1981.
(2) Approximately 6.5 km south east of Smith Dam.
(3) Approximately 62.3 sq. km.
(4) Nickel, copper, cobalt, silver, lead, zinc, chromium, molybdenum, platinum, manganese, talle, uranium, titanium, vanadium, and asbestos.
(5) No active exploration for gold in area of reserve.
(6) Coolgardie and East Coolgardie.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Average Cost of Replies

1109. Mr SHALDERS, to the Treasurer:

What is the average cost of preparing a reply to a parliamentary question?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

As the member may be aware, this question has been asked on previous occasions. In 1978 a considerable amount of time and expense was involved in collating the information in answer to a similar question. The same will apply if the required research is to be undertaken once more.

The average approximate cost to answer a question in 1978 was $89 and it can reasonably be stated that this amount has now increased considerably. Unless the member has a particular reason of which I am unaware, I do not propose to request the necessary research be undertaken again.

TOWN PLANNING

Melville Scheme

1110. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Is it a fact that the Melville Ratepayers Association has written to the Minister and asked that in view of the time involved in making a decision on the implementation of the new Melville town planning scheme, would she agree to grant preliminary approval of the scheme to expedite its implementation?
(2) If “Yes”, does she intend to grant the association's request?
(3) How much longer does she estimate it will be before approval of Melville’s town planning scheme will be granted?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) Yes.
(2) I will know the position about preliminary approval when the Town Planning Board has finished examining the scheme and there has been the opportunity for me to consider the board’s recommendations.
(3) If “approval” refers to final approval, this depends upon the timing of preliminary approval and also upon reaction to the scheme when it is advertised for public examination. As the latter procedures are outside my control, I am unable to give any indication of the time of final approval.

STATE FINANCE

Borrowings Programme: Infrastructure

1111. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

(1) Which of the following projects have been the subject of borrowings under the infrastructure financing scheme—
(a) Dampier-Perth pipeline:
(b) Pilbara electricity project:
(c) Worsley alumina project:
(d) North-West Shelf gas infrastructure:
(e) Kwinana power station conversion:
(f) Muja D electricity project:
(g) North-West Shelf gas-Jervoise Bay.

(2) How much has been borrowed in each case?
(3) When was borrowing commenced in each case?
(4) How much more in loans have yet to be negotiated in each of the cases mentioned in (1)?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Borrowings arranged to date $m.</th>
<th>Borrowing commenced</th>
<th>Balance of borrowings required in accordance with loan Council project approvals of June 1980 $m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dampier-Perth pipeline</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>541.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilbara electricity project</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>125.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsley alumina project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Shelf gas infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwinana power station conversion</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muja D electricity project</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>189.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Shelf gas-Jervoise Bay</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The balance of borrowings listed above is in terms of current approvals. Any increase in cost of projects because of additional inflation or other causes will, of course, require further approvals.

TOWN PLANNING

Koondoola and Turana

1113. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

(1) What area of land has been purchased for regional open space west of Alexander Drive between Yirrigan Drive and Marangaroo Drive since April 1978?
(2) What was the cost of any such purchase?
(3) What area of land in the same vicinity is yet to be purchased by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority for parks and recreation?
(4) What action has been taken to put into effect the undertaking given in her answer to question 2484 of 1979 that signs indicating that land had been purchased by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority for regional open space in Turana and Koondoola would be erected in those areas by 15 December 1979?
(5) How many such signs have so far been erected in this vicinity?
Mrs CRAIG replied:
(1) None.
(2) Not applicable.
(3) 305 ha.
(4) The undertaking was effected by the date specified.
(5) Four.

BOATS
Mishaps: Police Patrol

1114. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

(1) Will the Police Department be purchasing a patrol boat to check on river craft, etc., following increasing mishaps with power boats on our waterways?
(2) If “Yes”, where will be boat be located, and who will be in charge of the patrol boat’s operations?

Mr HASSELL replied:
(1) A new patrol boat is being purchased to augment present river surveillance and also to be capable of operating in the open waters of Cockburn Sound and coastal areas.
(2) The exact location of the new patrol boat has not been determined at this stage. Responsibility of the craft’s operations will lie with the officer in charge, water police.

RAILWAYS
Employees: Fines

1115. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has he and Westrail senior officers discussed with railway unions, as promised, the increased penalty of fines from $20 to $250 as laid down in the recent amendment to the Transport Act?
(2) If not, would he indicate why no discussions have taken place?

Mr RUSHTON replied:
(1) and (2) No discussions have yet taken place. The matter has been the subject of a study within Westrail which embraces other aspects of disciplinary procedures. This study is almost complete and Westrail expects to be in a position to discuss the matters fully with the unions within the next two weeks. No fine in excess of $20 has been imposed on any member of Westrail’s staff.

1116. This question was postponed.

TRANSPORT: AIR
Perth Airport: Upgrading

1117. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will the Government be making a submission to the Commonwealth works committee supporting the Belmont and Canning City Councils in regard to the proposed Perth Airport upgrading?
(2) Which of the proposed alternative sites for the new international terminal is favoured by the Main Roads Department?
(3) Were submissions made to the Commonwealth parliamentary committee on the future of Perth Airport with suggestions for future positioning of the international terminal?
(4) If “Yes” to (3), what was the suggested location of the international terminal building?

Mr RUSHTON replied:
(1) The Government expects to make a submission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Public Works Committee concerning developments at Perth Airport. It is not known which other organisations might also be interested in making submissions.
(2) The Main Roads Department has examined access to several alternative sites for the new international terminal and considers that adequate access can be provided to whichever site is chosen.
(3) and (4) The only Government related committee which has studied Perth Airport was the Commonwealth/State Advisory Committee and it reported in mid-1979. That committee's terms of reference did not include an examination of terminal positioning within the airport boundaries.

HOSPITAL
Royal Perth: Plumbing Apprentice

1118. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Has he received correspondence from the Minister for Labour and Industry drawing his attention to the fact that Royal Perth Hospital has not recruited a new plumbing apprentice this year?
(2) Did that Minister also request that endeavours be made to ensure the intake of apprentices be maintained?
(3) What has he done about this matter?
(4) If the answer to (3) is "nothing", or "very little", what does he propose to do?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) Yes.
(2) Yes.
(3) and (4) A first year apprentice plumber commenced duty at Royal Perth Hospital on 13 April 1981. Hospitals are encouraged to embark on the maximum recruitment of apprentices within their budgets.

TRANSPORT
Grain: Lake King-Esparance

1119. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will tenders be called for the carting of grain in the Lakes district—Lake King—to Esperance this year?
(2) If "No", would he state his reasons?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) and (2) This matter is under consideration and I will inform the honourable member when a decision is made.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
MINISTERS OF THE CROWN
Honorary: Validation of Appointment

241. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

On 16 April last I asked the Premier whether any positive action had been taken to make valid the appointment of two Honorary Ministers. He said he did not know the situation, but would advise me of it in due course. Is he now able to advise me what the position is and when it is anticipated the matter will go to court in order that we may prepare our case?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

No, I cannot give the Leader of the Opposition the latest position, because when I answered his previous question I said I would follow the matter through, which I did; but I understand certain discussions have been taking place.

Mr Davies: They have been taking place for months and months.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I understood the Leader of the Opposition was privy to them. If he is not I will make sure the information is communicated to him officially.

USS "MIDWAY"
Oil Spillage

242. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the Minister aware whether any spillage or other efflux of oil took place from the USS Midway whilst anchored outside Fremantle Harbour?
(2) If "Yes", what does he propose to do about it?
(3) If "No", will he investigate the matter and advise me of the outcome?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) to (3) No. I will certainly inquire into the situation and let the member know.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS
Students

243. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Education:

What is the aggregate number of students in each of years 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 at last school census attending—
(a) metropolitan high schools
(b) country high schools south of the 26th parallel
(c) country high schools north of the 26th parallel?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

Enrolments as at 1 July 1980—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Metropolitan high schools</td>
<td>11,725</td>
<td>11,298</td>
<td>11,405</td>
<td>6,764</td>
<td>3,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Country high schools south of the 26th parallel</td>
<td>4,455</td>
<td>4,077</td>
<td>4,074</td>
<td>2,051</td>
<td>1,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Country high schools north of the 26th parallel</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps his answer might be of convenience to those of us who do not have maps, if he would enlighten the House as to the difference between that boundary and the one currently being debated in respect of the Electoral Districts Act.

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

I will be glad to delineate the boundaries if the member cares to put the question on the notice paper.

HOUSING
Interest Rates

246. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Treasurer:

I have asked the Treasurer a number of questions on interest rates, without any apparent determination by the Government to outline a policy aimed at combating interest rate increases. I ask the Treasurer—

(1) Is his Government aware of the hardship, extreme in some cases, being occasioned to young home buyers by increases in interest rates?

(2) Is he aware that in many cases young home owners are being forced to give up their homes?

(3) If the Treasurer is aware of those things, could he please outline to the House all the steps his Government will take to turn around or at least ameliorate the worst effects of increasing interest rates?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) to (3) The Government’s policy in connection with interest rates is very clear—

Mr B. T. Burke: It is not working.
Mr Davies: It is to be inactive.

Sir CHARLES COURT: —and it is a policy to try to get interest rates down as quickly as we can. It must be accepted that the first thing to do is to get on top of inflation. As an interim measure, the Minister for Housing, with the full support of the Government, has been endeavouring to get the Commonwealth to agree that interest in connection with first homes will be a tax deduction. That
in itself would be a tremendous help to young home buyers in particular. So far as interest rates are concerned, whilst we are not happy about them, if it is any solace at all to the member he may be interested to know our rates are in many cases much lower than those applying in other countries which are generally regarded as having good and solid economies. However, that does not in any way please us.

I want to refer also to the remarks made by the member—and I think he made them for the second time—about young home buyers being forced to give up possession of their homes as a result of interest rates. My understanding is that all financial institutions—and not only building societies—are showing a great deal of sensitivity in this matter.

Mr B. T. Burke: There is only a certain amount they can do.

Sir CHARLES COURT: They are trying to make it possible for these people to remain in their homes by the rearrangement of their finances to give them every possible chance. The lending institutions have a desire to keep persons who have borrowed money from them in their homes.

Mr B. T. Burke: I do not disagree when you say they have tried, but they have only a certain scope.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am merely trying to answer the member's question. I listened to him when he asked it.

Mr Davies: You are just waffling on. Rhubarb, rhubarb.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Balcatta has on more than one occasion tried to give the impression that droves of people are walking out of their homes every day. That is not so.

Mr Wilson: Not in Nedlands.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order!

Mr Davies: There is more than enough of them.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member for Balcatta has tried to create a degree of sensationalism which ill becomes him. We of the Government are more concerned than anyone in the Opposition regarding home ownership and making it possible for people to obtain money at an interest rate they can afford. This is basic to the Government's policy, and it ill becomes members of the Opposition to give the impression that people are walking out of their homes in droves because they cannot meet their instalments. If the member for Balcatta has any particular cases of hardship, I would like to know of them because people have come to me regarding their particular problems and I have gone to the financial institution concerned, which has been very helpful and considerate. In many cases the problem has been caused because the persons concerned just do not have enough experience to talk the matter over with the bank, building society, or life assurance company, as the case may be.

FRUIT

Apples

247. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Have apple orchardists been able to dispose of their crop viably both on the home and overseas markets, or is there a surplus as in the past several seasons?

Mr OLD replied:

To the best of my knowledge most of the crop has been disposed of. Certainly there have been some problems in respect of the juicing plant at Capel which has been unable to take the quantity it took last year. Its intake was halved. The Commonwealth and State Governments are continuing their support for markets at risk. During a recent trip to Donnybrook I was given to understand that, in the main, the apple crop was being and will be disposed of satisfactorily.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Superannuation

248. Mr STEPHENS, to the Treasurer:

In answer to question 1097 of last week wherein I questioned him about the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund the
Treasurer indicated that last year the deficiency was $916,877. He went on to say that results of the last three actuarial valuations have disclosed that the fund has an increasing deficit. I ask—

(1) In view of that, has the Treasurer given consideration to making the fund substantially self-sufficient?
(2) If not, why not, particularly in view of the reported comments in *The West Australian* this morning that instructions have been given to Ministers to reduce their Budget requirements?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

(1) and (2) I was quite amazed that the member asked the question he asked last week.

Mr Davies: You are easily amazed these days.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The way that he asked the question gave the impression that this is something new, and I notice the media has worked on that basis; that is, that something new had been disclosed. However, the matter has been known to this Parliament and every member should have sufficient responsibility in the matter to know that the actuary was very concerned about the liquidity or solvency of the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund.

Mr Davies: You said that during the debate on the amendments last year.

Mr Stephens: I asked the question because of the increase in the membership of Parliament.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Wait a minute, I will answer the member's question because I want to get this in its proper perspective. The member for Stirling is entitled to the full benefits of the fund, and he is under its shelter at the moment. If he suggests it should be altered, I would ask him in what way does he want it altered? Presumably he wants to reduce the benefits and, as Treasurer, I would love to have a suggestion of that kind.

I remind the member that when we found the fund was insolvent in actuarial terms, it was necessary to bring into the Budget, on a predetermined basis in consultation with the actuary, an amount which would progressively increase and get the fund into a state of solvency. Quite frankly, my purpose is to get the fund into a state of solvency and make the present generation of members keep it in such a state by making allowance in the Budget for the amount necessary to meet the commitment progressively in actuarial terms. We could just sit back and meet the amount that falls due from year to year out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and allow it to get bigger, and bigger, and bigger without taking the accrued and contingent liability into account. I have deliberately made sure—and I thought it was thoroughly understood when we introduced the amendments last year—that we were handling the matter in a sensible way. We do not want to put into one Budget alone the full amount the actuary said should be put in to make the fund solvent. By arrangement we have this increasing amount so that we can get to a situation eventually where the fund is in a state of solvency on a continuing basis, with each year making its full contribution.

As far as the fund is concerned, if there are fewer members obviously the demands on the fund are less, and if we have more members the demands on the fund are greater. The demands are increasing, and have been approved by this Parliament. I would very much like to hear from the member for Stirling any way in which he would like to see the scheme amended, because he might have a good supporter in me if we could relieve the strain on the Treasury.

**Housing**

**Interest Rates**

249. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Treasurer:

My question is supplementary to my previous question without notice and follows the Treasurer's reply to it. I ask him whether it can be drawn logically from his answer that the Government regards the problems of the effects of increasing interest rates on home buyers as being minor problems, and whether it is possible that very few people are in fact experiencing hardship amounting in
some cases to being forced to leave their homes as a result of increasing interest rates? If that is the position, can he produce some evidence to support it?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

It is not correct to assume that the Government has a policy or an attitude to the effect that the problems caused by the interest rates charged for home buyers—be they first, second, or third home buyers—are minor ones. We regard them as very serious.

That is one of the serious problems of our times. It is a social problem as well as a financial problem. We as a Government are committed to a policy of maximum home ownership to the extent that we can influence it. So far as the second part of the question relating to numbers is concerned, I do not have the numbers available to me. Based on the questions asked by the member, he is the one who should be producing the numbers. He should be indicating to this House the number of people he knows of who are being forced out of their houses—and I am using his words—because of interest rates.

EDUCATION

Colleges of Advanced Education: Commonwealth Funds

250. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Has he now had the opportunity to discuss with the “razor gang” or its representatives the proposals to remove Commonwealth funding from the three colleges of advanced education unless they undertake some form of amalgamation?

(2) If he has consulted with that body, can he indicate to the House the nature of the consultations, and the likely future of the three colleges?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

(1) and (2) The Western Australian Government has a number of options in meeting the requirements of the Commonwealth Government. Those options are being examined by WAPSEC in order that we might be familiar with all the arguments in respect of each of them. When that investigation has been completed, we will be in a better position to make decisions whether we can effect further economies. It is most unlikely that we can think in terms of a multi-campus organisation, as proposed by the Commonwealth. We have to wait for the investigation to be completed to determine whether there are possible ways in which we can further rationalise the situation, and thereby meet the requirements of the Federal Government.

RECREATION

Football: Sunday

251. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware that the Victorian Government has apparently allowed the Victorian Football League to play certain matches on specified Sundays?

(2) Has any approach been made to the Western Australian Government, and does the Government have any policy, in regard to league matches being played on Sundays in Western Australia?

Mr HASSELL replied:

(1) I am not aware of the position in Victoria.

(2) My understanding is that the Sunday Entertainments Act was amended by this Parliament about two years ago, and as a result of that amendment, new regulations were promulgated early last year.

Those regulations removed from immediate control the issue of the conduct of certain entertainment activities on Sunday. It is also my understanding that amongst the matters removed from control was the issue of football being played on Sundays when it involved the charging of an entry fee. That information is “off the top of my head”, because I have not had notice of the question to enable me to research
the answer. As to whether we have had representations made to us, a specific question was raised in relation to a particular match to be played on a Sunday. That question was necessarily referred by my department to the football league, to obtain its view and its indication of what it proposed to do in view of the fact that it was not a matter within regulatory control.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

South-west: Seminar

252. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

(1) Would he indicate whether any or all of the keynote speakers at the seminar in Bunbury on Thursday and Friday of last week were paid a fee by the Government?

(2) If so, how much?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

(1) and (2) To the best of my knowledge, no keynote speaker has been paid a fee, and none of them have asked for any expenses associated with travel or accommodation. If it is a matter of some concern to the member, I will check on it. At this stage, I know of no such claims.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS

Bentley and Tuart Hill: Closure

253. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

I refer to my question 1011 on Tuesday, 5 May, in which I sought from him an undertaking to release the report prepared under the supervision of Superintendent James proposing alternatives to the closure of high schools. In response to that question he declined, stating that the public release of the document would achieve nothing more than creating unnecessary anxiety and unreal controversy. Therefore I ask whether that indicates an attitude on the part of the Minister and the Government of distrust in the people of Western Australia, and whether their desire to maintain this form of secrecy is one way in which he and the Government are attempting to hide the truth from the parents who are concerned about the conversion of the high schools.

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The member well knows the answer to that question. It is “No”.

FUEL AND ENERGY: ELECTRICITY AND GAS

Charges: Pensioners

254. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Would he confirm or deny the rumours which are rife that with the next rise in tariffs the Government intends to do away with the concessions currently granted to pensioners in relation to the payment of electricity and gas accounts?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The same question was asked of me last week.

Mr Davies: I missed it. I am sorry.

Mr P. V. JONES: I will repeat the answer. I do not know where this information comes from, but the answer I gave last week is still relevant. Such a move is not being considered.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Perth Airport: New Terminal

255. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

My question relates to the publicity attached to the visit by the Cabinet to the Perth Airport recently to view proposed developments and extensions to the airport. Is the Cabinet of the view that it is in the best interests of the Perth metropolitan area, and more particularly the suburbs near the airport, for the new international terminal building to be established in Redcliffe rather than in Newburn, where provisions have been made to cater for the added noise problems and safety questions?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I should preface my answer by saying that the reason a number of Cabinet
Ministers made the visit was to make sure that we had a visual as well as a written understanding of what was to be done. In addition to checking the timetable and the sequence of the works programme to be undertaken. Some of that programme has not been approved finally, but is subject to the normal Commonwealth study by the appropriate committee.

We were impressed with the commitment and the dedication of those local officials involved in this programme.

Mr Bryce: Do you mean Transport Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT: Yes; they shared our sense of urgency about the matter. We were worried about the original timetable and even the one now proposed in view of the fact we have the wide-bodied aircraft coming on the domestic service and the amount of international traffic is increasing. We hope that traffic will further increase.

My observation of what was tentatively under consideration was that it seemed the logical way of developing Perth Airport. We are fortunate we have enough land in the area to be looking as far ahead as 2010, and perhaps even later: it is not every capital city which is in that fortunate position.

I must be very careful to make it clear that no final decision has yet been made as to where the international terminal is to be located. I know that some of the local authorities have aspirations about a parallel strip being installed in the foreseeable future, rather than the distant future. However, I do not think it is a possibility; I do not think we would get the funds in time to get on with the development we need.

I must repeat that a final decision on the matter has not yet been made; however, it did appear to me that what is proposed was a sensible use of the available land in this first phase. In saying that, I am conscious of the fact the member for Ascot referred to two aspects in his question: One was from the point of view of the metropolitan area, and the other was from the point of view of people living in the immediate vicinity of Perth Airport.

I can understand the concern of people in the immediate vicinity of any airport. I would not like the honourable member or the people concerned to think we are unmindful of their situation. However, in my inspection of the proposed developments I was impressed by two things: One was the thoughtfulness of the people designing the terminal to make sure any future buildings in themselves will assist in reducing the noise factor and, secondly, in the tremendous technical advances being made in reducing the noise level of modern aircraft. I believe that so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, the present proposal is a desirable place for such advances to occur.

TRANSPORT: AIR

Perth Airport: New Terminal

256. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question on the same subject. The local authorities in the immediate vicinity of the airport are very keen to see the new international terminal located away from the existing terminal for a very important reason related to the traffic flow and the traffic problems in the community, since there is a perfectly good access to the airport from Leach Highway and Hardey Road. Will the Premier indicate what he believes are the best steps for those local authorities to obtain the support of his Cabinet on the matter?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

If I have understood the question correctly, let me hasten to say there is no suggestion of the international airport being an extension of the present structure. Whilst that might be one of the options, it would hardly be an option which would achieve the result we want to achieve. In any case, if they tried to adapt the present structure to an international as well as an adequate domestic standard, we would have terrible confusion not for a few months but perhaps for three or four years. So, I am assuming it is basic to the entire concept that the international terminal will be located away from the present
Site where currently, both domestic and international traffic is handled.

I understand the local authorities concerned have been very active in representing their case to the appropriate Commonwealth authorities, setting out their views as to why they want an entirely different type of development from that currently starting to show up as a most desirable concept in terms of finance, timetabling, and efficiency. If they feel they have not adequately represented their case to the Commonwealth, or to our Minister for Transport, I suggest they make representations to me. I know our Minister for Transport has been very active in the matter, and very responsive to representations. The important thing is to get on with the job.

GOVERNMENT CHARGES

Increase

257. Mr Davies, to the Premier:

I know rises in various charges such as electricity, water and the like have been forecast for the new financial year. My question is as follows—

(1) Is it likely those charges will be introduced earlier than previously announced because of the situation in which the States find themselves?

(2) I note this morning's newspaper carried a report of Ministers being asked to see how they could slash their Budgets. Is it also a fact they have been asked to see what charges can reasonably be increased to raise more revenue for the States?

Sir Charles Court replied:

(1) and (2) I am not prepared to foreshadow what will be the position in connection with charges, but I think it would be completely irresponsible to assume there will not be any increases in charges.

Mr Davies: You have already announced some.

Sir Charles Court: Quite apart from the decision of last Monday week, normal cost pressures, with increasing industrial, fuel and other costs being borne by these various instrumentalties make it inevitable that these authorities must increase their charges from time to time just as any trading concern would have to increase its charges. I would not hazard a guess as to what those increases are going to be, or when they are to be announced. Suffice it to say the Ministers have been asked in the light of last Monday week's decision to go back and re-examine their preliminary bids for the Budget, because it was quite obvious those preliminary bids in most cases would have had very little chance of success. One must face up to the realities of the situation. I think the Leader of the Opposition would know well enough that most Ministers and their departments ask for more than they reasonably expect to receive even in the best of times. In the present day times, we must be even more austere, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

As I have announced, the Ministers have been told to go back and have another look at their Budgets, bearing in mind that the sooner we make decisions on these matters, the less severe the cuts must be. If we delay taking action, the cuts would be that much more drastic to have effect in a financial year. As to increases in charges, the requests made to Ministers are no different from those made normally in preparing every Budget as to the expenditure and charges which should be considered.