

Clauses 148 to 162, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 163—For the holding of first elections, Governor-in-Council may, by *Gazette* notice, alter this Act:

MR. JAMES: To make the clause operative, should not something be added after the words "anything required by this Act to be done." These words were somewhat vague.

THE PREMIER: The same clause was in the Constitution Act.

MR. JAMES: No; in the Act 52 Vict., No. 23, the words in this clause, which appeared there as a substantive section, were a proviso to another section, which dealt with the making up and otherwise disposing of lists. The Bill required a multitude of things to be done. It was not intended that the Governor should be enabled to suspend the clauses dealing, for instance, with voting by ballot. The intention of the clause would be carried out if, after the words "required by this Act to be done," there were inserted, "in the preparation of the rolls under Part II. of this Act." There was nothing required to be done beyond that. He moved that the words he had read be inserted after "done" in line 7.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 164—agreed to.

New Clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following be inserted, to stand as Clause 153:

Certify that difference to the House.

If the Judges who hear a petition differ as to whether the member whose return or election is complained of was duly returned or elected, they shall certify that difference, and the member shall be deemed to be duly elected or returned.

New clause put and passed.

Schedules 1 to 5, inclusive—agreed to.

Schedule 6:

THE PREMIER moved that in the footnote, describing the qualification of the elector, the words "with not less than 18 months to run (or of which I have been in possession for 18 months next before making claim)" be struck out.

Put and passed, and the schedule as amended agreed to.

Schedule 7:

THE PREMIER moved a precisely similar amendment to that made in Schedule 6.

Put and passed and the schedule as amended agreed to.

Schedules 8 to 18, inclusive—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 11.5 p.m. until Tuesday, September 5.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th September, 1899.

Paper presented—Motion: Draft Commonwealth Bill, Joint Committee, Extension of time; Division—Rural Lands Improvement Bill; Amendments on report, reported—Roads and Streets Closure Bill, in Committee reported—Constitution Acts Consolidation Bill, second reading, resumed and concluded; in Committee, *pro forma*—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Report of Commandant of local forces, year ending June, 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

MOTION—DRAFT COMMONWEALTH BILL, JOINT COMMITTEE.

EXTENSION OF TIME.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) moved that the time for bringing up the report of the Joint Select Committee on the draft Commonwealth Bill be extended for one week.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): The Joint Committee had been appointed in the face of strong opposition from federalists in the House, based on the fear that the report would not be delivered at the time fixed by the resolution; but the objection

was then met by a statement from the Premier, that the report would be ready at the time specified. During the earlier proceedings of that very select committee—

MR. MORGANS: A very valuable committee.

MR. JAMES: That remark must be sarcasm: it was so on his own part. The very valuable select committee, during the first two or three weeks, absolutely wasted time discussing matters on which they could throw no light. They were discussing the constitutional aspects of the Bill, which had received the fullest discussion at the Conventions, and in connection with which the members of this House could obtain light by referring to the reports of debates at the Conventions. Having done that, an effort was made to obtain evidence, and for the first time the committee began to realise that what was wanted was evidence of facts. Opinions were not wanted, because every member of this House was just as competent to express an opinion as was that committee on those questions in regard to which we had all the information that could be obtained. But the committee having at last realised that time was being wasted, as we knew it would be wasted, for we knew that the committee was moved for and appointed in this House for the purpose of wasting time—

MR. HIGHAM: That was the hon. member's opinion.

MR. JAMES: Of course that was his opinion, and we could only express opinion.

THE PREMIER: Whose opinion?

MR. JAMES: We, the federationists of this House, the men who had been consistently standing by one policy, and not wobbling; those who desired federation, and had looked on this select committee as an attempt to block federation—these were the persons; and their fears were justified by the proceedings of the select committee during the first week. At last, as he had said, the committee began to realise, there being three federalists on it, that something ought to be done to justify their existence as a committee, and then evidence was called. And what did we see in connection with the evidence? Was that evidence such as had been suggested by the speech

of the Premier in moving for the committee—was it the evidence of experts given on those questions in regard to which experts had a right to express expert opinions? First, the Government Actuary was brought forward, not to deal with figures and statistics, but to express his opinion upon what the Federal Parliament was going to do, and what was going to be the effect of federation in regard to this and that industry, and even the effect on wages. That was a deliberate waste of time. On statistical questions Mr. Owen was an expert, and entitled to be heard with respect; but any inquiries from that gentleman, beyond questions of figures, were simply wasting time.

THE PREMIER: As the hon. member was wasting time now.

MR. JAMES: Then, for the purpose of exposing what federalists believed to be fallacies, a member of the committee entered into a somewhat long cross-examination; and then he was subjected to the greatest insults, simply because he endeavoured to throw light on this great question. No time could have been wasted in hearing from Mr. Owen all about his figures, and the facts and data on which his figures were based. But Mr. Matheson's cross-examination, which was curtailed by the hostility of the select committee, did at all events draw from the "seventh Minister," the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), an expression of apology for having in the House questioned the accuracy of Mr. Matheson's figures.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must not go into these matters. It was to be apprehended the hon. member was opposing the extension of time asked for; and, if so, he should confine his observation to reasons why the extension should not be granted.

MR. JAMES said he was endeavouring to show that the committee had a desire to waste time, and therefore should not be granted further opportunity of doing so.

THE PREMIER: No doubt the hon. member would have worked very hard had he been a member of the committee.

MR. JAMES: It was not asserted that the committee were doing nothing; but, considering the object in view, the committee were wasting time. When Mr.

Owen passed away, and was not allowed to be thoroughly and closely examined, the evidence of certain experts was called; and then, instead of their observations being limited to matters of fact, they were asked all sorts of questions, and a great number of the answers were suggested by the member who asked the questions. Another feature, emphasising the fact that this was simply a move of the anti-federalists for blocking the Bill, was that the whole of the evidence so far had been evidence on one side.

MR. MORGANS: Why did not the hon. member suggest witnesses?

MR. JAMES: For the purpose of argument, it might be assumed he had been wrong in not suggesting witnesses. But who did suggest the witnesses that were called? It seemed strange that all the witnesses suggested by the committee gave evidence on the one side. He wanted to know who was responsible for suggesting or nominating the witnesses.

THE PREMIER: Each individual member of the committee was responsible.

MR. JAMES: The witnesses who had given evidence had apparently been "nobbled" by members of the committee, and all spoke from one point of view. Surely it was a waste of time, piling one witness on another in that way.

THE PREMIER: Whose time was being wasted?

MR. JAMES: The time of the country, the time of Parliament, and the time of Australia. This question was being dealt with in the presence of the whole of Australia, and we should, as the Premier said in his speech in May last, deal with it properly and honourably. The committee having exhausted the time provided by the resolution, it had become necessary to carry out the main object of the select committee by gaining further delay. The committee could not come to the House and say they wanted further time for the purpose of calling anti-federal evidence, because that would have been "too thin" and obvious. And so, at the last moment, for the purpose of justifying a further extension of time, they, with a burst of generosity, proposed to call witnesses on the other side. The committee now saw how the country had been laughing at and criticising the select committee. It was significant that, if the object of the committee were to

throw light on the question, the light thrown had been of one colour, and one colour only. The only object in suggesting that witnesses in favour of federation should be called was to gain further time and further delay. There would never have been heard any suggestion of federal witnesses, if the members of the committee had not realised that the country would not tolerate further waste of time. He would like to know whether, if this extension of time were granted, the House would rise during the ensuing week.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. JAMES: Then it was just as he had fully anticipated, that the business of the House would be urged on, so that by the time the report of the committee came before hon. members, it would be too late to do anything with it.

THE PREMIER: The members of the select committee did not belong to that class of people.

MR. JAMES said he was glad to hear that; but he would like the Premier to say the same on his feet, so that the assurance might be recorded. The Premier had said the information was being obtained by the committee, not for the instruction of the public, but for the enlightenment of members of this House; but members ought to be able to make up their minds now. He understood that all the anti-federalist witnesses had been called; and those who were in favour of federation were prepared to go to the country on that evidence. What need was there for further evidence? Those in favour of federation did not need any justification; and, that being the case, to prolong the sittings of the committee was simply a waste of time.

A MEMBER: The federalists were afraid.

MR. JAMES: It was said the federalists were afraid; but that was purely an anti-federal and select committee argument. There was no necessity for any evidence from federalists. Five out of the seven bank managers in Perth were federalists, but two had been chosen and five left. The federalists did not desire any further evidence; but that was not because the federalists were afraid. If the committee deluded themselves with the idea that they could throw dust in the eyes of the public, by calling this sug-

gested evidence at the last moment, they were making a huge mistake. Those who favoured the Bill being referred to the people, realised that the select committee was a farce; and the sooner the farce was ended the better it would be for the honour of the Premier, the better for the honour of the country, and the better for the political honour of the House.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon Sir John Forrest): The hon. member had really only taken an opportunity to air his wordy eloquence. He liked to hear himself speak, and the fluency of the hon. member was his greatest danger. The hon. member did not care what he said about other people, but he did not like anything said about himself, although he did not mind telling hon. members here that the select committee was a farce. The hon. member did not mind using insulting observations to members of the select committee or to members of the House; but we were accustomed to that way of treating hon. members. We knew the hon. member spoke without responsibility, but simply took up an idea and "went for it for all he was worth;" then, after a bit, he changed his opinion, and if he did not altogether forsake his former opinions, he varied them. As to the work of the select committee, it had been a great tax on all the members of it, except at the beginning, when they certainly did not sit as often as they should. Recently, the committee had been sitting every day of the week, and to-day the select committee sat from half-past two till a quarter-past four, and now the members who had attended the committee were also attending this House. That was what nearly every member of the committee had been doing every day, and the committee had sat from Monday till Friday for the last fortnight. The hon. member (Mr. James) did not seem to give members credit for that, but said we were simply wasting his valuable time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon member did not appreciate the committee's good qualities.

THE PREMIER: He ought to appreciate that they were carrying out duties which had been entrusted to them by the Parliament of the country. As to not calling evidence, it was open to every member of the committee, both federalist and anti-federalist, to call what witnesses

they liked; and why the hon. member should blame those members of the committee whom he liked to call anti-federalists, because they did not call what witnesses the hon. member desired, one could not tell. Why did not the hon. member blame those who were federalists for not calling witnesses? Every member of the select committee had been given a free hand in regard to calling witnesses. As to the two bank managers, he (the Premier) could say he had no idea what their views were before they gave evidence.

MR. JAMES: It was an unfortunate selection.

THE PREMIER: They were the oldest bank managers of the colony; they had been here the longest, and were better acquainted with the conditions of the country than the other bank managers, most of whom had been here only a year or two, and had not had the experience of this colony, its ways or the extent of its business relations, as had the two bank managers who were called. If the committee desired to call all the bank managers, and if they were named by the member for Albany or the member for Central Murchison, those bank managers could be called.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We did not want to call anyone.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member did not want to call anyone, and he represented the member for East Perth—

MR. JAMES: The member for East Perth represented himself.

THE PREMIER: The hon member used the "we," like newspapers did, as if the hon. member represented somebody. The member for East Perth (Mr. James) should rather have blamed those members of the committee whom he was supposed to dominate or represent—one did not know which it was. If the House, as he believed, would give this extension of time, he thought the committee would not want more than a week. He (the Premier) thought he knew more about Western Australia than did the member for East Perth; that he represented more people and knew far more people than did the member for East Perth, and perhaps he was better respected; at any rate, his opinion was as good as that of the hon. member; and his own opinion was that the work of the committee was

appreciated and valued by the people of the country.

MR. LEAKE (Albany) hoped the House would not grant the extension of time, because, when the select committee was appointed, it was suggested that the committee could do no good.

THE PREMIER: Divide the House on it, and the result would be seen.

MR. LEAKE: The observations which he had been enabled to make as a member of the select committee confirmed his suspicion that the work of the select committee was little better than a waste of time. The member for East Perth had pointed out, and his information had been gathered from reports in the Press, that up to the present time all the witnesses called were anti-federalists.

THE PREMIER: Not all. What about the one to-day?

MR. LEAKE: Up till to-day.

THE PREMIER: And yesterday?

MR. LEAKE: Then he would say the majority of the witnesses called were anti-federalists.

MR. MORGANS: Who knew they were anti-federalists until they were examined?

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member knew, and every other member of the committee knew.

THE PREMIER: We could not know.

MR. LEAKE: Then the selection had been most happy. He had pointed out during the debate in the House, and also at the meeting of the select committee, that the gentlemen who had been called before the committee had not given evidence in the true sense of the word; that all they did was to express opinion as to whether or not federation would be of advantage to this country. If we were going to take the opinions of people, we might as well summon every person in the country, and find out whether federation was to be of advantage to them or not. The list of witnesses was revised yesterday, and about 12 intended witnesses were left out of the list. It was understood we should close the evidence to-day; but, in a spirit of anti-federal generosity, he supposed, we were told that we could call as many witnesses as we liked. We did not want to call witnesses. Sufficient time had been wasted, and we did not want to be parties to wasting more time.

MR. HIGHAM: The federalists dared not call witnesses.

MR. LEAKE: Just fancy the hon. member for Fremantle telling him that he dared not call witnesses! He might say he did not care to call witnesses, that he did not care to submit a man to the torture of being put before the select committee. Not one man who had been called had done more than express an opinion. He was asked: "Was he in favour of federation?" and the witness replied "yes" or "no;" generally "no." "What would be the effect on the population if federation were introduced?" Answer: "There would be an exodus of population." "What tariff would the Federal Government impose, were federation established?" Answer: "A highly protective tariff." Those were the sort of questions put, and that was the way they had been answered, and we, as federalists, were asked to continue that sort of farcical examination. Well, he was not going to be a party to it, and consequently he was opposed to this extension of time. We were told the extensive industries and manufactures in this country were going to be "wiped out;" but if the committee concentrated their attention in trying to find out what these industries were, more good would have been done. Many witnesses had said, that all those connected with manufactures were going to leave the country, and amongst others we were going to lose Mr. Hackett—that was if we got federation.

THE PREMIER: Where did the hon. member get that from? It was not stated to the select committee that Mr. Hackett was going to leave the colony.

MR. LEAKE: Was not the right hon. gentleman present yesterday? It was an open secret that the country must suffer to that extent if there was federation, and hence the necessity for further consideration. (Some laughter.) He agreed with what the member for East Perth said, that no good could be gained by calling further evidence, and the House might accept the statements of the federalists in the House that they did not want witnesses called. That being the case, there was no necessity for that little effort of generosity which his friends opposite intended to exercise on their behalf, as the federalists did not want the witnesses.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): What had been expected from the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James), to throw ridicule on the select committee, had occurred, and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had done the same thing. It had been the policy of the so-called federalists to throw ridicule on every effort made in the colony for the purpose of elucidating the position of Western Australia if we entered the Commonwealth. The hon. member for East Perth talked about "wobblers." He (Mr. Morgans) did not know whom the reference was intended for, but the member for East Perth was the arch "wobbler" on the question of federation as far as Western Australia was concerned. In the Convention of 1898 the member for East Perth stated that federation under the Bill, as proposed by the Convention, was absolutely impossible for Western Australia.

MR. JAMES: No; that was not what he said.

MR. MORGANS: What did the hon. member say?

MR. JAMES: Nay; the hon. member was quoting, and should not misquote.

MR. MORGANS: The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had been a little more sincere in his position; for that hon. member had not expressed himself against federation at all, whereas the member for East Perth (Mr. James) had been one of the strongest anti-federalists in the colony.

THE PREMIER: The biggest protectionist, too.

MR. MORGANS: The member for East Perth had told us that federation would bring ruin to the colony, and the same hon. member had told us that he believed in a system of protection for the colony. That position appeared to be incongruous; and if the hon. member had been able to turn so many somersaults up to the present time, one might expect that within a few months the same gentleman would turn another, and we might see him one of the strongest anti-federalists in the colony.

MR. JAMES: The hon. member must have been reading his (Mr. James's) speech about the Premier.

MR. MORGANS: The position of the hon. member was inconsistent, and he had no right to attack men who were

endeavouring to throw light on this question. He (Mr. Morgans) did not say the member for Albany or the member for East Perth desired this; but from their opposition to calling any witnesses regarding federation, it appeared they wished to prevent light being thrown on this great question. They would admit the Commonwealth Bill was not understood by the general public of Western Australia. Not five per cent. of the whole population of the colony understood the Bill, or what the effect of it would be on Western Australia if we joined the Commonwealth; and for gentlemen to get up in the House and oppose any action on the part of the Parliament or the people of the colony who desired to throw light on the question, was inconsistent with their position as members of the House and representative of the people. The description given by the member for Albany, regarding the evidence taken by the committee, was humorous but misleading. The hon. member said nothing but opinions had been elicited; but that was not so, for most important facts had been stated.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Let the hon. member name one.

MR. MORGANS: Facts had been stated regarding the cost of production, the rates of wages, and the effect of the Commonwealth upon industries of the colony. As for the Government Statist, important facts had been elicited relative to what the financial position of Western Australia would be if we entered the Commonwealth.

MR. LEAKE: They were not facts, but opinions.

MR. MORGANS: They were facts. Mr. Owen took, as the basis of his statements, the position of the colony in 1898; and, looking at the financial position of the colony in that year, it was perfectly proper and easy to draw a conclusion relative to the effect the Commonwealth would have upon Western Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Pure speculation.

MR. MORGANS: Such was not the case. If the finances of 1898 were taken as a basis, people could draw conclusions with regard to the effect of the Commonwealth on the finances of the colony.

MR. JAMES: Members had all those figures.

MR. MORGANS: That was true, but the figures had not been elucidated, and

not one man out of a hundred in this colony had read Mr. Owen's figures, or had any idea what they meant, before the committee began this inquiry. The investigation by the committee had thrown a great deal of light on the subject; and many people had a clearer perception of what the Commonwealth Bill meant, since the investigation of the committee began. Why should those members on the Opposition side of the House who dubbed themselves "federalists" continue to oppose the throwing of light on this question? Did they wish the public of Western Australia to swallow the Commonwealth Bill *holus bolus*, without knowing what it meant to them?

THE PREMIER: That was what they wanted.

MR. MORGANS: Was that the desire of members on the Opposition side, or did they wish the people to understand what they were going to do? It appeared to him the member for East Perth thought we should go on the principle of "open your mouth and shut your eyes, and see what federation will send you." That was a dangerous policy. Let all the light possible be thrown on the question, and let the public understand what they were going into. The member for East Perth said the whole of this thing had been investigated by greater minds in the other colonies.

MR. JAMES: Not the whole thing, but the constitutional question.

MR. MORGANS: That Mr. Reid, Mr. Barton, Mr. Deakin, and others occupied a high position in the sphere of knowledge, members were prepared to admit; but his hon. friend must admit there was some intelligence in Western Australia, that there were some men in this colony who ought to know something about these things, and who had a right to their views even on the constitutional question. Were those gentlemen in the Eastern colonies possessed of all the knowledge in the world, and were we in Western Australia obliged to blindly follow all they said and did? It was not only the right but the duty of members, as public men, to look into the question; and opposition to the proper investigation of the merits of the case was improper. It was the duty of the House to extend the time asked for by the committee, in order that the investigation might be made complete.

His hon. friend spoke about federalists; but he (Mr. Morgans) claimed to be as much a federalist as that hon. member, the only difference between them being that his hon. friend was a federationist-at-any-price, whereas he (Mr. Morgans) was not. If we could enter federation even without advantage to ourselves, without serious loss, he would be prepared to go in for federation at once. That was what the committee were investigating, and those members who believed in submitting the Bill blindly to the people were not the only persons in this colony who believed in federation. There was no more ardent federalist in the House than his right hon. friend, the Premier; and, if ever federation was carried in this colony, the whole thing would be due to the right hon. gentleman's efforts; the honour and the glory would be due to him, because he had attended every Convention, had fought almost single-handed the battle of federation in the Conventions, and had come back here and made a noted speech in the Town Hall, advocating federation for the people of this colony.

MR. LEAKE: And now the right hon. gentleman tried to block it.

MR. MORGANS: The right hon. gentleman did not try to block it; and when gentlemen like the member for East Perth stumped the goldfields and said the Premier, the Government, and the members on the Government side were trying to keep the Bill from going to the people, they were misleading the public. Neither the Premier nor any member on the Government side of the House had ever said the Bill should not go to the people, nor had they ever voted against it. His hon. friend (Mr. James) said every man who did not follow in his footsteps was a traitor to the cause and the country. But that was not the proper way to deal with this important question. Surely his hon. friend would admit that members who thought as he (Mr. Morgans) did were genuine in their views, although they might be in opposition to that hon. member. The only thing they asked was that there should be light on the question. His hon. friend said: "No; shut your eyes, throw the Bill to the people, ask them if they will take it as it is, 'yes' or 'no'; there must be no investigation; here is the Bill, and you

have a chance to read and understand it." But no question of so much importance as this, involving the destinies of the colony, had ever been brought before the public of Western Australia; and whereas if we passed a measure in this House one session, we could undo it the next, yet if once we entered into federation, there would be no retracing our steps; therefore that was one of the strongest reasons for a proper investigation into the merits of the question before it was accepted by the public of Western Australia. He (Mr. Morgans) did not intend to oppose the submission of the Bill to the people. On the contrary, he strongly advocated it, as he had done before. Every speech he had delivered in the House on federation was upon the lines that the question must be settled by the people; and at a very early date all the necessary information would be before the House, to enable Parliament to submit the Bill to the people. The Bill must be submitted to the people with the fullest knowledge and information it was possible for the select committee to give to them.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): When the motion for the appointment of the select committee was before the House, he expressed his disapproval of the action the House were taking, and held the opinion that the select committee would not do much good. He regretted to say that, in his opinion at all events, that view had been borne out by facts that had occurred since the appointment of the committee. He wished not to say a word against the committee, for he believed they were a most estimable body of gentlemen, and he gave them credit for every honest desire; but they appeared to have had the worst kind of luck.

A MEMBER: They had done nothing.

MR. KINGSMILL: The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) had constructed a most eloquent speech, and made out a good case, but on a somewhat nebulous basis. The hon. member had contended that the committee were throwing light on the subject, and that very important facts had been elicited. He (Mr. Kingsmill) had read the evidence of Mr. Owen, and the "facts" were not apparent, though there certainly were numerous expressions of opinion. The only statements in any

way resembling facts were Mr. Owen's opinions regarding statistics.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member himself was now giving opinions.

MR. KINGSMILL: And even the few facts which had been gleaned, if facts they were, were constructed on the same nebulous basis as the hon. member's speech. There had been nothing certain for Mr. Owen to build his arguments upon, and therefore the deductions drawn from his figures were open to question. As the evidence hitherto called had been that of witnesses who were all of one opinion on federation, the state of affairs was bad enough; but now that the committee were about to call evidence of persons who favoured federation, there would be confusion worse confounded. If an expression of opinion from witnesses was desired, the only sensible procedure for the committee would be to ask every elector in Western Australia to express his opinion, and the shortest and most just and satisfactory way to secure that expression was to send the Bill to the people.

MR. MORGANS: That would be done.

MR. KINGSMILL: Then hon. members would get a true expression of opinion. As for the idea of keeping the Bill from the people until the select committee had thrown all available light upon it, he was afraid the people of the colony, or several he had met, were not paying as much attention to the committee's proceedings as they should. For those reasons he would oppose the motion for extension of time.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): If there were no satisfactory reason for the appointment of the select committee and for such work as it had already accomplished, such a reason would be found in the fact that the grossest misrepresentations had been scattered broadcast over the colony, and more particularly throughout the goldfields, concerning the scope of the Bill, its probable effect on the colony, what the Commonwealth would be able to accomplish, and what this Parliament would do when the Commonwealth was established. He was not aware whether any means had as yet been taken for disseminating over the goldfields any portion of the evidence elicited by the committee; but if the committee, either now or at any future time, were to have any effect

in dispelling those misrepresentations, it would have done good work and would have fully justified its appointment. He must also express his indignation at the tenor of some of those misrepresentations as applied to members of this House; for it had been publicly asserted throughout the goldfields that he (Mr. Vosper), in allowing himself to become a member of the select committee, had been conspiring and conniving with members of the Government and others in the House for the purpose of preventing the Bill going to the people; that, in fact, he had voted against the referendum, and was opposed to it from beginning to end. The whole of those statements were absolutely false.

MR. JAMES: What a shame!

MR. VOSPER: It was a shame, and if the hon. member had any grace, he would be ashamed of such statements. It was undoubtedly a most shameful proceeding to misrepresent and traduce a man behind his back. He denied most emphatically that he, or, so far as he could judge, any other member of the select committee, was involved in any "conspiracy." There was no "conniving" amongst members of the committee, for the purpose either of delaying or of denying the referendum to the great body of the people. All the committee wished to do had been explained by the Premier, to get together as many facts as possible, so that from those facts, if necessary, both parties could draw their arguments as from a magazine, making use of them when the battle of "yes" or "no" had to be fought in the various constituencies of the colony. That there had been perhaps as many opinions as facts elicited was undoubted; but in dealing with a subject which was purely hypothetical, it was only natural that a large number of opinions should be ventilated; but that both classes of evidence had come before the select committee, none could deny. That there had been waste of time he was willing to admit, and he asserted that the greatest waste of time took place in the cross-examination of Mr. Owen by an hon. member of another place.

MR. JAMES: Every hon. member asserted that.

MR. VOSPER: And so did he. Firstly, the theory of the hon. member to whom

he had referred was that Mr. Owen had built his figures upon hypotheses, and then the hon. member proceeded to erect a regular Tower of Babel, all made of hypothetical material from beginning to end. Surely if the foundation of the figures of the Government Actuary was so immaterial, there was no necessity to waste three whole days in a long cross-examination; and it might fairly be said that, if there were any portion of the committee's report which had not been read by the public, it was that cross-examination; because he (Mr. Vosper) would defy any hon. member to read it through carefully without getting premonitory symptoms of insanity, as a reward for his perseverance.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member in question (Hon. A. P. Matheson) proved Mr. Owen to be wrong to the extent of £1,000,000.

MR. MORGANS: No.

MR. VOSPER: Some four hours were occupied during the cross-examination in disputing whether certain figures should be £15,000 or £8,000. That appeared to have been the main point in dispute between the Government Actuary and his examiner, and these were the only grains of wheat which could be winnowed out of the enormous mass of chaff. If the federalists on the select committee were examples of men skilled in figures, he thanked Providence that a similar faculty had been denied him. What were the objections to this select committee?

MR. KINGSMILL said he would give up trying to guess that riddle.

MR. VOSPER: The select committee might fairly be described as a properly constituted tribunal, formed by Parliament for the purpose of investigating certain issues. To this investigation there were two parties. It was very well for the federal party inside and outside Parliament to say that they would have nothing to do with the investigation, and would neither acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Court, nor that the inquiry was fair and open. If that were the opinion of the party, the federalist members of the House should have notified to other members that they had no desire to be elected on the committee; and in that event surely the House would never have elected them. Then, perhaps, the federalists might, on a motion of this kind, with some degree of strength have

charged that the committee was entirely one-sided. Instead of so doing, those hon. members allowed themselves to have their representatives appointed on the committee, and those representatives proceeded to cross-examine certain witnesses. The next complaint from the federalists was that the anti-federal members of the committee were bringing forward all the witnesses, were going into the highways and the by-ways for witnesses whose evidence was more or less valuable. But the members of the other side had exactly the same opportunities, and could do precisely the same thing; yet from beginning to end they had refused to call any evidence whatever. Was that conduct calculated to make their position look better in the eyes of the House or of the country at large? Surely the member for East Perth (Mr. James) and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), who had spoken to-night, would bear him out in stating that if in a Court of law one party called witnesses and succeeded to some extent in proving his case, and if the other party refused to call evidence, that refusal would not destroy the power of the Court to give judgment, but would undoubtedly interfere with the position of the party refusing to furnish evidence.

MR. LEAKE: Federalist members did not want any more opinions, for they had all the facts.

THE PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.

MR. VOSPER said he did not think those hon. members had all the facts; and supposing, for the sake of argument, that the whole matter rested purely on a basis of opinion, then surely there were gentlemen connected with the federal party in the colony quite as well qualified to give opinions, and arguments in favour of those opinions, as there were amongst the anti-federalists. If the matter rested purely on opinion, surely the opinions of men of eminence in the commercial and professional world were of some value.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When all was said, the whole subject was only a matter of opinion.

MR. MORGANS: The whole question of the Commonwealth was a matter of opinion.

MR. VOSPER: What the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) asserted in practice was, that the Common-

wealth itself was a matter of opinion: that all the alleged facts were matters of opinion; and that there could be no useful investigation and no discussion with a view of establishing facts on the strength of opinions formed by large numbers of people on the question of federation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was what the rest of Australia did.

MR. VOSPER: The rest of Australia took good care to discuss federation over and over again. The other colonies had two or three referenda and general elections.

MR. LEAKE: In this colony there had been neither a referendum nor a general election.

THE PREMIER: There had been a general election. The question of federation had been mooted before the last election.

MR. VOSPER: While as much in favour of a referendum as the hon. member, yet the people of the Eastern colonies had enjoyed ample opportunities of investigating the question from every possible standpoint, while in this colony the people had no such opportunities; and hon. members would certainly not be doing their duty to the people by sending the Bill to the electors devoid of any information for their guidance. And while the House would not be justified in denying the right of the people finally to decide the matter, they would be doing a grievous wrong if they sent the Bill to the people without any evidence on one side or the other to enable the electors to form an opinion. The committee had a twofold duty to perform, and if they were conscientiously aiming at obtaining that evidence, surely the House which elected them for that purpose might afford them the necessary facilities for its fulfilment. What could the federal party have to gain by taking up their present attitude? At the outset, that party tried to burk inquiry; they said they did not want to examine witnesses. To what conclusion would that attitude lead the impartial observer? What would be thought of a litigant in a Court of law who refused to go into the witness-box.

MR. LEAKE: Was not that attitude all the better for the anti-federalists?

MR. VOSPER: Admitting that, he would point out that the hon. member, in

the course he was taking, was simply playing into the hands of the anti-federalists. He (Mr. Vosper) had told the House before that he was an opponent of the Bill; and the policy of the hon. member was not advancing the cause of federation, but was giving rise to a well-grounded suspicion that the federalists, from their point of view, could not bring forward witnesses able to stand cross-examination.

MR. MORGANS: And that they wanted darkness rather than light.

MR. VOSPER: Precisely.

MR. LEAKE: The public could not have formed that opinion till yesterday.

MR. VOSPER said he did not know through what channels the hon. member gained his information as to the state of public opinion; but he remembered times when the hon. member's opinions had been very divergent from those of the public. Recently the hon. member had been more fortunate. Perhaps there might be more personal comfort in resting on a popular wave which had nothing to support it, but some day that wave of popular opinion would certainly collapse, and would leave the hon. member high and dry, or worse still, below low-water.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member was now on a subject concerning which he knew something.

MR. VOSPER said he failed to perceive the exact application of the hon. member's interjection. At all events, he (Mr. Vosper) was working in favour of investigation. He did not want delay, and certainly if the select committee were to be asked once more to go through the same experiences as those involved in Mr. Owen's cross-examination, it might be desirable for the committee to report immediately; but those experiences were not likely to be repeated.

MR. MORGANS: The Hon. A. P. Matheson had not sufficient courage to do that again.

MR. VOSPER: No; nor had the other members of the select committee sufficient endurance to support the inflection. The main point was that the investigation by the select committee had not yet concluded; the anti-federal members had now forced upon the federal members of the committee an opportunity of bringing forward federal evidence, if there were any.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Evidence of editors.

MR. VOSPER: If the hon. member did not approve of editors, he could take the evidence of reporters or anyone else.

MR. JAMES: The names of the witnesses called by the committee were selected by the anti-federalists.

MR. VOSPER: The anti-federal members of the committee had submitted certain names of witnesses to the committee, and the federal members had as much right to accept or reject those names as anyone else. The insinuation that, if the federal members proposed to bring forward witnesses of their own, those witnesses would be rejected, was absolutely untrue. That was not the case, because he had proposed the name of Mr. Zollner, secretary of the Federal League, and Mr. George proposed Mr. Zollner's colleague, Mr. Brickhill. The reason for Mr. Zollner's rejection was, that at the time, the committee were calling technical evidence, and Mr. Zollner was not in a position to give such evidence. In any case, Mr. Zollner was now amongst the 13 witnesses yet to be called, and the mere fact that anti-federalists had gone out of their way to call federal witnesses was in itself a proof of the *bona fides* of the committee. Sooner or later the country would understand the position and see that, to quote an old Book, "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

MR. GREGORY objected to further extension of time. The report was promised on the 5th September, and to enable it to be produced on that date, the House had adjourned over a week. When the class of evidence which had been called was looked at, it was easy to understand why the people on the goldfields were laughing at the committee. A manufacturer was brought before the committee, and gave evidence to the effect that the article he produced brought 3½d., while the imported article brought 4½d., and he supposed the reason was that his article was the better one, that manufacturer being the employer of about six men. The committee by this time ought really to have been able to call sufficient evidence for their purposes. As to the question why federalists did not call special evidence, it was known when the committee were appointed that their report would be against federation.

THE PREMIER: Do not prophesy.

MR. GREGORY: There was not much chance of the majority of the committee bringing in a report in favour of federation.

MR. MORGANS: That was all assumption.

MR. GREGORY: The evidence had all been opposed to federation, and it could be easily prophesied that the majority of the committee would be against joining the Commonwealth. No doubt the people in the other colonies had had a better opportunity, in consequence of the Convention elections and the referendums, of obtaining knowledge on this question; but what had been the effect? Between the first referendum and the second there was a great increase in the number of those who voted for federation, and that was an argument in favour of the view that the more the question was ventilated, the more would people be found in favour of federation. To approach this question by means of a select committee was not the proper method. The proper way would have been for the opponents of federation, including the Premier, to have gone out and explained the dangers of federation to the country at large, and if they had a good case, no doubt the people would have voted against the measure.

MR. MORGANS: All on the Government side of the House, including himself, were federationists.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	21
Noes	7

Majority for ... 14

AYES.
 Sir John Forrest
 Mr. A. Forrest
 Mr. Hall
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Higham
 Mr. Hooley
 Mr. Hubble
 Mr. Lefroy
 Mr. Locke
 Mr. Mitchell
 Mr. Morgans
 Mr. Pennefather
 Mr. Phillips
 Mr. Piesse
 Mr. Rason
 Mr. Robson
 Mr. Sholl
 Mr. Solomon
 Mr. Throssell
 Mr. Vosper
 Mr. Quilman (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Gregory
 Mr. Illingworth
 Mr. James
 Mr. Leake
 Mr. Qats
 Mr. Wallace
 Mr. Kingsmill (Teller).

BILLS OF SALES BILL.

Read a third time, on the motion of MR. JAMES, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

RURAL LANDS IMPROVEMENT BILL.

AMENDMENTS ON REPORT.

Order of the day, for consideration of report from Committee, read.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) said he had one or two amendments to submit with the object of saving a considerable amount of money. The amendments provided that the owners themselves should send in their valuations, rather than that it should be incumbent on the Government to make a valuation in every case. It would be a great assistance, especially in the early days of the working of the Bill, if the people should send in their valuations; and the probability was that only in cases where exception was taken to the valuations would it be necessary for some representative of the Government to go over the ground. There were officers already in the Government service who knew nearly every piece of land in the colony, and had a general knowledge as to values. It might be, of course, difficult to find persons with that knowledge, but still there were such persons to be found, and, in many cases, there would be no occasion to go over the ground, at any rate not immediately. The owners' valuation and classification might be accepted, and, if so, then all the trouble and expense of visiting the locality would be avoided. Even if it were necessary to visit every locality, and the plan proposed failed, still the possession of the information as to the valuation by the owner himself would be useful. The only object of the amendments was that the owners should be bound to make a return, classifying and valuing the land, leaving to the department either to accept the owner's statement or have an independent valuation. He moved that the following words be added to Clause 5:—"When the Minister does not receive a return, or does not accept the classification and valuation contained in each return, as required from the owner of rural lands under this Act, the Minister shall direct a valuation officer to classify such land, and to estimate and report as in this section provided."

Question thus passed, and the time extended for one week.

Amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that in Clause 13, after the word "land," in line 1, the following be inserted:—"Has duly made a return, and the classification and valuation therein contained are accepted, or if he does not appeal from the classification and valuation made by a valuation officer."

Amendment put and passed.

New Clause—Owners of certain rural land to make annual returns of classification and valuation:

THE PREMIER moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 5:

On or before the thirty-first day of December, in the year 1902, and thenceforth in every year until the Minister has given his certificate as in the last preceding section mentioned, it shall be the duty of every owner of rural land which has, at the time being, been for ten years alienated by the Crown in fee simple, to make and return to the Minister in the prescribed form, and containing the prescribed particulars as to the situation, classification, and acreage of such land, the extent and character of the external fencing thereof, and the money, or the equivalent of money, that has been expended thereon in the improvements mentioned in the second schedule hereto; and every such owner who fails to comply with the requirements of this section shall be guilty of an offence, and being convicted thereof before a Court of summary jurisdiction shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Twenty pounds. Proof that the Minister had not received the said return on or before the day on which it was due shall be *prima facie* evidence that such return was not made or sent as required by this section.

Amendment put and passed.

New Clause—Minister may accept owner's classification and valuation and assess accordingly:

THE PREMIER moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 6:

The Minister may accept the classification and valuation so returned, and may assess the fine, if any, due to the Crown on the basis of such valuation, and in that case shall cause to be served on the owner a notice of such acceptance and assessment, and thereupon the sum so assessed shall, on the first day of March following the last day for making the return, be paid to the Colonial Treasurer in satisfaction of the fine imposed by this Act.

Amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that the present Clause 5 stand as Clause 7, and that the other clauses be added consecutively.

Put and passed.

Bill reported with further amendments, and the report adopted.

ELECTORAL BILL.

Order of the day, for consideration of report from Committee, read.

MR. LEAKE: When was the proper time to give notice of the recommitment of the Bill?

THE SPEAKER: Amendments or new clauses could not be inserted without notice. The best plan would be to recommit the Bill on its third reading.

MR. LEAKE: The amendment he wished to make was in regard to the elector being on the roll for six months before the election. We should have new rolls, and if we insisted strictly on an elector being six months on the roll before an election, we must disfranchise a lot of people.

THE PREMIER: An elector could get on the present roll.

MR. LEAKE: That did not meet the case.

THE SPEAKER: If the hon. member wished to make an amendment, he could give notice to-morrow that he intended to move that the Bill be recommitment on the third reading, and then give notice of his amendment.

THE PREMIER said he wished to make an amendment in the Bill, and he believed he could do so at the present stage.

THE SPEAKER: Not on the report stage.

THE PREMIER: The only alteration he wanted to make was to insert the word "adult" before "witness." According to the Bill, a witness had to do certain things, but it did not say the witness had to be an adult. He moved that the report from Committee be adopted.

Put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that the third reading be made an order of the day for the next Thursday.

MR. ILLINGWORTH hoped the Government would not press the third reading of the Bill on Thursday or Tuesday next.

THE PREMIER: Why not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We had to deal with the Constitution Bill, and it might be desired to make some alteration in the Constitution Bill that might affect the Electoral Bill, therefore the third reading of the Constitution Bill should not pass until we saw what amendments had been made which would affect the Constitution Bill.

THE PREMIER: There was only one point that could affect the Constitution Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There were two or three points.

THE PREMIER agreed not to press forward the third reading before the Constitution Bill had passed the Committee stage.

Question—that the third reading be made an Order of the Day for Thursday—put and passed.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Abolition of certain rights-of-way:

MR. GEORGE: Had the authorities under whose jurisdiction the various roads which it was proposed to close been consulted, in regard to the closure of the rights-of-way?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The Minister of Lands in moving the second reading of the Bill did not place before the House the particulars now asked for, but he (the Commissioner) was prepared to give any information necessary in regard to any portion of the schedule. This information, when given, would be so far satisfactory that there would be no difficulty in passing the schedule as it now stood. In every instance, with the exception of one, namely, Wellington terrace, Fremantle, which he would be able to deal with, the concurrence of the local authorities had been obtained; and there should be no objection to the closing of those streets. In fact, many of them were merely formal matters, as the streets intended to be closed were not required, and in many cases they were closed at the request of the local authorities. In connection with any of the sections of the schedule, he would be pleased to give any information required. With the exception of Wellington Terrace, there should be no difficulty.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: With regard to Wellington Terrace, a communication had been received from the municipality of Fremantle asking for further consideration of the matter, and that the terrace should not be closed. The closing which was

asked for was that of a portion of Wellington Terrace, a street which ran parallel with the sea-shore, being a part of what was termed the Fremantle Esplanade. The railway constructed towards the smelting works traversed this street; but although a portion of the street was taken, there was sufficient space between the street and the sea to have a road constructed in the future, if necessary. He could not see there should be any objection offered by the municipality to the closing of this portion of the terrace. There was quite sufficient room below the present roadway, the roadway taken over for railway purposes, for continuation of the terrace. If the member for Fremantle who had mentioned the matter would let it rest with the Government, the Government would see that the street was surveyed for the purpose of a continuation of Wellington Terrace. He moved that the following be added to the schedule, to come in between the paragraph relating to the town of Fremantle and that relating to North Fremantle:—

In the Municipality of East Fremantle.—All those portions of a public road approved by the Governor on 7th December, 1846, and gazetted 11th December, 1846, lying within the boundaries of Swan locations, N.G. 66 and 71, and within the boundaries of sub-divisional lots 1 to 13 inclusive, of Swan location 62.

The proposal to add this to the schedule was made at the request of the East Fremantle Municipal Council. Members who knew the locality would remember the road which had recently been made along the foreshore on the eastern side of the river, and would notice that it ceased abruptly. It was proposed by the owners of the old road to give up sufficient area along the boundary of the river for the continuation of this road, and it would give a continuation of the present drive, which he believed was approved of by the members of the East Fremantle municipal council. The owner of the land was willing that the road which passed through his property should be closed, and in agreeing to this foreshore being made, he agreed to give up also a piece of land along the foreshore. It would be an advantage to have this road opened up in the position indicated.

MR. SOLOMON: Had any letter been received in regard to the closing of the other road?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; he had received a letter, and would like to see the hon. member about it.

Amendment put and passed, and the schedule as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

At 6-23, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

CONSTITUTION ACTS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed on motion by the **PREMIER** for the second reading, moved on the 29th August.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): For a considerable time in this colony there has been a consensus of opinion that the representation in this House was not in accord with the best interests of the country. The changes which have naturally arisen in consequence of the circumstances by which this colony has been surrounded, must necessarily give rise to that state of things which causes the present discontent. I am pleased, therefore, that the Government have taken the step of bringing in a Bill having for its object the removal of some of these defects. Hon. members know that, during last session, I endeavoured to carry a motion in this House affirming this principle, and I have no doubt that the motion would have been put to this House and would have been carried, had it not been for the circumstance that the Government were pleased, at the time, to look upon it as a want-of-confidence motion; and as I and others had no desire to treat this subject on that basis, the motion was withdrawn. Notwithstanding that, the Government have been pleased to carry out what was then, to some extent, my intention, and what was the intention or the desire of the country at large in reference to this question. But the first objection I have to take to this Bill is that it is not the Bill which the country has been seeking. As far as I understand the sentiment of this country, what was asked for was a Redistribution Bill. This Bill is on the lines of preceding Bills, but unfortunately has not the same reason

for its existence as those preceding Bills had; and the objection I take is that it is an increased representation Bill as well as a Redistribution Bill. I would suggest that this colony, with a population of less than 170,000—

THE PREMIER: Not less than 170,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH—is sufficiently represented in a House of 44 members; that there was no warrant for increasing the membership of this House, nor was there any request from the country for an increased membership. What was sought and desired by the country was a redistribution of seats, so as to have the various interests in this colony, as well as the individual persons, more equitably represented. When we remember that in New South Wales, with a population of one million more people than we have in this colony, there is only a representation of some 132 members; that in Victoria, with a population of a million more than we have, or nearly a million, there are only 96 members; it must be evident to thoughtful men that a House of 44 members is sufficient for the population of this colony. This panacea of increased representation as a reply to the request for redistribution must come to an end; and if this Bill be carried, and this House consist of 48 members, then I think we have reached the limits to which a Bill of this kind should go in regard to the number of members sitting in this House. However, the Government have been pleased to bring in a Bill both for redistribution in part, and for increased representation. I think the increased representation is somewhat of a mistake: the redistribution, however, is the question that, for a while, I propose to discuss. Taking as a basis the figures published in April of this year, there appear to be upon the electoral rolls of this colony 43,185 electors. To divide these *pro rata* amongst the seats in this House would give 986 electors, or say in round numbers 1,000 per member. At the time when these returns were made up, which returns, of course, applied to the sitting members of this House, Coolgardie East had 5,674 people upon the roll, North-East Coolgardie had 3,370, Coolgardie proper had 3,364, and Coolgardie North 1,710, or a total of 14,118 electors, who were represented in this House by four members; while nine

seats, representing the squatter interest in this country, appear as follows:—Ashburton, 42 electors; East Kimberley, 90; DeGrey, 70; Irwin, 106; Roebourne, 128; Kimberley West, 145; Gascoyne, 180; Murchison, 163; and the Moore, 356; or a total of 1,280 electors representing this special interest in the colony. These 1,280 electors are represented by nine seats in the House, and what is more, amongst those nine seats are some of the strongest and most influential men in the Assembly. One is the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt), whose voice carries more weight, perhaps, in the Assembly than that of any other member in it outside the Ministry. So we have the squatter interest represented by nine members, while we have another interest represented by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) with 1,710 electors. Taking the four Coolgardies together, we have 14,118 electors, represented by four members; and we have the squatting interest with 1,280 electors, represented by nine members. Taking the whole goldfields as an interest by themselves, we have on the one side Dundas with 812 electors, Yilgarn with 422 electors, Murchison Central with 892 electors, Murchison South with 768 electors, Murchison North with 300 electors, Yalgoo with 194 electors, and Pilbarra with 215 electors.

MR. A. FORREST: How many voted at the last election?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The number of electors on the roll for all the goldfields seats is 17,711, represented by 11 members; while the squatter interest is represented by nine seats for 1,280 voters. Passing from these two interests, which contrast so adversely, we come to electorates divided into what I have called the city and ports. We have Perth West with 2,909 electors, Perth North 2,459 electors, Perth East 1,691 electors, Perth City 1,269 electors; so that the city of Perth, with 8,328 electors, has only four seats, against the nine seats representative of squatting interests. With regard to the ports, we have Fremantle South with 2,270 electors, Fremantle East with 1,618 electors, Fremantle North with 1,496 electors, and the town of Fremantle with 825 electors, or 6,209 electors for Fremantle with four seats. Then adding the other three ports of Albany with 785 electors,

Bunbury with 625 electors, and Geraldton with 622 electors, we have a total of 16,569 voters, represented by 11 members. I want to present to the House the fact that the goldfields interest, with 17,711 electors, is represented by 11 members, and the city and ports with 16,569 electors, are represented by 11 members; so that we have 22 seats for 34,280 electors out of 43,185 electors on the roll. In the agricultural interest we have 13 representatives for 7,615 electors. There are Greenough with 178 electors, Nelson with 235 electors, Beverley with 295 electors, Sussex with 361 electors, Toodyay with 416 electors, York with 490 electors, Wellington with 510 electors, Williams with 553 electors, Plantagenet with 581 electors, Murray with 595 electors, Northam with 794 electors, Canning with 1,220 electors, and the Swan with 1,387 electors. I am not very much in favour of dividing the country on the basis of heads, but still we must have some representation in proportion to population. The better basis for division, I contend, is the basis of interests; and we have four distinct interests here, namely the mining, the squatting, the agricultural, and the interests of the city and ports. The goldfields hitherto have had 11 members for 17,711 voters, and the city and ports have had 11 members for 16,569 voters, so that these two interests are fairly well balanced. We have, therefore, to look to the other two interests to find the discrepancy. There are nine squatters' seats, representing 1,280 voters, and 13 agricultural seats representing 7,615 votes; so that we have 22 seats representing 34,280 votes, and 22 seats representing 8,895 votes. It will be seen that the squatting interest and the agricultural interest combined have hitherto had in this House more representatives than any of the interests represented by the city and goldfields members. It is quite clear that this state of things cannot continue, and hence the cry for a redistribution of seats. This Bill proposes in some respects to remedy the evil, but how? The 11 goldfields seats, with 17,711 electors, are to have 14 members, or three more than they had before; while the squatting interest is to have three less members. Both the goldfields interest and the squatting interest are invaluable to this country, and we

desire to see both flourish in the fullest possible way. But is the representation proposed in the Bill fair and equitable? Is it fair and equitable that an interest such as is the squatting interest should have six seats for 1,280 voters, while the goldfields interest is to be content with 14 seats for 17,711 voters?

MR. A. FORREST: Wipe out the North altogether, and give it no representation at all.

MR. DOHERTY: We will give you another couple of representatives, if you are not satisfied.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Taxation and representation are inseparable; and who are the people who are paying the taxes, if not the 34,000 people on the goldfields and in the ports and towns on the coast? The member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) interjects, "Wipe out the North;" but I would suggest that every member in the House is interested in the North, as every member is also interested in the goldfields. Suppose there were no direct representation of the North in the House, the interests of the North would not be unrepresented.

THE PREMIER: The same principle would apply to the goldfields, in which we are all interested.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have just made the remark that we are all interested in the prosperity of the North, and in the prosperity of the goldfields; and I do not think any member desires to do any wrong or injustice to the goldfields, or to the squatting or any other interest in the colony.

MR. A. FORREST: You do not understand the North, you know.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member says I do not understand the North.

MR. A. FORREST: Not in the slightest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And I am certain the hon. member cannot enlighten me.

MR. A. FORREST: I could enlighten you on the spot.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The subject I am dealing with does not touch on the point which I am sure the hon. member has in his mind. The change proposed in the Bill gives 14 seats to the goldfields as representing 17,711 voters, and 14 seats for the city and ports representing 16,569 voters.

THE PREMIER: What do you call the ports? Do you call Bunbury a port?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Certainly, I call Bunbury a port, and have put it down for 625 electors.

THE PREMIER: There should be 1,600 on the roll.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: All these interjections do not affect the argument one atom, and though they may amuse members, I am not disposed to be carried away from the subject. The Bill gives six seats in the squatting interest for 1,280 electors, or 200 electors per member; it gives 14 seats in the agricultural interest, with 7,615 electors, or 544 per member; while only 14 seats—and I call special attention to this—are given to the goldfields interest with 17,711 electors, or 1,265 electors per member. I am not going into any speculation, but am dealing with the only facts that are available. I admit that these figures may be subject to material variation by changes in the population, but we must start somewhere. For instance, if the Premier desires to say that Bunbury, instead of 625 electors, should have 1,625, I would tell him that Central Murchison ought to have an extra 1,000 electors.

THE PREMIER: I am not inclined to agree with you there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier does not often agree with me, and that is one of the difficulties I have to labour under in this House. No matter what I say, no matter how kind I am to the Premier, I can never get him to agree with me; and I suppose that is one of the misfortunes that will follow me through life.

THE PREMIER: I try very hard to agree with you.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Proceeding, we find the Bill proposes to give four extra seats. One seat is taken away from the goldfields and three from the northern districts, to provide the four seats for the other portions of the goldfields. But I contend this Bill does not remedy the anomalies that exist, and the measure cannot be accepted as satisfactory on any of the bases on which we can argue. The redistribution is not according to population, and it is not fair according to interests. These are the only two things, I contend, that can be argued on this question. If

members say, and they have a right to say it in this House, that the great interests of this colony ought to be fairly represented, I am perfectly with them; but if they say, on the other hand, that representation should be on a population basis, I am not prepared to go all the way with them; but I say, approximately, we should get as near to an ascertained population basis as we can justly, without interfering with the interests. These are the lines which actuate me in my criticism of the Bill, but are we in the Bill going to do this? We leave the condition of things almost the same as it is now. Hon. members may say we have a large growth of population in the South, perhaps. It is the mining interest that has made that growth. Could we say that population was not going to increase on the gold-fields? May we not look at the large output of gold in years past, and prospectively we may look to a great output in the future; and, in that case, there may be a much larger population on the gold-fields than there is now. I know the difficulty that may arise. We do not know a day when gold may break out, and we hope that seats which now represent 70 electors may soon represent 7,000, and we shall hail that day with pleasure; but when that time comes, it will be sufficient to meet the circumstances and difficulties that will then arise. There is another remark I want to make. I consider it is very undesirable that we should have too frequent interferences with the Constitution. We can plainly see that the Bill which is proposed to this House on the present occasion, does not meet the difficulty and does not do away with the evil that exists, and cannot be satisfactory to the country; therefore we are only inviting an inevitable change of the Constitution, and that at an early date. We do not want these perpetual changes.

THE PREMIER: We shall have them, though.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There will be some change: it is inevitable, in the country's condition, that we shall have a change and we shall have to follow it. If we have during the next five years what we have had in the last five years, an increase in the population of 100,000 or thereabouts, we shall have to change the Constitution to do justice to the

people; but we are now asked to pass a Bill which, *prima facie*, is not equitable, which does not meet the difficulty, which does not reach the root of the evil, and which is in no sense a Redistribution Bill. We propose to redistribute the seats on what basis? Not on a population basis; not on the basis of interests.

THE PREMIER: It is.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A good many of the 1,280 electors who are on the rolls for squatting districts live down here and have double representation: they vote to a very large extent by sending their vote up there by letter. If we were to ask the people in those districts to come personally and vote, the figures would be materially altered. A number of the people whose names appear on the rolls send their vote by letter.

MR. A. FORREST: Why should they not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is no reason; I do not object to it; but they have the means of making themselves heard and felt in the place in which they live; they are represented in the place in which they live; and as I am not a believer in plural voting, I say the North would not suffer very materially if there were a considerable reduction in the number of representatives.

MR. GEORGE: They are not inclined to risk it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I suppose not. When we come to the agricultural interest, we have what we hope will be a growing interest.

MR. DOHERTY: Agriculture always does grow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A very enlightened remark, and I am glad the hon. member has given it, because it is really new. I think he must have brought it with him from his recent visit to Ireland.

MR. DOHERTY: Well, you go there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have been there: you can see a bit of green grass there, sometimes. When we come to look at the agricultural interest, we may reasonably expect and hope there will be a large increase. The Premier suggested just now that the number of persons on the roll, if I understand his interjection aright, is not the total of the number of people in the different electorates. I suggest to the Premier that it is more

than likely that the figures are accurate in regard to the agricultural districts.

THE PREMIER: No; they are not. There are no trades unions there to put the people on the roll.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say that the figures are more likely to be accurate in regard to the agricultural districts than in regard to the mining districts, for the reason that you have a settled population in the agricultural districts, and the people take the trouble to get on the roll. The people in the agricultural districts have been on the roll for years, and those are the people who always vote for the Premier, whether he is right or wrong, and that is the kind of population the Premier likes to have.

THE PREMIER: The people in the agricultural districts do not seem to take the trouble to get on the roll.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is lamentable that the Premier should defame his own interests in Bunbury, and say the people in the agricultural electorates do not value the representation given to them and do not get on the roll.

THE PREMIER: I did not say that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Something very much like it.

THE PREMIER: I said the people do not get on the roll: that is certain.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I answer that by saying the miners do not get on the roll.

MR. A. FORREST: They are put on whether they like it or not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: With all the efforts made to get the miners on the rolls, not one-half of those on the fields are on the rolls at the present time. The figures, as regards the settled districts, are more likely to be accurate than those in regard to the goldfields districts. It is for the Government to justify this Bill. I lay this charge: it is not a redistribution Bill, but an increased representation Bill, to which I object. I say that 44 members are sufficient for the population in this colony. I say that this Bill does not represent the people or the interests, equitably, and it is for the Government to justify this Bill. I also say it is inevitable, if this Bill passes in its present form, at an early date a change in the constitution will have to take place to remedy the defects in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: Give us what you suggest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If this be so, would it not be wise in this House to so alter the Bill that it will, at any rate, secure for the country something like fair and equitable representation of the interests of the colony, so that a change in the constitution may not be so inevitable at an early date. I think a good many of the seats mentioned in the Bill might very well be associated together. What is to prevent, for instance, the Greenough being associated with Geraldton?

MR. ROBSON: We do not want it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Thanks; my hon. friend does not want it. With all due deference to the member for Toodyay, what is to prevent Toodyay and Northam coming together? Perhaps they would want a divorce after coming together. With all due deference, I suggest that Beverley and York could come together without injury to anybody.

MR. QUINLAN: We are not taking any.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am only giving these as suggestions.

MR. DOHERTY: What about Murchison?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Murchison was well represented when it had only one member; but I am not suggesting that the Murchison should have only one member now. When I had the honour of representing Nannine, I say that it was fairly well represented. These things that I have mentioned must be apparent to the House and the country; and if we pass this Bill, it is only a makeshift Bill, and will have to be altered at an early date. I challenge the wisdom of passing a Bill of this kind. I am not quite clear as to how the Bill stands. The right hon. gentleman made some allusions to the repeal of the Act.

THE PREMIER: This Bill will not affect that in any way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: As the Bill is drawn, when the measure passes we go out of existence; but I think the Premier intends to amend the Bill in that direction. I will ask the Premier, when this Bill is assented to and proclaimed, what becomes of the Act under which we exist.

THE PREMIER: We will have this Bill instead of the present Act. We are

going to do as you suggest : we are going to leave the old land-marks standing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I approve of the suggestion of the Premier. There is one thing I hail with pleasure in the Bill, and that is the adoption of triennial Parliaments. Enough perhaps has been said by the Premier on this subject, so that I need not pursue it further, but I approve of the principle. There is one thing I oppose in the Bill, and shall when the Bill goes into Committee, and that is in regard to the word "adult." Hon. members know what I mean. We passed in this House in a most unsatisfactory manner—

MR. A. FORREST : Both Houses passed it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : A resolution to give women the suffrage in this colony ; and I contend that the members who voted for that question did not vote on the question itself, but on an entirely different issue. I shall give members an opportunity in Committee to retrace their steps, if they have the courage and the honour to do so. Then I hope the Government will be prepared to admit an amendment in the Bill that will do away with plural voting. We have had nearly enough of that in Western Australia, and we are entirely out of line with the other colonies on this question. When this constitution is passing through the House, it will be well if we get rid of this thing. A man might own a piece of land in every one of the electorates, and might send his vote by post, and vote for the whole of the electorates if so fortunate as to have land in them.

MR. A. FORREST : Why should he not ?

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Let the hon. member not ask us to prove a negative, but let him prove an affirmative. There are only two things by which a man should have a right to vote, the first being his manhood, and if you want to extend it, let him vote for his home ; but for a man to vote 14 times for 14 different candidates is giving one man too much representation in the House and in the country. The principle we ought to adopt, and which I desire to introduce when the Bill is in Committee, is that of one man one vote. I said at the outset, I hail the Bill with pleasure as an attempt to deal with this difficult question ;

and I urge upon the Government and the House to consider that we do not want to have a Redistribution of Seats Bill and an alteration of the Constitution involving the life of the House, every year or two. We are asked in this Bill to pass what we know is unsatisfactory and inequitable, and does not represent the interests of the colony on an equitable basis. Of course half a loaf is better than no bread, and I shall certainly vote for the Bill, because it is much better than anything we have ; but I desire to urge on the Government and the House the desirability of going a step further than this Bill, in order that we may try, if we possibly can, to settle the question on an equitable basis. I am speaking in all kindness to the Government, and all fairness to the question, as far as I am able. I do not want to be captious in any degree, nor to ask anything unreasonable or unfair ; but I think the Government must see that if this Bill be passed, there will be a cry for another Bill almost directly afterwards.

THE PREMIER : I believe that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : We want, if possible, to put on the statute book this time a Bill which will be fairly equitable. There are some members here whose seats will be done away with, who I hope will be successful in some of the new electorates. It would be almost a calamity to the House if the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) did not take his seat in the next Parliament ; and I may say the same of others, including the members for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) and West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) : I hope those hon. members will find seats in other constituencies. At any rate, there are a large number of members whom we should sadly miss in the legislation of this colony, and, as I say, I hope they will be able to find seats in some other portion of the country, and that their presence in the House will be as valuable to us in the future as it has been in the past. If it is desirable, and I think it is, to make further changes of this character, it will not be with the idea of unseating any member, but locating him in some part of the colony where he will represent human beings with throbbing hearts, whose property will be taxed, whose interests can be stirred, and who can at least shout at an election,

instead of having two or three hundred thousand sheep, which can only say "baa." I hope the House will take this into consideration, and that we will endeavour to put the Bill into a better form. I must of necessity accept the Bill and vote for the second reading, because it is a good step in the right direction; but members must, I think, see it does not go far enough. I hope they will be prepared to admit some amendment which will be in the direction of making the Bill more satisfactory than it is at present.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): As it appears hon. members are rather diffident about speaking on this important Bill, I should like to say a few words, more especially in reply to the last speaker, who has, I must say, been most friendly towards those people who are to be wiped out, as we may term it. The hon. member hopes we will be able to get into other districts, and it will cause him great sorrow to lose our presence in the Parliament of the country. I am thankful to the hon. member for those suggestions; but I fail to see why we should be asked to have our districts wiped out under the Electoral Bill, considering those districts have had representation in the House for the last 15 years; any way, the district I represent has had a member for 15 years, and two members since 1890. The population then was smaller than it is now, and the interests were smaller. No reason has been given by the Government for disfranchising the northern portions of the colony. The northern portion of the colony has been the backbone of Western Australia for the last 20 or 30 years. It was considered the saviour of the country some years ago before gold was found; and what reason has been given why it should be disfranchised? I do not think I could read the telegrams I have received, for I have a pocketful of them. The people want to know why they are to be disturbed in sending a member to the House. Is it because of a floating population scattered over an area from the head of the Gascoyne down to Dundas—is that the reason why these districts should be wiped out?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: One member is enough.

MR. A. FORREST: I differ from the hon. member. The interests of those two places are entirely different. One is a border district, where they are always fighting about stock coming across the border. It appears to me, from the argument used by the member for Central Murchison, that because five thousand or six thousand people go to a certain place and set themselves down there for a short time, not being a permanent population, they are to elect members. We know that in the district of Kanowna, where there were ten or twelve thousand people nine months ago, there are now only three thousand. Broad Arrow is abandoned. At Goongarrie there was a township, and what is there now? New places on the goldfields are always cropping up, and I am glad it is so, because no member wishes to see the country go down, but we want to see it progress. Go to Kurnalpi and Widgiemooltha, to any of those places, and you will find there have been large populations at one time, and afterwards practically none.

MR. VOSPER: Go to Kalgoorlie and the Boulder.

MR. A. FORREST: Kalgoorlie and Boulder are permanent, and I would like to see those districts get a fair representation, but not on the basis of population. Why should five or six men be allowed to a circle of a few miles square because there are a large number of people going there, and not what you may call settled population? It seems to me that if Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Kanowna are to have fair representation on a population basis, there will be no members for anywhere else, and you may as well wipe them out. From the Gascoyne to the two Kimberleys we would not be entitled to one member. The hon. member suggests that there would be people in the House perfectly able and willing to protect that portion of the country; but I am sorry to say there are few members in the House, except the members representing those districts, who know practically anything about those districts. It is a difficult portion of the colony to represent, and the people there are so far away that they are not like people in the South, nonproducers, for they are large producers. I think we may safely say that the exports from

West Kimberley and East Kimberley are over £300,000 a year.

MR. GREGORY: Are not the people on the goldfields producers?

MR. A. FORREST: A few of them, but not all. Many people in Perth and Fremantle are not producers, also many in other parts, but all the people in the northern districts are producers, employing a large amount of labour. It is all very well for hon. members to say there are only 150 or 160 voters in my district. There are many hundreds of people who are fed and employed by the persons living there.

MR. GEORGE: Have they votes?

MR. A. FORREST: They have not. Europeans cannot do the work on these stations, and the native population are employed by settlers, who have to pay customs duties, a large expenditure being incurred in those districts. We are not like the people on the coastal districts down here; we are improving the public estate. There are no freehold lands there, and some day the Crown will come down and sell those lands for immense amounts of money, and perhaps pay the national debt. It appears to me the Government, when they had an opportunity in introducing the Bill, should have said, "We will not, in consequence of the clamour of people who are not permanent residents in the country, take away from those who have held these northern districts for so many years." There is no reason why West Kimberley, East Kimberley, Pilbarra, Ashburton, Roebourne, and Gascoyne (head waters) should not have a population in twelve months equal to that in any part of the colony. It is never known from one day to another what will crop up in those districts, because they are all gold-bearing country, and it is only because of the isolation of those places that more attention has not been drawn to them.

MR. GEORGE: Can white men live up there?

MR. A. FORREST: White men do not care about working up there; but those who work for their daily bread have to, and they do as little hard work as they can, because people can get other labour of a better and cheaper kind.

MR. GEORGE: Is black labour better than white?

MR. A. FORREST: Certainly; I would rather have a black man than a white man to work for me in the North. I would rather have a native to work in what is called the "black North" than the hon. member, because I would get more out of him.

MR. DOHERTY: He would talk all the time.

MR. GEORGE: Fancy me working for the hon. member!

MR. A. FORREST: I intend to support the second reading, and in Committee I shall move that in those districts north of the Murchison the members remain as they are at the present time; and the grounds for my motion are that no good reason has been given by the Government or by the last speaker why those electorates should be disfranchised. Lack of population is the only reason, and I do not think that the highest intelligence is always to be found in the masses. I suppose that is not considered a good argument to use, but I am not prepared to go so far as to say that the intelligence always lies with the large number of people, because the large number of people are very often found doing what a few people would not do: they do not consider the position with sufficient care. I have spoken to a great many hon. members on this question, and they agree with me that it is not necessary to do away with such an important part of the colony as the northern electorates. If the Government think it necessary to give more members to the goldfields, I shall be very glad to see that done, because I believe the time is fast approaching when hon. members, like the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), will ask this House to give all the representation to the goldfields and none to those districts where the people are improving the public estate; and we have already given the goldfields eleven or, if I am not mistaken, fourteen members; and yet the electors in those districts have only been here a few years. It is said they have done a lot of work, and that is true; but I think the people in the coastal districts are as much interested in those goldfields as those who live there. The goldfields trade and our trade are identical: we live on each other.

MR. VOSPER: Especially the others.

MR. A. FORREST: No; I do not think so. I do not think my interests in the goldfields would be changed if I lived in Kalgoorlie. Because a man opens a store on the goldfields, he at once becomes the man who has made the colony. I could never see the force of that argument. If I have money invested in a goldfields district, and have people there working for me and employed by me, I think I have just as much interest in that particular district as its inhabitants have. The question to my mind is that, if the Government think it necessary to give these goldfields more members—

MR. GREGORY: Put on some fresh members elsewhere to neutralise the goldfields vote.

MR. A. FORREST: Because, if the goldfields send down such able advocates as they at present have in the House, the Assembly will be benefited; we shall then know something we have never known before. We, who are called "sandgroppers," do not pretend to know much, and are not thought very much of, but still we try to do the best we can.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And you do it.

MR. A. FORREST: And if it be proposed to give more members to the goldfields, I am sure I shall be pleased to vote for the motion, especially for more members in the Kalgoorlie district, where they have a field which is going to stay, and is not likely to disappear; but let the Government give the goldfields an increased number of members in the House without decreasing the representation of those in the North, who have been represented for a large number of years. I want to know why this is to be done. Is it because we in the North are not sufficiently numerous? That is the only argument that can be used. Considering the importance of the northern districts, the little representation they have, and the very small proportion of the public revenue which they receive, I fail to see why they should be cast aside, as if to say: "We have made use of you for the last 40 years; we have finished with you now; we no longer require your aid, because we can get more members in the city of Perth, in Fremantle, in Coolgardie, and in Kalgoorlie." I ask hon. members, when they go into Committee on this question, to look at this matter of the representation of the North on equitable

grounds. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) said that there are 14 members representing squatting districts.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Nine.

MR. A. FORREST: I say there are nothing like nine: there are only six.

THE PREMIER: There are only four in the Bill.

MR. A. FORREST: There are only six now in the House.

THE PREMIER: In the Bill there are really only three.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Four.

THE PREMIER: No; for one of those electorates is a farming district.

MR. A. FORREST: A cry might be raised in the North, such as was raised in Kalgoorlie, for separation. The North threatened separation before, and they might very easily carry on without the other parts of the colony, because they could not be called upon to pay any portion of the national debt, for practically no Government money has ever been spent there, except on wharves; and if they separated, the other districts would have some trouble in getting food in this country. They would have nothing to eat.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The northern districts would sell to us if we would buy.

MR. A. FORREST: No; they would send their cattle and sheep to the Chinese, and would cast you aside.

MR. VOSPER: You would shift your camp to Hong Kong, I suppose?

MR. GEORGE: You could not raise chickens up there.

MR. A. FORREST: We do not raise chickens up there: chickens grow down at the Murray, and pigs too. Let the hon. member stick to growing pigs and chickens, and we will stick to bullocks and sheep. I will only say in conclusion that I support the second reading, but will move an amendment in Committee that the Northern divisions remain as they are as regards representation.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): During the earlier part of this session it has been my somewhat extraordinary fate to be found supporting most of the Government measures, and I have frequently had occasion to congratulate the Government upon the nature and character of the measures

brought forward. It certainly is more in keeping with the former conditions of my position in this House to be able to say that I am opposed to this Bill as at present framed. I am in the same dilemma as the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), and I shall have to vote for the Bill because it is, of course, an improvement on the existing law. But nevertheless, to my mind it bristles with faults, and I am quite of the opinion of the hon. member that the Bill will only have the effect of keeping this question alive, and of making it a permanent subject of discussion in this House. Before going into the Bill in detail, I should like briefly to refer to the remarks of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest). I am quite sure he always succeeds in amusing, and sometimes in enlightening, the House. He said that no reason has been advanced as yet, either by the Government or by hon. members on this side of the House, for what he called the disfranchisement of the North. In the first place, the North is not disfranchised; nobody attempts to disfranchise it. All we are proposing to do is to amalgamate two electorates into one, so that we may give the members who represent those electorates some reasonable chance of saying that they do represent somebody, instead of, as at present, representing nobody in particular.

MR. KINGSMILL: Thank you.

MR. VOSPER: I am not referring so much to the hon. member's (Mr. Kingsmill's) electorate, for it is currently reported that, after a strict investigation, a few people have been discovered in that region; but that cannot be said for the whole of the northern electorates. We must found our representation on some basis; and although I do not want to insist that it shall be founded purely on the basis of population, I think that neither from that nor from any other standpoint at all can we find any argument to justify the division of Kimberley into East and West. The argument used, that those two districts have had representation for the last 15 years in the Parliament of this colony, is not an argument. Take the case of the borough of Old Sarum, which, when disfranchised by the Reform Bill, had three electors. That borough might still be in existence if the hon.

member's argument were to prevail, and Old Sarum had an antiquity extending much further back into the mists of time than the Kimberley districts can hope to claim. Besides, I think I cannot be altogether wrong when I say that the representation of the Kimberleys was given to them at a time when the district had a far larger population than at present.

MR. DOHERTY: But it was not so important a district.

MR. VOSPER: That all depends upon the gauge by which we measure importance. There was a large proportion of diggers and perhaps fewer squatters at that time, though it may be contended that one squatter is more important than 15 diggers. In any case, at that time there was a larger population than there is now; there has been a declining population since; and we have seen, in the course of the last few years, how some of those northern electorates have fallen off. Ashburton is a flagrant example. At the last election there were some 57 on the roll, and the latest returns show that there are only 42; so in the course of time the hon. member representing the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) will be found representing nobody at all. If I cannot follow the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) in his arguments in favour of the North, still less can I follow him when he speaks about the floating population of the Coolgardie goldfields. I contend that the population of the Eastern goldfields is now, to all intents and purposes, a permanent population. When the depression succeeded the recent boom, we lost the floating population. I am speaking of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie: I shall deal with the other electorates afterwards. The flotsam and jetsam of the goldfields population have disappeared already, and those who live there now are people who have made up their minds to reside in this colony for a considerable time to come—I do not say permanently—and who have such large interests in the colony that they cannot very well afford to leave it. Among the electorates in the Eastern goldfields selected for attack by the hon. member was Kanowna, or North-East Coolgardie, which I have the honour to represent; and the hon. member said that the population of Kanowna had fallen away from 12,000 to some 3,000.

I do not know where he gets his statistics from; but when I was at Kanowna quite recently, I endeavoured to get statistics from the best available sources, and I found that within a radius of a few miles from Kanowna there was a population of between 5,000 and 6,000 persons. And then, if people have left Kanowna, many of them have not gone far away. There is a considerable rush out beyond Kurnalpi, and some have gone to Red Hill, and some to Bulong; and I venture to say that few of them have left the district. I can champion the cause of that district, not only as regards population, but for a reason which will commend itself to the hon. member; I mean its wealth. But we find that whereas all the other goldfields districts have been divided up, and have had increased representation given them with a lavish hand, Kanowna, with an electoral roll of 3,370 voters, is left with one member; and yet, like the Kimberleys, the different parts of North-East Coolgardie have diverse interests. There is no great community of interest between the three towns making up the bulk of the population of my electorate, and those towns are certainly entitled to larger representation than the Bill proposes to give them. Again, if it be said that the poorer classes of the goldfields people are still a floating population, I may fairly retort that they are not really so. I met a man only the other day in Perth, who had come down to Perth for the first time since the Kimberley rush, and he had been in the colony all the time. That man had been working, and fossicking, and prospecting in the back blocks of the colony, and for the first time he had come to Perth for a holiday. If that man is not an approach to something like a permanent resident, I should like to ask what constitutes permanency? And then as regards the wages men and the miners generally, who are said to be not so settled as other people, I may say that even to-day, in the Joint Select Committee on the Commonwealth Bill, we had a witness, the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, who declared that one of the reasons why working men in Western Australia stick to this colony is because they cannot afford to get out of it. There is a very large number of that class on the goldfields also; men, perhaps, willing enough to go away

if they could go, but who find themselves unable to leave.

MR. A. FORREST: Those are good men to make the laws of the country!

MR. VOSPER: They are; and I always contend that they are. I say there are two classes of people who have a stake in the country—one consists of men with capital invested here, and who want to earn interest on that capital, and the other of that class of men so hard up that they cannot get out of the country, and consequently have the strongest interest in seeing that it is well governed. What man is more likely to take an interest in the good government of the country than the man who is forced to reside in it? Such a man will take very great care to see that circumstances are made as comfortable for him as possible. Therefore, I contend that the man who is hopelessly impoverished, and cannot leave the colony, is as much entitled to a voice in the government, or perhaps more, than is the person who draws his income from invested capital, and at the same time may live in a more congenial climate. The member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) says that the North might possibly go in for separation, on the ground that they do not receive a sufficient amount of the public funds. As hon. members know, I recently moved for a return, showing what it has cost to maintain the large area north of the Murchison during the last ten or twelve years; and when the return is forthcoming the information contained will no doubt be valuable. A calculation was made not very long ago, which, taking the revenue and the number of electors in the North, showed the maintenance costs about £200 per annum for every person on the electoral roll.

MR. A. FORREST: How much do they pay to the revenue?

MR. VOSPER: I do not think any one of them pays anything like £4 a week to the revenue.

MR. A. FORREST: There are plenty who pay that much.

MR. VOSPER: A few squatters may pay a large amount to the revenue.

MR. A. FORREST: I pay £100 a week myself.

MR. VOSPER: But the hon. member is only one out of the number I have referred to.

MR. A. FORREST: And £100 a week accounts for a great many £4 per week.

MR. VOSPER: Certainly; but the hon. member pays that money as rent for value received. He does not pay it in taxes, but for licenses to occupy certain Crown lands; and if he did not receive value in return, he would not long pay £100 a week. I am now talking of taxation and public expenditure, and I say no one representing the Northern districts can complain when people there are in the habit of receiving subsidies to the amount of £4 a week per individual. But I will pass away from these Northern districts, which, though large and well represented, are not the only places to be taken into consideration. I observe that in the Bill, in the first instance, no attempt is made to remodel or reform the Legislative Council; and this is to be regretted, for although I have not the exact figures before me, I am under the impression there are only 6,500 electors entitled to vote for members of that Chamber.

THE PREMIER: There are a great number of electors also in Perth.

MR. VOSPER: Precisely; and of the 6,500, I believe five-sixths, or about 5,000 of them, are represented by half the members in the Council, that is by twelve members, and the other 1,000 have twelve members amongst them. The disparities and anomalies in the representation of the Legislative Council are as bad as in this Chamber; and if any reform of the constitution is contemplated, the reform of the other Chamber should be taken in hand. Both the metropolis and the goldfields are entitled to increased representation, and no Bill will be fair which does not grant some equality of representation in the Legislative Council as well as in the Legislative Assembly. Dealing with the various constituencies affected by the Bill, we find that the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) is correct in the points he has raised, for there is not adequate representation provided, either on the basis of population or of interests; and, besides that, there are greater anomalies created in regard to the distribution of seats in the very districts which it is proposed to benefit by the Bill. Take, for instance, Coolgardie district. There, one additional member is provided for the city of Coolgardie, and a member

for what is to be called the Mount Burges constituency. I suppose it is fair to say --and the member for Coolgardie will bear me out in this--that on the Coolgardie goldfields the bulk of the population is in Coolgardie itself; and while Mount Burges district has a comparatively small population as compared with that of Coolgardie, yet the two places are to receive equal representation. If attention be turned to East Coolgardie district, more grievous anomalies still are being created; for there only a portion of the townsite of Kalgoorlie has been declared one electorate, and the municipality of the Boulder another.

THE PREMIER: That has been altered, and the boundaries are extended.

MR. VOSPER: And outside that again is the country district called Hannans. The probabilities are that when we come to elect members for Kalgoorlie and the Boulder, we will find the electors there will not exceed at the outside 7,000 or 8,000; and, of the votes cast, many will be proxies sent from Perth, so that the elections for these towns will not be so much in the hands of the residents as they should be. The suburbs and residential mining areas will be represented by one member; so that if we take the voters on these latter areas at 1,600, we have 4,000 represented by one member and 1,600 electors represented by another. Not only does this Bill perpetuate anomalies, but it creates fresh ones; and surely that is not the object of what is called a reform Bill. Then, I am at a loss to understand why such electorates as Greenough and the Irwin cannot be amalgamated. So far as I know, Greenough has nothing to recommend it on any score: it has neither territory nor population.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Were you ever there?

MR. VOSPER: I have been there, and that is the reason I am speaking as I do about it. The Greenough Flats are notorious all over the colony. In any case the Greenough contains only 197 electors, and yet that constituency is not dealt with in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: There are over 1,000 people at the Greenough.

MR. VOSPER: There may be.

THE PREMIER: But they are not all on the rolls.

MR. VOSPER: Some years ago, when the goldfields were agitating for a redistribution of seats on the strength of population, the Premier said, "Never mind the population: look at the number on the rolls." Now, when we point to the number on the rolls, the Premier says, "Look at the population." No harm would be done by amalgamating Greenough and Irwin, and there is absolutely no excuse for maintaining the former as a "pocket borough," except that to interfere with it might cause a certain amount of Ministerial inconvenience. If the Government are in earnest about reforming the constitution, they should not have left such anomalies as I have pointed out. There is nothing to justify the anomalies, and they certainly tend to impugn the sincerity of the framers of the Bill. Something should have been done for another new population springing up in a portion of the colony. I refer to the tin-miners, the gold-seekers, and the coal-miners at Greenbushes, Donnybrook, and Collie. In those districts recently a large population has settled, and the latest reports of the various experts who have visited the locality is that there is every reason to believe the gold and tin will provide permanent industries; in fact, they say that the tin mines will become a very flourishing industry. We have heard so much about Collie coal, and every one has such a profound belief in the permanence of those coalfields, that my statements are not likely to be disputed or denied when I say that at the Collie we are likely to have a large permanent industry, employing numbers of men; and these three centres, if they go ahead in the direction I have indicated, will have little or no affinity with the districts surrounding them. For example, the Collie coalfield has little or nothing in common with the rest of the Wellington district; similarly, Greenbushes has little to do with the Nelson district; and Donnybrook, in a little while, will have little to do with Bunbury, except as a port. I need scarcely point out that another danger, if I may use the term, is springing up amongst hon. members who represent those districts now; for two of those members could ill be spared from this House, and indeed I may say all three could ill be spared, but two in

particular could not be spared in any conceivable circumstances. Yet those hon. members may rest assured that if the population is revolutionised by an influx of miners into those districts, sooner or later it will put an end to their political career—a state of things which would be regretted by no one more than myself.

THE PREMIER: But there are other districts those hon. members might represent.

MR. VOSPER: Quite so; but I am speaking of those districts. The wisest plan, from a selfish point of view, as well as from the general aspect of expediency, would be to create these three mining districts into one electorate, represented by a mining member. The Premier has said the Bill is intended to represent various interests, and not bodies of population. But new interests are springing up, which will probably become great interests; and even supposing there were only a small number of miners there, the districts would be large, including all three places, and embracing a sufficient agricultural population, to give at least as big an electorate as Nelson. If there is anything to justify Nelson as an electorate, there is everything to justify Greenbushes. Some consideration should be paid to miners settled there, and an offer should be made to give them separate representation in this House. Referring again to the question of the goldfields, I would earnestly urge the necessity of endeavouring to give increased representation there. I contend my own electorate wants, at least, one more member, especially if the divisions named in the Bill are to be made. There are other electorates of which hon. members know more than myself, and can speak more fully; but I certainly think some extra representation should be given in the cases I have indicated. If the redistribution of seats is to be made on a population basis, the goldfields have an undoubted claim, as they have if the redistribution is being made from the point of view of capital invested, of land values, of the value of production, or even from such a point of view as revenue-producing or territorial extent. Indeed, from any point of view, the goldfields have a better title to increased representation than any other

part of the colony. It is of no use saying that extra representation is claimed by the goldfields merely on the score of population. The goldfields have more invested capital, and produce more wealth and revenue, than any other part of the colony.

MR. CONNOR: They are just like Kimberley.

MR. VOSPER: Precisely; the argument might apply there. What I am saying is that, in addition to the democratic claim for representation on a population basis, the goldfields have the strongest claims that can be brought forward. I have already referred to the North, and to the defence of it by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest); and I cannot help thinking there is something in the suggestion of separation for the North. It is a moot question, which should be brought before the House, as to whether it would not pay us better as a colony to grant some degree of local autonomy to the North. I do not mean that portion of the colony should be separated altogether, and become a separate colony or State under the Federal Union; but surely some scheme might be adopted, such as that once suggested by Sir Samuel Griffith, in Queensland. There might be a council of some description, sitting at Roebourne or other convenient spot, and the line of demarcation might be drawn north or south of Carnarvon, while representation could be given to the North in the Legislative Council sitting in Perth, with one or two members in the Assembly. Under such a plan, I fancy both the people in the North and the people in the South would be better off, and we would not complain of being afflicted by the preponderance of their vote in this House. I cannot see anything impracticable about such a scheme, which would meet the requirements of the territorial proprietors in the North, and get rid of the anomaly of a handful of persons having so many representatives in this House.

THE PREMIER: There are not many representatives for the North provided in this Bill.

MR. VOSPER: I notice that the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) has included two pastoral districts which do not enter into my calculations.

I have divided those districts into four, with a member for each, but I find in the four electorates only 750 voters.

MR. CONNOR: Which are they?

MR. VOSPER: They are Kimberley, Gascoyne, DeGrey, and Murchison. The difference between my figures and those of the member for Central Murchison is that he has included the Irwin.

MR. CONNOR: Is not Kimberley a gold-producing district?

MR. VOSPER: I believe that Kimberley has sent down eight ounces during the last three years, so that it is a gold-producing district to some extent; still I do not think the gold from that district troubles the statistician to any great extent.

MR. CONNOR: Is that all?

MR. VOSPER: The return may have been 80 ounces.

MR. CONNOR: Cannot you add some other figure?

MR. VOSPER: I have no ill-feeling towards the northern districts; I can recognise the importance of the interests in the North; but I do not desire to see, on the one side, the anomaly of 14 members representing 17,000 electors, and on the other side four members representing 750 electors, which is the position to-day. The only way out of the difficulty is to give the North a large measure of self-government, and maintain a reduced representation in this House and in another place. That I think will satisfy the people in the North, and will be more satisfactory to those living in the South and the Central districts. I desire to conclude by saying that I regret the Government have seen fit to perpetuate anomalies which the Bill seeks to destroy. This measure will not end the agitation for redistribution: the House will always be bothered with a request for redistribution, because the Government have not seen fit to tackle the question properly. If the Government give the goldfields members all they are likely to reasonably demand, the Government will not give the goldfields anything disproportionate to what their wealth and population deserve. I shall support the hon. member for Central Murchison in Committee in trying to obtain the one man one vote principle, which is a good one, and has been adopted by the Commonwealth and many colonies and countries throughout

the world. It is high time the unjust and anomalous system that prevails in this country should be abolished. I regret that the Bill is not all we desire it to be, but I shall vote for the second reading, and do all I can to lick the Bill into shape in Committee.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): As I do not wish to record a silent vote on this question, I ask permission to say a word or two, but only a word or two. Since I have had the honour of sitting in this House, we have been given to understand that the Premier has always been doing something to keep in office; but if we look at the Bill before us, I do not think the Premier is going the right way to do that now, as he is disfranchising four electorates north of the Murchison, and out of that four three of the members sit on this side of the House, and have been consistent supporters of the Premier's policy.

MR. LEAKE: Good by!

MR. MITCHELL: I do not quite agree with the alteration of knocking the seats out, and the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), when speaking, had a very good case. I do not think this House will consider that the immense districts of East and West Kimberley should be amalgamated. Something has been said during the debate about a floating population, and I think every member in the House knows perfectly well that a mining population is more or less a floating population. Probably some of the large centres that now exist will, in a few years time, not be so largely populated, and the places that the Premier now tries to disfranchise, or politically tries to disestablish, may be quite as important to the colony as many of the large centres on the goldfields are now. We know that every ounce of gold taken out of the mines is not expended in this country, but every pound spent in the cultivation of the land helps to keep the country together. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, but I hope in Committee that certain alterations will be made. Certainly, I shall do all I can to keep East and West Kimberley separate districts.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): Of course it is my intention, in common with other members, to support the second reading of the Bill. I notice, in going through the measure, that the Bill differs in only

two particulars from the law which we have at the present time. These two particulars are, on the one hand the establishment of triennial Parliaments, and on the other hand increased representation.

THE PREMIER: Also the time a man has to be in the colony.

MR. LEAKE: That is rather provided for in the Electoral Bill.

THE PREMIER: No; it is in this Bill.

MR. LEAKE: The question of certain advantages, I will add, to the electors not only in getting on the roll, but in having their votes transferred and so forth. On the question of triennial Parliaments, I suppose we are fairly well all agreed. I do not think there is anything more calculated to keep members of Parliament up to the mark than the possibility of having to face the electors in the immediate future, and I hail that alteration with a certain degree of pleasure. As to the increased representation the Bill proposes, for my own part I do not appreciate it. I really think that 44 members in this Assembly are ample for the needs of this colony at the present time.

THE PREMIER: They do not get paid.

MR. LEAKE: I know they do not. The 44 members, taking into account the population of the colony, are quite sufficient, and if the Bill had been confined to redistribution, I think that would have been sufficient. We may, when in Committee, move to reduce the number of members from 48 to 44, and I throw this out with the idea that hon. members will consider whether or not it is advisable we should keep the present number of members as they are. One real and substantial reason for not increasing the membership of the House is the possibility of federation in the near future. Many of us, we know, are in favour of federation at once; every member of the House I believe is in favour of federation sooner or later, and if it comes within the next five or six years, there will be no necessity to have this increased representation in this Assembly. If we do not join the federation and Australia is federated, we shall have to trim our sails, as it were, to catch the federal breeze; and the tendency in all the federating colonies will be, and is as a matter of fact, to reduce the representation in the States Assemblies.

MR. MITCHELL: Quite time enough to do that when we get federation.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member has made a suggestion at last. As I was saying, and I ask the hon. member to bear this in mind, federation is practically an actual fact as far as our neighbours are concerned, and more than a possibility with ourselves; therefore, we should consider our present situation with regard to Australia federated as our nearest neighbour. As we are at present situated, the question of redistribution is a political necessity; at any rate it is a question which every Parliament must consider during the next few years; and the reason is this, that owing to the discovery of gold, and the establishment of large centres where there was no settlement at all, in fact where it was nothing but wilderness, the establishment of these large centres necessitates consideration of this question of representation. No one, five years ago, would have thought it possible that Kalgoorlie could have reached its present dimensions to-day.

[The PREMIER: Hear, hear.] We must always consider that the question of redistribution will crop up in every Parliament; therefore, inasmuch as the tendency is, or should be, to increase the representation in Parliament, it is as well not to carry it too far; therefore I suggest to members that we should hesitate before increasing the number of members from 44 to 48. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) referred casually to the possibility of the separation movement. I do not think that is necessary in our present constitutional condition, but it might happen if there were federation. Part of this colony might agitate perhaps, not so much for federation, as to have the boundaries of the Commonwealth extended to embrace some of our present area; but I do not think the question of separation, as we have understood it up to the present, is likely to receive practical consideration in this colony, nor is it likely that we are in a position to give the northern portion of the colony any particular form of local self-government. It seems to me the Administration acted quite right when they endeavoured to shuffle up the Kimberley and the Ashburton electorates. No doubt the hon. members for East and West Kimberley will agree with me that either one of those

hon. gentlemen will be ample representation for the Kimberley electorates; and the electors of Kimberley, I am satisfied, will congratulate themselves if they return either of those gentlemen who have hitherto represented them, and who have occupied seats on the benches opposite, in so marked a degree. It is difficult to forecast which of the hon. members we shall welcome back again, and which we shall lose, but I am inclined to think we shall have the member for East Kimberley back.

MR. CONNOR: Thank you!

MR. LEAKE: It is not right for me to promise the hon. member my vote. I should like to see, not so much a rearrangement of the boundaries, as one electorate absorbing another. I say so for this reason, that if we roll the two into one, we shall avoid the difficulties and complications which may arise owing to the compilation of a new electoral roll. Take, for instance, the two Kimberleys: if they were declared to be one electorate, the two rolls could be easily added together, and there would be little difficulty in arranging for the next election. This question of the rolls is an important matter, because the Bill as drawn says no person can vote at an election until he has been on the roll six months. I do not think that should be. At any rate, there should be some special provision made with regard to the first election, because while there is an alteration in these boundaries, there will be many voters who have not been more than six months on the old roll; yet, because there happens to be technically a new roll, it probably will not be possible for them to vote at the next election, because they will not have been on the roll six months.

THE PREMIER: That is provided for. They are transferred to the new place.

MR. LEAKE: I am sure the Government have no intention of placing difficulties in the way, and I hope the Premier will not think I am unfairly criticising the Bill when I mention the matter. However, it is sufficient for my purpose to have mentioned it, and I am glad the Premier is alive to the necessity of providing for that possibility. I should prefer that the members which are taken away from the northern constituencies should be given to the goldfields. I really think the goldfields are

entitled to more representation than they have at present, and I think if we come to weigh the *pros* and *cons*, they are more entitled to have increased representation than either Perth or Fremantle or the settled districts are. I say that for this reason: in my opinion there is more likely to be a community of interests between those who live in the settled districts of the colony—and particularly Perth and Fremantle, and the metropolitan districts—than there is between those on the goldfields. If members will pause to consider they will see that even now in the present goldfields representation the representatives are not unanimous, but are split up far more than other members are, and there is never any fear (at any rate to my mind) of the goldfields vote as a vote dominating any one particular section of the community. I have a sufficient belief, and I think knowledge, of human nature to know that no matter what section of the community, a dozen or more men representing them will never pull together.

A MEMBER: There may be another goldfields party formed.

MR. LEAKE: That may be, but if there is another goldfields party formed, it will only be to split up again. Such a contingency may happen in any respectable community. I should prefer to see the Legislative Council representation increased rather than the Assembly increased, because if members are required anywhere, it is in the Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER: They have half the number of the Assembly, and that is the same as under the Commonwealth Bill.

MR. LEAKE: Still, under the circumstances in which we are placed, it would be better in the interests of the community, if the number of members of Parliament is to be increased, that the additional members should have a seat in the Council rather than in the Assembly. I will not go so far as to say I shall fight for that when we go into Committee; but I certainly shall urge upon the Committee the advisableness of reducing the number of members in the Assembly from 48 to 44. I really do not see, and I think I may be regarded as fairly impartial in this instance, the necessity for increasing the representation of Perth and Fremantle practically at the expense of the goldfields.

THE PREMIER: The population is nearly double.

MR. LEAKE: Perth and Fremantle?

THE PREMIER: Twelve miles around it.

MR. LEAKE: It has been pointed out by members this evening and on other occasions, that not only do the goldfields represent people, but they represent property, and they have in a greater degree the double qualification which everybody claims is worthy of consideration in determining what representation any community shall have. Taking it either from the property point of view or the manhood point of view, the goldfields are entitled to more representation; and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the mining community and the miners' interests in this country are paramount. Besides, I do not think it correct to say the goldfields population is a floating one. Naturally there must be a certain nomadic element up there; yet it is astonishing to find how these communities have become settled, and what wealth has apparently been accumulated in the centres of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. In addition to those fields we now find there is a possibility of an extensive field being established down in the South. It is to be hoped that the mining down there will become of almost equal importance with that in the Eastern goldfields—mining for gold and mining for tin—and consequently we shall probably have a demand for increased representation from that portion of the colony before long. I do not know there is any other subject I need refer to on the second reading of the measure. The two principal points, I say again, are the establishment of triennial Parliaments and increased representation; and whilst I am opposed to increased representation, I am not opposed to redistribution of seats. I think if we confine ourselves to the question of redistribution, we shall be able to prepare more easily for the next election. It has been said time after time, there is always a difficulty in getting good men to come forward and represent constituencies in Parliament. If there is anything in that argument, if we increase the number of constituencies, so will the difficulty of getting proper people to represent the different constituencies also increase. I recommend to members the

consideration of this question of not increasing the number of members in the Assembly. I shall strive to keep the numbers as they are, and particularly am I moved in that direction by consideration of the fact that we may sooner or later have another constitution dominating in many respects the whole of the constitutions of Australia. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): I do not suppose it was expected I should view this Bill with any amount of enthusiasm, but at the same time I intend to support the second reading. The sad news that the constituency I have the honour to represent is about to be abolished has only been ameliorated as it were by one little ray of hope which the member for West Kimberley has held out in the suggested amendment he has foreshadowed. I think the Government, in framing the Bill as they have done, have dealt far too trenchantly with the northern districts; and if they had possessed the sense of gratitude they should entertain towards that district, which stood by Western Australia in her less prosperous days, they should have given expression to it by leaving the northern members practically as they were. For my part, when I first glanced over the Bill, I was somewhat indignant at the way the Bill treated the electorate I represent, because if there was one electorate in the North which did not lay itself open to the charge of being a "pocket borough," and which deserved to be left alone, that electorate was certainly the electorate of Pilbarra, which is both the largest in point of numbers, and almost the only electorate in the North which has ever had a contested election. Still, in spite of that, I awoke to the sad fact that the Government decided to abolish it.

THE PREMIER: Not at all.

MR. KINGSMILL: I was going to explain to the right hon. gentleman that, in looking the matter over, I came to the conclusion that perhaps there was not so much cause for indignation on my part as on the part of the electorate with which the electors of Pilbarra are to be merged, and whose name the Government propose to give to the new electorate; that is the electorate of DeGrey. If the amendment of the member for West Kimberley is not carried, I most

certainly will ask the House to be good enough, as I think they should be, to change the name of the proposed electorate from DeGrey to Pilbarra, because the electorate comprises, practically, the Pilbarra goldfield. That goldfield is providing nearly four-fifths, or at all events three-fourths of the electors, and is providing the greater part of the area; furthermore, the name of "Pilbarra," I venture to say, although the Premier thinks differently, expresses the locality better to the average man than the name of "DeGrey."

THE PREMIER: No; people do not know where Pilbarra is.

MR. KINGSMILL: They know where the goldfield is.

THE PREMIER: But Pilbarra is now a deserted place.

MR. VOSPER: Where is DeGrey?

MR. GEORGE: What is DeGrey?

THE PREMIER: DeGrey is the name of a well-known river.

MR. KINGSMILL: I have taken cognisance of the argument of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) with regard to the North trusting to the generosity, as it were, of the House and relying on the good feeling of hon. members, and for my part I am glad to think the hon. member has been able to express the good feeling of the House towards that part of the country; but, as a Northern member, I do not feel inclined to take the risk of the changes which might occur if we placed too much confidence in that feeling; and, furthermore, if the argument of the hon. member be carried to its logical issue, I fail to see that Parliament could be anything else than an executive body. We could all trust to one another's just feelings, and our presence in this House would then, I take it, be little longer required. I think somewhat too much stress has been laid by hon. members, and especially by some representing the Eastern goldfields, upon the population basis for the determination of the electorates. It has always appeared to me that in a country like Western Australia the population basis is absolutely impracticable. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] It is found to be impracticable in England, which, of all countries in the world, is the most uniformly populated; and we find in England anomalies in representation,

if not as great as those in Western Australia, still proportionately most absurd; and if in a country like England, where the uniformity of population is so much greater than it is here, the population basis for the determination of electorates is found to be impracticable, how much more impracticable must it be in a thinly-populated and straggling country such as this. Further, I maintain that the population basis is distinctly against the advancement of any country. If enfranchisement be worth anything, then those straggling populations in parts of the country which are just coming to the fore and going through the pioneer stage, require enfranchisement more than those parts thickly populated, more settled, and better able to look after themselves; and if such straggling districts do not get their enfranchisement, I must maintain that the population basis theory is altogether against the advancement of any country. I feel a certain amount of regret that the Government have not thought fit to create a new southern mining electorate, to take in the districts of Greenbushes, Colliemans and Donnybrook. I think that by so doing the Government would have taken a wise step. It is a peculiar fact, and I do not know to what it is due, that where two industries should, theoretically, work smoothly and amicably together, we find in practice that such is rarely the case, and that, where two industries are represented in one district, the industry that is the stronger elects the member; and I think that where it is possible to differentiate and to separate industries, this should certainly be done as much as possible. Furthermore, from the knowledge that I have of those districts, I fancy that their interests are quite sufficiently important, and that their population has a chance of becoming sufficiently numerous, to entitle them to separate representation. I also feel great regret that plural voting is still provided for in this Bill. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] I must say that, as regards the election for the Lower House, I think that, if an elector vote as a man for the Lower House and leave his property qualification to entitle him to his vote or votes for the Upper House, such elector is very well represented; and I am inclined to agree with the remark which

fell from the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), that if there is any increase of members to be made, it should be made rather in the Upper Chamber than in the Lower. As I have said, I shall support the second reading of this Bill, trusting to the amendments that will be made in Committee; and from the number of suggested amendments already on the Notice Paper, it appears to me that we are about to have an extremely lively time while in Committee on this Bill. In these circumstances I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): I do not think this Bill is one which should be passed over by hon. members, or against which hon. members should record silent votes. Regarding the observations which have fallen from several speakers, I would more especially like to draw the attention of the Government to the manner in which, in the redistribution of some seats and the addition of others, they have united in one electorate the two leading industries of the colony, namely, farming and mining. I should like to place on record my opinion and my experience of the united representation of these two industries by one member; and I may say, and the truth of my statement will be known to many members, that my experience in this matter has been one which has not been happy, neither has it been satisfactory to the people whom I have had the honour to represent. I think my experience as a member for the Dundas district, representing as I do both the coastal district of Esperance and the mining district of Norseman, has shown to many hon. members, and I hope the Government will also take note of it, the great difficulty that exists in the case of one member representing two divergent industries or interests; and for this reason I would most earnestly request that the Government in some measure may take steps to divide the constituency which I represent. The Premier, on his tour through that district, must have recognised the great divergence of political opinion which exists there, and must also have recognised the difficulties of the position which I have filled in attempting to represent the Dundas district in a proper and loyal manner. And I would ask the Premier, if that part of the colony is to receive proper and adequate repre-

sensation in the Parliament of this colony, to see that some step shall be taken --

THE PREMIER: To join Esperance to Albany?

MR. CONOLLY: No; I do not think that would be a reasonable step. As it is, I consider that in population, in interest, and in area, a separate constituency could well and reasonably be formed; and I hope that when the Bill reaches a more advanced stage, the Government will take some step in this direction. It is my intention to support the second reading, and in Committee I shall avail myself of the opportunity of once more bringing this question before hon. members.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): This discussion has shown the difficulty which must always arise in connection with such a measure as this. I invariably have great admiration indeed for a Government which introduces a measure for the purpose of limiting the number of members of a House. There is always a strong temptation to overlook the shortcomings of particular electorates which return favourable members; and if one does that, one can find plausibly good arguments for the purpose of justifying the course taken. For instance, I know the hon. member who championed the cause of the electorate of the DeGrey used strong arguments, that is plausibly strong arguments, for the purpose of advocating the retention of those three small electorates which I think have been wisely eliminated. The Government having done that, I shall be inclined to support them, and to express my thanks for having done it, more especially when I bear in mind that those three electorates at present return members pledged to the present Government; and there can be no doubt whatever that if those electorates were continued, they would still send members pledged to support the present Administration.

MR. A. FORREST: And why should they not?

MR. JAMES: I do not wish to express any reason why they should not. I only want to point out that, although we are raising these more or less technical objections to a Bill of this sort, which are always raised in connection with such Bills, we should not overlook the fact that the party responsible for introducing

the Bill have at all events realised how severe, how great, these disparities in representation are, and have applied the pruning knife not altogether for their own benefit as a party machine. To that extent, I think this House owes its thanks to the Government for having introduced a measure on these lines. I am also inclined to agree with the Government to this extent: in this colony in the past, we have had representation based, not upon population, but in a large degree upon area—upon electorates rather than electors; and during the course of the last five years, owing to the sudden large increase of population, the time has arrived when this principle has to be departed from. It was to a certain extent departed from when the last Redistribution of Seats Bill was introduced; it is to a larger extent departed from in the present Bill; but I think we should be wrong if we took up the position of insisting upon the Government introducing a Bill which would be theoretically correct. We have to bear in mind that we in this colony are dealing with two conflicting conditions: the old condition, to which I have referred, and the new, under which we are constantly discovering electorates which have suddenly been filled up with an ever-increasing number of people. In a matter such as this, it is essential that the Government and the House, in dealing with this measure, should show a spirit of compromise. No member of this House has so far contended for a strict, theoretically proportionate representation. Nobody asks for that; and I think we all realise that, not only should we consider the number of people in an electorate, but also the value of its industries, and perhaps of its proprietary rights. On the other hand, we have to consider that most undesirable contingency that those who introduced the Bill might have avoided their difficulties by saying: "We shall keep all the existing members, and add new members to those districts in which the population has increased." A Bill of this nature introduced on that principle would reflect little credit indeed upon the Government; but the Government have not adopted that principle: they have taken upon their shoulders the responsibility, if not of introducing to us a Bill giving

representation on a population basis, at all events a Bill which adopts that principle to a large extent, cutting away the representation given for some years past to some of the older electorates of this colony. I do not think it advisable to approach the consideration of a Bill like this with too much carping criticism: we ought, on the contrary, to recognise that the Government have made a very great advance in introducing a Bill which, on the face of it, so far as we can see, tends to deprive the Ministry of loyal supporters. Whilst we do not desire to increase the number of members too largely, nor to make great changes, we have at the same time to give as many new members to as many new electorates as will satisfy reasonable wants and requirements. I agree with the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), that even if this Bill be passed on the assumption that the tin-miners and the coal-miners will be a large population, and representatives are given where they are asked for on the goldfields, before the end of the new Parliament there would be a clamour for a redistribution of seats. If this colony is to move and grow at all, we ought to look for and pray for an agitation for redistribution of seats, because that agitation would be a sign of that vitality and increasing population we all desire to see. We would be entirely wrong if, in approaching the consideration of the Bill, we soothed or misled ourselves with the idea that by this legislation we could remove all difficulties, even for a period of two Parliaments; because I feel confident that whatever we do now, there will be a clamour for redistribution within two years. I fervently hope so, and the larger the clamour and outcry, the gladder I shall be, and I believe the gladder every hon. member will be. At the same time I should have been glad if the Government had seen their way to give increased representation to the Eastern goldfields. The electorate of Hannans, proposed in the Bill, seems unduly large, if we bear in mind, as the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has pointed out, that the Boulder and Kalgoorlie are only small electorates.

THE PREMIER: As proposed in the Bill, they are not so small.

MR. JAMES: So far as one can see at present, the Hannans district is comparatively large, and with the information I have at present, I think the member for North-East Coolgardie could make out a very strong case indeed for increased representation for the district he now represents. Doubtless in connection with this question there are details which cannot be dealt with until the Bill is in Committee; but I hope before the Committee stage is arrived at, we shall have more information as to population within the boundaries of the various proposed electorates. If the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) could give us some information as to the number of residents on the goldfields, that information might seriously influence hon. members in dealing with the question. With the object the Government have in view, they will no doubt get the fullest and most accurate information to enable hon. members to judge as to the population on the goldfields, and in the proposed electorates. I do not think we need fear the existence of a goldfields party, which would not, in my opinion, be felt any more than is the agricultural party, the pastoral party, or the metropolitan party, in the House. No doubt if questions cropped up concerning the goldfields closely, the members of the goldfields party would be found voting in the same way, to protect the interests they represent; but beyond that, I feel absolutely certain that any goldfields members in the future would act exactly as goldfields members have acted in the past and act now. When a question arose which did not vitally concern the goldfields, they would occupy an independent position, and vote in the same free and independent way as other members do. It is my desire that we should realise this, because there is a strong tendency among those on the goldfields and ourselves on the coast, to emphasise the difficulties which arise between us. No doubt there are difficulties at present, and we should do all we can to lessen them. If we were to attempt to adopt proportional representation, it would injure and I think retard the advent of that time, which we hope is very close now, when members from whatever part of the colony they come, or whatever part of the colony they represent, will realise they are members for

Western Australia, and, when they enter the House, must do their best to serve the interests of the whole colony. If we adopted proportional representation, comparatively small and scattered electorates would feel themselves seriously injured, because a great number of such electorates would be destroyed, and we would be creating that ill-feeling which we desire to allay. While dealing with the question of redistribution, the Government should have taken some steps for the purpose of getting increased representation in the Legislative Council. I do not like to see the number of members in either House unduly increased, but there has been a large increase of population in the metropolitan districts and on the goldfields, and on that ground there ought to be increased representation in the Council.

THE PREMIER: The number of members in the Council is half the number of members in the Assembly.

MR. JAMES: Is that provided by the Act?

THE PREMIER: No; but the members in the Legislative Council will be 24, as against 48 members in the Assembly: that is the same proportion as is provided under the Commonwealth Bill.

MR. JAMES: But we are not acting on that proportion now. Take the Eastern Province for example: that is a very large province, almost entirely controlled by Perth suburban voters, and that is not desirable.

THE PREMIER: That is not so in the Bill.

MR. JAMES: Then you are altering the boundaries.

THE PREMIER: No doubt the Metropolitan Province is very large.

MR. JAMES: Undoubtedly; and although on the basis of population it would be entitled to increased representation, I do not urge increased representation seriously, because, broadly speaking, the interests of Perth are not, perhaps, the interests of that province. But the goldfields are entitled to a larger representation in the Legislative Council, and if the Government could see their way to introduce a clause creating a new province, largely if not entirely controlled by the goldfields, I should be very glad to give it my hearty support. I do not follow the suggestion of the member for North-

East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), that there ought to be a member for the new mining districts of Greenbushes, Collie, and Donnybrook. We ought not too hastily jump at the conclusion that we are going to have a large permanent population in those districts during the next two or three years: that would be counting our chickens before they are hatched. We are already providing for several changes; and as regards the danger of the present members being rejected by the new electors in those electorates, they no doubt would be able to find seats as representatives for some other part of the colony. I should be sorry to think the members of the House who appreciate those gentlemen so much would, under the circumstances indicated, fail to show that appreciation and not give them an opportunity of seeking re-election. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) referred to one point to which I would like to draw the attention of the Premier, and it is a point for consideration in Committee. By the Electoral Act we provide that if any voter is on an existing roll, when the new Act comes into force his name can be transferred to the new roll, and then he has a right to vote, although his name has not been on the new roll for six months. In the Constitution Bill, which I suppose overrides the Electoral Bill, Clause 30 says:

Every person of the age of 21 years being a natural born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who shall have resided in Western Australia for six months shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, if qualified as in this section is provided, be entitled to be registered as an elector, and when registered for six months, to vote for a member.

The Constitution Bill, therefore, says that the voter must be on the register for six months before he is entitled to vote.

THE PREMIER: Clause 72 provides for existing voters.

MR. JAMES: But if you turn to Clause 72, you will see the effect is that names are taken off the existing rolls and put on the new roll; but it does not say that those persons shall have the right to vote although they have not been there six months. It simply puts their names on the roll. Then Clause 30 comes into operation, and says the names must have been on the roll six months. At any rate, that is the construction of the two provisions which suggested itself to me.

THE PREMIER: Having the name on the roll gives the right to vote.

MR. JAMES: But only after the name has been there six months.

THE PREMIER: That refers to future voters, not existing voters.

MR. JAMES: But it even applies, I should think, to existing voters, because it makes no exception. Can an Electoral Act to that extent modify a Constitution Act? I may be wrong in my idea, and the Attorney General can look into the matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It requires looking into.

THE PREMIER: If a man is on the roll he is entitled to vote.

MR. JAMES: However, we need not argue that matter now. I should be glad if, in dealing with an important question like this, the House and the Government could see their way to give increased representation to Hannans and Kanowna. That increased representation might be given by adding Greenough to Geraldton, and giving an additional member to the goldfields districts I have mentioned. Greenough represents no interest, and in 1898 it had 185 electors as against 178 in 1899; so that instead of increasing in number, like all the other electorates, Greenough has actually decreased.

THE PREMIER: But when the franchise is extended to women, what will be the effect?

MR. JAMES: But the fact remains that there has been this decrease in the number of electors in the one year.

THE PREMIER: There is a population of 1,000 there.

MR. JAMES: But will there be voting power of 1,000?

THE PREMIER: Not quite.

MR. JAMES: We cannot remove all disparities and inequalities, but we should remove all we can, without doing any injustice by too sudden a change. That is why I say some small electorates should be eliminated, unless they are required for the purpose of protecting some industry. If the redistribution of seats can be carried out in that way, I shall have pleasure in supporting the Bill. The Government deserve our thanks for introducing this measure. They have done what few Governments would have the pluck or courage to do: they have

introduced a Bill which strikes out small electorates, the members for which have supported the Government in the past, and would no doubt support them in the future.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley): Although I was not prepared to speak to-night, yet as it is desired we should go on I may as well give hon. members my views. Notwithstanding what the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) suggested, that I might be the member to come back to represent Kimberley, still I want to enter my protest against the amalgamation of East and West Kimberley; and in doing so I may seem to be introducing into the subject a local matter. I want to enter my protest against the suggestion that this Bill should interfere with the representation of one of the districts in the colony which I consider is, next to the Great Boulder district, one of the great mining centres; I refer to the district I have the honour to represent. I hold that the district of East Kimberley, and I may couple with it the district of West Kimberley, are at the present time the backbone of the colony, as they contain the entire pastoral industry of the colony. In East and West Kimberley we have nearly 200,000 head of cattle.

MR. VOSPER: Have they got votes?

MR. CONNOR: No; but we have some animals there with long ears who will try to get votes, and they are not connected with the Press, either.

MR. VOSPER: Very few of them are.

MR. CONNOR: Not only have we the pastoral industry, which will bear a great deal of talking about, but we have the original goldfield of Western Australia. East Kimberley is the parent of the gold-mining industry, which has been the means of bringing population to this country. In Kimberley there exist at the present time deposits of gold, not perhaps as rich as those in the Eastern goldfields districts, but we have rich gold mines there which will be worked in days to come, and which will probably be in existence and producing gold when some of the immense and very rich deposits which are now attracting notice will have been forgotten. The ores in the Kimberley mines are not of the same richness as those on the Eastern goldfields, but the lodes are more defined,

the reefs are more defined, and I give it as my opinion that we have a great many mines there which will be worked by and by.

MR. VOSPER: You have more stone there.

MR. CONNOR: But not so much "brass" as in another place. The Kimberley goldfields are worthy of the consideration of the House, although now they are in a depressed state, which is due entirely to the cost of living, and to the fact that the richer goldfields have drawn the population away; but in the future there will be in Kimberley a great goldfield which will require representation in this House, and which when the time comes this House will be bound to give. There is a very large coastline round East and West Kimberley, and I intended giving some figures in connection with this, but I did not think the debate on the second reading would be finished to-night, therefore I am not prepared with the figures. On that coastline are some of the finest harbours in Australia, and at the back of those harbours there is some of the finest pastoral country in Australia. At Wyndham, the harbour runs 60 miles inland, and there is a harbour 60 miles long, which could accommodate the whole of the British fleet anchored safely, almost within a stone's throw of the shore. Right up to the shore, where the ships can come alongside, there is excellent country, not sour country, but good pastoral country. We have another important industry connected with Kimberley: I refer to the great pearling industry, which is worthy of some consideration. Surely this industry should not be wiped out, as far as representation is concerned in this House. These three industries, the pearling industry, the gold-mining industry, and the pastoral industry—the pick of the pastoral industry in the colony—should have some consideration, although the population in the North is not such as we could wish. The pearling industry has been the means of helping this colony before the great goldfields were discovered; then gold was discovered in Kimberley, which was the means of the gold being discovered in other parts of the colony afterwards. The pastoral industry, which embraces nearly a quarter of Western Australia, should not be forgotten. I do

not think the representation which East and West Kimberley now have should be changed. It may seem that I am speaking of a personal matter, but I do not suppose my opinion would be taken for much were I not representing one of the Kimberley districts myself; but being the representative of East Kimberley, and as I have had the honour and pleasure of being the first representative of the gold-mining industry in this House, I think I am entitled to say something on this matter. I claim the sympathy and support of every member representing the gold-mining industry who sits in this House, because I represent the parent of that industry which brought the population here; and I claim that the representation of the district should not be wiped out. In committee, I hope I can claim the support of members when I move an amendment that these two constituencies be not amalgamated. I might draw hon. members' attention to the fact that it would be an unhappy state of affairs if we were bound to live entirely on the gold-mining industry, and if we had no other industry which we could develop, or which deserved developing. Is there no other industry which deserves consideration than the gold-mining industry? I have been a consistent supporter of the gold-mining industry since I have been in the House, but I hold we are not wholly dependent on the gold-mining industry; and if we place in the hands of the gold-miners the control of the country, we shall not be doing what we were sent here to do: we shall not be carrying out our duty. In the North of this colony there are millions and millions of acres suitable for pastoral and agricultural purposes, or at least suitable for pastoral purposes, for growing tropical products; and if we give no representation to that part of the country, and take away the representation it has at present, it will be as much as to say "We do not require that." How are the people on the goldfields to be supplied, if we do not foster the Northern part of our colony? Are we to do what we have been doing before, take the wealth from this colony and send it to Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, instead of fostering our own places and industries? If we do that, it will be a sad state of affairs.

MR. MORGANS: That is what federation will do for you.

MR. CONNOR: We are not talking of federation now. I do not mean to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I intend to move an amendment in reference to the two districts of which I have particularly spoken. It was a very ungraceful act on the part of the Premier, who I believe was responsible for this Bill, to take the representation away from three of the districts which have been not only supporting him and his Government, but comprise people who have helped to develop the industries of the colony, and have worked hard for it. I will not talk about myself, further than to ask, what man has done more for the benefit of this country than the member who at present represents the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt)? I do not know of one. There is an industry which has been talked about a good deal lately, namely, the coal industry, and we are doing the right thing in trying to develop it. When the time comes for the subject to be brought before the House, I shall support direct representation for Greenbushes and the Collie coalfields. Speaking about that reminds me that at Wyndham, where there is one of the finest harbours of Australia, there is shale which is an almost certain indication of coal; and if this industry can be established, especially with the possibilities of supplying the Eastern islands and countries, and getting a large shipping trade at Wyndham, we shall require another redistribution of seats. Shale is there, and I believe it is a greasy shale; and, if we keep the member, we will develop the country all the better for it. To do away with a member is not the way to get development, for any district has a better chance of development when it has a member in Parliament. Let the member stay in, and we will have a better chance of developing the coal at Wyndham.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why have you not done it?

MR. CONNOR: There is a lot I had to say in connection with this subject, but as it seems to be the wish of members that the Bill should go through without much discussion, and I have not had the pleasure of being present to hear the ideas of other members, I will not discuss

the question at any length. I will only say the right to increase the number of representatives of the colony is not disputed; but I would like to impress upon members that it does not follow there is a right to take away representation already existing, which representation was not created without a sufficient and just reason. There is no retrograde movement in the North of the colony, so far as the productions of it are concerned, which justifies taking away the right to elect a member, which was created seven years ago. If there were a retrograde movement it would be a different matter, but development is increasing every day. Look at the export that takes place from Derby. I am not quite certain about the exports there, but this year the exports from Wyndham will represent £80,000, and next year perhaps £100,000. The amount goes on increasing.

MR. A. FORREST: £300,000.

MR. CONNOR: I am talking purely from the pastoralist's point of view, from the property point of view if you like, and the view is one we have no right to ignore. I credit myself with being as democratic as most members, and I am not afraid to get up and express my opinions. I say we must not ignore the fact that if we do not develop these outlying countries with capital, we will not get the population. The first thing is to develop these countries with capital, and, if you wish to kill the monopolies to a certain extent, get people there, and you will soon bring those monopolies down. What we want in this colony is more population. I wish to enter my protest against the decrease in the representation for the North of this colony, and particularly against the amalgamation of the two Kimberleys into one district. When the time comes I shall move in Committee that this be altered. I beg to support the second reading of the Bill, with that idea.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): I desire, in common with other members, to express my appreciation, and to thank the leader of the Government for bringing down the measure to the House so promptly. It is with regret I reflect on the remark made by the Premier the other evening, that owing to some form which the new Electoral Bill has to go

through, we will be unable to go to the country on this Redistribution of Seats Bill so soon as we had hoped. I, for one, am prepared to go to the country on this Redistribution Bill under the old Act.

A MEMBER: You are wiped out.

MR. WALLACE: I recognise I am wiped out, and do not regret it, because I am prepared to sacrifice my position to satisfy the popular cry for more representation; but I wish to point out a little objection I have to the suggestion that my constituency, which is principally a mining one, shall be thrown in with an agricultural constituency. It cannot be denied that the great trouble with the miners has been that they have considered themselves unduly taxed in order to foster the agricultural industry; and yet, after the careful consideration of the Premier and his colleagues, we find that one hon. gentleman (whom I believe it would be hard to defeat, no matter under what conditions we went to the country), is to be asked to represent an agricultural constituency and a mining constituency. I declare now that it will prove impossible for that gentleman, or any other, to represent interests which clash as these clash; and when we go into Committee I may suggest some amendment which will alter that boundary. In doing so I shall have no desire to complain of having been obliterated; but in the interests of that portion of the new district which I represent, I should like to point out that the proposal is unjust to the agriculturists, to the miners, and to the member who will be asked to represent them. "Yalgoo" is a name which has always been very pleasing to the Premier: it has caused him to smile and to laugh heartily at times, even when the member for Yalgoo stood up in his place to speak; and I have no doubt that no one in this House is better satisfied than the Premier that Yalgoo has been left out of the new Bill. I will now tell the Premier that, notwithstanding his desire to obliterate the name of "Yalgoo," still I have every confidence that I, personally, will not be obliterated. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] It is not with the feeling that I shall be obliterated that I seek to point out what I consider will be an injustice to a portion of the miners in the Yalgoo district, but it is simply because I sincerely believe that they cannot be represented by the

same man who will represent an agricultural district. At the same time, I have no desire to suggest that any districts should be obliterated or amalgamated; but I feel sure that the Premier will refer, if he has not already referred, to the number of persons on the electoral roll, and that he will find that there are many places which have considerably fewer names on the roll than Yalgoo, and many places, too, which have not the prospects which Yalgoo has; and notwithstanding that, we find that the Premier has carefully outlined certain districts, and has given them representation in this House, while he has mutilated Yalgoo to such an extent that the people will not know where they are, and it will be difficult in time to come for people living in the three divisions proposed to be made in the Yalgoo district to know who is their representative, or in which district they live. Regarding the other matters in connection with plural voting and the term of residence required before men can get on the roll, I shall be pleased to give my few little words when in Committee. I have no desire at present to prolong the debate on this Bill, because I have heard a wish expressed by some hon. members that they would like it finished to-night, though I think it is impossible to finish it to-night if we desire to be fair to members unavoidably absent, and I hope the Premier will waive his objection, and will agree to the adjournment of the debate in order that absent members may have a chance of speaking: I intend to support the second reading, and to follow it with amendments.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I move the adjournment of the debate. I promised several members to do so.

THE PREMIER: Who are they?

MR. GREGORY: Mr Holmes and others.

MR. MORGANS: They all intend to support the second reading. Why adjourn the debate?

THE PREMIER: Those members ought to stay in the House. They go away and expect all the business to stop for them.

MR. GREGORY: I consider the main question in the Bill now before us is that of redistribution, and I hardly think we can look upon the scheme proposed by the Government as fair and equitable. In the first place I am strongly of opinion

that the Government should provide a little extra representation in the Legislative Council for the people on the goldfields. According to the Premier's own statement, the goldfields representation is a little less than one-third. I join issue with him on these figures.

THE PREMIER : They are the Registrar General's figures.

MR. GREGORY : Taking the population as 40,000, we have only one-eighth.

THE PREMIER : One-eighth of what ?

MR. GREGORY : Only one-eighth in the Upper House, of which I am speaking. You ought to give us a little more representation in the Upper House ; and when we get into Committee on this Bill, I hope the Government will agree to a greater representation in another place for the goldfields. But in regard to the figures the Premier has given this House to the effect that there is only a population of 40,000 on the Coolgardie goldfields, I contend that the population is over 60,000. There are some 35,000 in Kalgoorlie.

THE PREMIER : You only guess at that number.

MR. GREGORY : I do no more than you do, because your estimate must be a guess.

THE PREMIER : No ; I took the Registrar General's figures.

MR. GREGORY : Why did you not take the basis of the names upon the electoral rolls ?

THE PREMIER : Address the Chair, and not me. Address the Speaker.

MR. GREGORY : I beg your pardon. It is a great pleasure to receive a lesson in manners from the Premier. In Coolgardie there are, I believe, about 12,000 people ; in the North-East Coolgardie electorate there are from 7,000 to 8,000 ; in North Coolgardie and Mount Margaret there are some 10,000 ; bringing up the total, with the 35,000 in Kalgoorlie which I previously mentioned, to 64,000.

THE PREMIER : There are 75,000 in the metropolitan districts.

MR. GREGORY : I do not think there are. Let us take the rolls as a fair basis. In the metropolitan district there are some 14,500 on the rolls, and they return eight members ; in the four Coolgardies are 14,000 people, returning four members, and under the new scheme it is proposed to give those people seven members.

The district of East Coolgardie, with 5,674 persons on the roll, is to have three members ; and North-East Coolgardie, with 3,368 on the roll, is to have one member. When one looks at the number of electors on the rolls in those various districts, some of those smaller districts, as suggested, could be merged into one another, so as not to increase the number of members in the House if we can possibly avoid it. We might merge one or two together, giving a few more members to those goldfields. In this Bill the Premier has seen fit to obliterate or "wipe out," as it is called, the district of Yalgoo, which has some 194 persons on the roll. Then we have Greenough, a small agricultural district, with 179 on the roll ; and we have the Irwin, with 106 on the roll, these two districts adjoining one another ; and I am sure these districts might well have been made into one electorate. The pastoral districts have suffered to some extent, and the goldfields are supposed to get some slight additional representation : but when one weighs the advantages and looks at figures, one finds that the Government have carefully added extra members for metropolitan and semi-metropolitan constituencies, and have still retained the same power that they have had in the past. I do not altogether believe in giving representation on the basis of population. That would not be fair, because we cannot look for as large populations in the agricultural districts as are found in the metropolitan and the goldfields districts ; and agricultural districts should, no doubt, have reasonable representation. In my opinion the constituencies of Irwin and Greenough might be amalgamated, and there are several other constituencies of a similar description. These points, however, can be dealt with in Committee ; and I, for one, hope the Premier will see his way to give one extra member to the Kalgoorlie district, and another to North-East Coolgardie.

MR. MORGANS : What about Coolgardie ?

MR. GREGORY : There are only 3,295 electors on the roll for Coolgardie, according to the latest returns.

MR. MORGANS : There are many more now.

MR. GREGORY : I am speaking on the authority of a return received to-day from

the Inspector of Rolls, dealing with the year ending June last. I must congratulate the Government on altering the life of the Parliament from four years to three, because that course is only right in a new country such as this. People on the goldfields have to take their representatives very much on trust, because they are all comparatively strangers to each other; and when a country is developing at such a rate as this country is, three years is quite long enough for a Parliament to exist. I cannot say I like the qualification for electors as laid down in Clause 30, and I hope that in Committee some alteration will be made in this direction. A person who has been six months in the colony is entitled to have his name registered, but he has to be registered six months before he gets a vote. There are numbers of people who have been seven to ten years in the colony and have never yet been on the roll, and surely, having been that length of time in the colony, they should be allowed to exercise the vote if they wish to. I would prefer that a person who has been twelve months in the colony, and has got his name on the roll, should be allowed to vote straight away. As the Bill stands now, it would be utterly impossible for a person who got his name on the roll to take advantage of the privilege for the next general election, and it would, in my opinion, be much better if the Government had proposed a system of electors' rights which, besides being a great convenience, would have been a source of revenue.

THE PREMIER : Who would pay the revenue ?

MR. GREGORY : The people would pay it. If there was a system of electors' rights, it would be possible to find out whose fault it was if any names were not on the roll. Under the present system I have known hundreds of claims sent in to electoral registrars, and the papers have simply been thrown into the waste-paper basket. I know that under the Electoral Act a receipt has to be sent by the registrar, but with a system of electors' rights, that receipt would be handed to the applicant at once, and if his name did not appear on the roll, it would be easy to find out the officer who was to blame. Under the Bill, members of the West Australian Club or of the Weld Club would all be able to get on the roll as

owners of property, because the Bill does not limit the number which can be placed on the roll for any given property. There might be twenty or thirty members of a club, and they would all be entitled to a vote.

THE PREMIER : Members of a club are not owners, but simply trustees for the owners.

MR. GREGORY : In Victoria there was a very similar provision in the Act, and the same point arose there; and it should be distinctly provided that for any property, no more than three voters should be placed on the roll. I want to raise my voice against the system of plural voting. It has already been pointed out that the property-owner has his representation in the Upper House, which provides him with, as it were, a second vote, and I do not see why there should be plural voting for the Legislative Assembly. I hope the system of plural voting will be abolished; more especially when, under the provisions of the Bill, a person is allowed to vote by proxy.

THE PREMIER : Not by proxy.

MR. GREGORY : Well, it is a system of absentee voting, and a man may sit in his office on the goldfields and vote for several districts without any trouble to himself.

MR. A. FORREST : It takes some trouble.

MR. GREGORY : There is not much trouble, because a property-owner's name is simply transferred from the municipal roll to the electoral roll; and such property-owners have power to influence elections all over the colony. I sincerely hope the House will reject the system, because now, in no other colony, is there plural voting.

THE PREMIER : Yes; there is in Victoria.

MR. GREGORY : Victoria has abolished plural voting.

THE PREMIER : Not yet.

MR. GREGORY : The Victorian Legislative Council have decided to abolish it.

THE PREMIER : There is plural voting in Queensland.

MR. GREGORY : I think plural voting has been abolished in Queensland: I read something to that effect in the newspapers only yesterday. At any rate, the Victorian Legislative Council have decided to abolish plural voting.

THE PREMIER: There has been plural voting for about 40 years in Victoria.

MR. GREGORY: I hope there will not be plural voting so long in this colony, because it is founded on bad principle.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so.

MR. GREGORY: The sooner we get rid of plural voting the better. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, and I hope, when we get into Committee, the representation given to the goldfields will be more in accordance with the great wealth and value of that part of the country. The goldfields made Western Australia what the colony is to-day. We on the goldfields do not ask for representation on the basis of population, but representation on a fair and equitable basis.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): I think the Bill very fairly treats the electorates, except the one I have some interest in (North); and I would be doing that district a great wrong if I did not enter my protest. The people in that district have lived there a great number of years, under adverse circumstances, trying to build up this country. It may appear a small thing to people not immediately associated with the district, but the northern country gives a daily supply to the market of this colony of a very necessary article. Year by year the trade is increasing, and we cannot anticipate the great possibility before that pastoral industry. In years to come we shall count our stock by millions, and not by thousands, as we do to-day. Then we shall be exporting to England, to Manilla, and to Africa, and I may tell hon. members that negotiations are now going on to supply the South African market with meat. This industry gave revenue to the country when there was very little revenue from other sources; still the representation of this district is to be wiped out. It is impossible to amalgamate the East Kimberley with the West. The people in the two districts live and think differently from one another. The people in East Kimberley employ nothing but white labour; they discard the Chinaman; I do not think three Chinamen could be found in East Kimberley, and very few blacks are employed. The whole of the work is given to white people. In West Kimberley the people associate with the natives, and

while in East Kimberley we try to educate the natives up to the white standard, in West Kimberley it is the opposite. How can a respectable community like East Kimberley associate with West Kimberley? If it is attempted to connect the two there will be a war. The stockmen will be going over the ranges and annexing the stock from the other side.

MR. A. FORREST: And bringing the tick over.

MR. DOHERTY: If hon. members will only give this matter due consideration, they will not allow the Government to simply discard the district for the purpose of satisfying the clamour of the public. When the Government get nice things said about them by such members as the member for East Perth (Mr. James)—and it was only by a misfortune that the member for East Perth did not represent East Kimberley: he tried his utmost, but was not elected—the Government are prepared to give way. The member for East Perth says nice things about the Government, and the Government are willing to listen to him. The Government should not discard the members for those constituencies who have supported them; and the member for East Kimberley—I think I know him—and the member for West Kimberley have given the Government undivided support. Because the members for the goldfields want the pastoral industry wiped out, the Government should not give in to them. We have goldfields members. There is the member for Yalgoo ———

MR. WALLACE: Yalgoo would not plead to the Government like you are pleading.

MR. DOHERTY: I do not know what your particular line is.

THE PREMIER: No one else, either.

MR. DOHERTY: There is another large industry in this country which may come under the head of "mining," but which is so distinct from gold-mining that I am not sure whether it should come under the Minister for Railways. At any rate, if the industry is to flourish, it must come under a Minister separate from that of the gold-mining industry. I refer to the Collie coal. We have at Colliefields one of the best seams of coal in the world: the quality of the coal is

not equal to the quality of other coals, but for the size of the seam and the purity of the coal, the seam is equal to any in the world. The output of the mines on the Collieries in a short time will over-supply the colony. The coal-mining industry has no one to speak for it in this House. The Commissioner of Railways no doubt wants to put all the profit from the coal mines down to the railways. If there is one particular industry in this colony which requires representation, it is the Collie coal.

MR. A. FORREST: I think the coal industry is very well represented.

MR. DOHERTY: If we give the Collie coalfields distinct representation we shall be doing a great deal of good.

MR. GEORGE: Are not the Collie people satisfied with the present member?

MR. DOHERTY: Who is he?

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Venn.

MR. DOHERTY: That will be seen when the election comes round. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but in Committee I shall insist—there is no other way of putting it—that East and West Kimberley and the Ashburton districts shall be restored.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): I did not intend to address myself to this question until we came to the Committee stage, but I am compelled to rise to protest against the argument used by the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty). I desire first of all to congratulate the Government upon the measure they have brought forward. It is a fair and liberal Bill, a far better one than I anticipated; therefore, I desire to express my gratification that this Bill has been brought in for our consideration. The provisions in the Bill with regard to the electors' claims, and the receipts for claims are everything that can be desired, and they should receive the commendation of every liberal-minded man in the community. I consider this provision extremely beneficial, and it will prevent an occurrence of an episode which happened in my own constituency at the last election, or just previous to it. There were 300, or something over 300 claims sent out, and they were lost somehow or other in the registrar's office; the result being that a constituency which ought to have numbered about 800 voters, was finally made up with a number of about 411. I

just want to deal with the argument advanced by the hon. member for North Fremantle for the retention of members for the two Kimberleys. I can easily understand the arguments advanced by the hon. gentlemen who represent these two districts, but I am astonished that any member of this House can get up and advance an argument which is abhorred in all English-speaking countries, and only finds a place in the most rotten of all countries which have endeavoured to assimilate English principles for their government (I mean the United States); that is, advocating the spoils to the victors; and simply because a constituency is likely to return members to support one particular Government, the justice of their case is not to be taken into consideration. It is not a matter of representation of interests, or of representation on a population basis, but simply that those constituencies have in the past sent men who will support one particular Government, and will continue to send such men in the future. I sincerely trust the Government will not stoop to such a process as that. If there are any arguments why those two constituencies should retain their representation, let us have them; but for goodness sake do not let us debase the Government by granting representation because of the favours they have received and are likely to receive.

MR. CONNOR: Is the hon. member in order in attributing motives to me personally?

THE SPEAKER: Oh, no; he has not done that. The hon. member is quite in order.

MR. CONNOR: I merely ask your opinion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order.

MR. OLDHAM: I have no desire whatever to impute motives to the hon. member. I tried to make it plain I quite understood the arguments he advanced, and that there might be something in them.

MR. CONNOR: You said I would be returned for the express purpose of assisting this Government. I understood you to say so.

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR. OLDHAM: The hon. member has quite misunderstood me. I was dealing with the remarks which fell from the mem-

ber for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), who advocated the retention of these two constituencies on grounds different from those urged by the members who so ably represent those districts at the present time. I only rose to protest as strongly as I can against the principles advocated by my friend the member for North Fremantle.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I indorse every word uttered by the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham), and I think this House has never heard a meaner sentiment uttered in it than the sentiment that a constituency should be retained because it has returned members who have supported the Government, in return for favours received one way or other. I do not think the House has ever heard a more mean sentiment uttered within its precincts.

THE SPEAKER, before putting the question, said: The Constitution Act provides that there must be an absolute majority to carry either the second or the third reading of any Bill brought in for the alteration of the Constitution of the colony. I have counted the House, and I find that there are 23 members here, which number is an absolute majority. The question is that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question passed on the voices, without dissent.

Bill read a second time.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House resolved into Committee, in order to embody certain amendments *pro forma*.

IN COMMITTEE.

On motions by the PREMIER, certain amendments (as printed in the Notice Paper) were made in the Bill without discussion, for the purpose of being printed.

Bill reported with the amendments made *pro forma*.

MR. GEORGE: I think the inexperienced members of this House are entitled to a little explanation. Several hon. members have informed me—I do not know whether they have been “pulling my leg”—that this action which has just been taken means that the Bill has passed through Committee absolutely.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. GEORGE: Will the Speaker kindly inform me whether this is so?

THE SPEAKER: I will inform the hon. member, if he will sit down. When a member in charge of a Bill desires to make numerous amendments after the second reading, it is a convenient form that he should move that the Bill be committed *pro forma*, for the purpose of having those amendments printed and inserted in the Bill before the Committee deals with the measure. The action which has just been taken does not take away any right of discussing the Bill in Committee. When the House goes into Committee again on the Bill, these amendments will have been printed and incorporated with the measure.

Report adopted. Ordered, that the Bill be reprinted with the amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 6th September, 1899.

Question: Agricultural Bank, Branch for Geraldton—
Question: Railway Excursion Fares—Question: Railway Excursion Fares, Perth-Albany—Question: Breaksea Island Light—Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Return: Railway and Telegraph Employees, Particulars—Motion: Agricultural Bank, Branch for Geraldton (withdrawn)—Motion: Lead Ore, Bonus—Motion for Papers: Vessels delayed at Fremantle—Motion for Papers: Fremantle Water Supply—Motion: Alluvial Flats, to Dredge or Sluice; Amendments—Motion for Papers: Mail Service, North—Rural Lands Improvement Bill, third reading—Roads and Streets Closure Bill, Amendment on report; reported—Municipal Institutions Bill: Motion to refer, negatived—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK, BRANCH FOR GERALDTON.

MR. ROBSON asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: 1, Whether any