

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1931

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WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 1931.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. C. Taylor, Windsor) took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN DEPOSITORS IN PRIMARY PRODUCERS BANK OF AUSTRALIA.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Valence*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“In connection with the failure of the Primary Producers Bank of Australia—

1. Is he aware that branches of this bank were established at St. George and Dirranbandi?

2. Is he also aware that the failure of this bank has placed depositors such as workers, selectors, and business people in the abovementioned districts in an extremely awkward position?

3. Will the Government consider making available financial accommodation for these people, until the affairs of the Primary Producers Bank of Australia are wound up?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. I have no official information on the subject, but it is probable that the closure of the bank has had that effect in some cases.

“3. It is not usual to disclose Government policy in answer to a question.”

CANE LAND ASSIGNMENTS TO FARLEIGH AND GIN GIN SUGAR-MILLS.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. Is it a fact that the Farleigh sugar-mill has been granted an additional area of land for assignment under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act; if so, what was the area?

“2. Was this area granted on the applications of individual farmers, and, if not, on whose application?

"3. What tonnages of cane were harvested last season at Farleigh and Gin Gin mills, respectively?"

"4. Why was Gin Gin mill, with a small tonnage of cane and a heavy financial responsibility to the Crown, refused permission to substitute a small area of assignment?"

"5. Does he support the policy of the board in apparent discrimination between mill areas?"

"6. If not, will he take action to rectify any anomalies existing in the assignment of cane areas as fixed by the Central Cane Prices Board?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*), for the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. H. F. Walker, *Coorara*), replied—

"1. Yes; 1,250 acres.

"2. On the application of the general manager, Farleigh Co-operative Sugar Milling Company, Limited.

"3. Farleigh harvested last season 76,810 tons, and Gin Gin harvested 37,050 tons.

"4. I am not aware of the reason, as the matter of assignment lies solely at the discretion of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board.

"5. I do not support a policy of discrimination between mill areas if conditions are similar.

"6. Action is contemplated which it is hoped will have the desired effect."

ACTION OF POLICE IN RE BROTHEL IN GLADSTONE ROAD, ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. DUNLOP (*Rockhampton*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is he aware that I called at the Rockhampton Police Station as member for Rockhampton on Monday morning, 24th August, 1931, to make some inquiries on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. W. Boniface, and that while making these inquiries I, and through me this Legislative Assembly and the electors whom I represent were grossly insulted by Inspector O'Hara, who called a witness into the room immediately I started to speak to him, and when I asked him what the witness had been called in for, he said, 'You are an unreliable man, and I cannot trust you'?"

"2. Will he see that I either receive from Inspector O'Hara a written apology for this gross insult, or that this inspector is immediately transferred out of my electorate?"

"3. With reference to his answer to my question No. 6, asked on the 3rd September, 1931, re Inspector O'Hara, is he aware that Inspector O'Hara under no circumstances whatsoever asked me to put my complaint in writing re Constable Jenks, but that he told me in a very abrupt general way 'if I had anything to tell him to put same in writing'?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. C. Peterson, *Normanby*) replied—

"1. I am informed by Inspector O'Hara that he did not make the remarks attributed to him.

"2. Instructions have been given that the hon. member be treated with the courtesy to which his position entitles him.

"3. No."

ALLEGED DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF BANKS BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Why did the Treasurer not assist the Primary Producers and Federal Deposit Banks?"

"2. Is it correct that a special Cabinet meeting was held on Sunday, following a run on the Queensland Deposit Bank on Saturday morning?"

"3. Was this hurried action taken because Mr. Kelso, member for Nundah, and other members of the Government were heavy holders in the Queensland Deposit Bank?"

"4. Do members of the Government condone this action?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) replied—

"1. I was not afforded an opportunity by either of those banks of assisting them before they closed their doors. As the Primary Producers Bank carried on business in other States, it would not have been possible for this State alone to do anything to avert the crisis in the affairs of that bank.

"2. In consequence of events which occurred on the morning of Saturday, the 5th instant, in connection with the Brisbane Permanent Building and Banking Company, Limited, and the Queensland Deposit Bank, Limited, I arranged for representatives of those institutions and of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the trading banks to meet me on Sunday afternoon to discuss the position. I am very thankful to say that the result of my action was entirely satisfactory, as the announcement which I was enabled to broadcast and to make to the press as the outcome of the conference had the desired effect of allaying any fear which may have existed as to the financial stability of the two institutions I have named. This is proved by the fact that the business of those institutions assumed normal conditions on Monday morning. A meeting of the Cabinet was held after the conference, at which I reported the result of the action taken by me.

"3. My action was taken solely in the interests of the public, and with the object of averting the disastrous consequences which would have followed a continuance of the conditions which prevailed on Saturday morning. The fact that any members of Parliament may, or may not, have been interested in either of the institutions did not enter into my calculations. I am surprised at the hon. member asking such a question.

"4. I have no hesitation in saying that not only members of the Government but all members of Parliament should be prepared to support me, or any other Minister, in taking steps to arrest what might have developed into

a serious financial crisis. It may probably interest the hon. member to know that all shades of political opinion have complimented me upon the action taken. Apparently the hon. member is one of the few who do not approve of what was done."

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*), without notice, asked the Treasurer—

"If the Federal Deposit Bank and the Primary Producers Bank open their doors, will he offer the same assistance to them that he offered to the Queensland Deposit Bank?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) replied—

"No financial assistance was offered."

Mr. BRUCE: If they open their doors, will you give the same assistance, or guarantee them?

The TREASURER: The hon. member must not answer the question for me. I must answer it for myself. If I can do anything to assist either of the banks mentioned by the hon. member—and I have already notified them to that effect—I shall be only too pleased to do it. I am not without hope that in the case of one of them something may still be done, and I shall assist all I can in that direction.

PRESS STATEMENT IN RE LOAN FOR RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is the statement correct which was published in the press recently that the Premier was asking the Loan Council for a million to relieve unemployment?

"2. Is the following statement published in the 'Daily Mail' on 6th September correct?—

'The Government has in the Commonwealth Bank in Brisbane £1,500,000, and it is stated on the best authority that whatever sum is necessary will be made available to the banks.'

"3. If this statement is correct, was it made to support the Queensland Deposit Bank, of which Mr. Kelso, M.L.A., is managing director, and many Government members are heavy holders?"

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Wynnum*) replied—

"1. The Premier is endeavouring to obtain this State's proportion of any loan money which the Loan Council may succeed in raising for the relief of unemployment."

"2. No. Such statement was not authorised by me as Treasurer of the State."

"3. See answer to No. 2."

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION COSTS.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Railways if he can give me a reply to the following question, which I addressed to him on the 8th instant:—

"1. What was the total length of railways constructed up to year ended 1913-14:—(a) Capital expenditure on same; and (b) average cost per mile?

"2. Total length of railways constructed since 1914-15 to June, 1931:—(a) Capital cost expended; and (b) average cost per mile?

"3. What amount has been charged to revenue for all railways for renewals and repairs, etc., from date of construction to June, 1931?

"4. What was the cost of Roma Street Railway Station freehold from tunnel to Red Hill?

"5. What was the cost of Central Railway Station freehold from tunnel to tunnel?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. Godfrey Morgan, *Murilla*) replied—

"1. 4,570 miles. (a) £23,655,156; (b) £6,271."

"2. 1,830 miles. (a) £16,528,083 (approx.); (b) £8,793 (approx.)."

"3. £29,523,944 from 1831 to 1931 inclusive. The information prior to 1831 is not available."

"4. £26,618. A considerable portion of Roma street railway yard was Crown land, for which no compensation was paid."

"5. £37,313. The main area for Central Station was part of a school reserve, for which no compensation was paid."

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Regulation under "The Elections Acts, 1915 to 1930."

Order in Council under "The Supreme Court Act of 1921."

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. R. M. King, *Logan*) [2.44]: I beg to move—

"That the House will meet for the despatch of business at 10 o'clock a.m. on Friday in each week, terminating each sitting at 5.30 o'clock p.m. All provisions of Sessional Order of 22nd July last shall, mutatis mutandis, continue to apply."

In moving this motion, the Government are merely following the procedure laid down in former years. The motion is practically identical with a motion moved last year for a similar purpose and at the same stage of the session. There is a considerable amount of Government business yet to be transacted, and it will depend a good deal upon hon. members whether it will be necessary to utilise Friday as a sitting day or not.

Mr. KIRWAN: Is it intended to sit on Friday this week?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, and it may not be necessary to sit on the following Friday. The Government are merely taking action in case it is necessary to utilise Friday as an extra sitting day. I hope that it will not be necessary, but at the same time it will be far better to have an additional sitting day than carry the session into the hot weather. The motion is simply considering the convenience and comfort of hon. members generally, and we are simply following the usual procedure adopted in the past.

Hon. R. M. King.]

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) [2.46]: I called "Not formal" simply to get the information which the Deputy Premier has given. We desired to know just how soon it was the intention of the Government to sit on Friday, and whether the Deputy Premier could give us any idea when the Financial Statement would be brought down. Friday is adopted as a sitting day as the session advances, and this party is not opposed to it; but, for the convenience of hon. members, we desired the information we have now obtained.

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) [2.47]: There are three main principles contained in this Bill, which are worthy of consideration. The first principle is that it gives the Government power to redistribute the electorates. The second principle is that it automatically reduces the number of members from seventy-two to sixty-two. The third important principle is the further recognition of the system of one vote one value by providing one quota for city and a different and smaller quota for country electorates. There are other principles contained in the Bill which are not so important, so they do not merit very much attention being given to them.

No one on this side of the House has objected to power being taken by the Government to arrange for a redistribution of seats. No hon. member on this side of the House has objected to the principle of a fair redistribution. A redistribution of seats becomes necessary from time to time in a State like Queensland, which depends largely on fluctuating primary industries. As one primary industry becomes stagnant, as prices fall, then the people who make a living in connection with that industry have to shift to other places. That leaves districts which normally have their quota with less than their quota. Consequently, every few years it is necessary to arrange a new distribution, so that the balance of the electorates and electors shall remain fairly and properly adjusted. But these redistribution schemes can easily take place too quickly; therefore, a redistribution would have arranged itself if no precipitate action to make the redistribution had been taken.

Take the case of the Flinders electorate, of which the Attorney-General made such a mouthful yesterday. It is true that after the last redistribution of seats that electorate had its full quota of electors; that is to say, it had the whole number of electors that the Flinders electorate as a country seat was entitled to have. But the decline of the copper-mining industry meant that that seat, which had 5,000 odd electors at the time of the last redistribution, lost quite a number of people, who were forced to leave the district, and naturally the electorate fell below its quota. That applies to many other electorates in the same way. If Flinders is redistributed on the present basis—that is to say, if, because it has for the time being fallen below the proper quota of a country electorate and other territory has to be added to it to make up the quota—it may have to be redistributed again in a year's time if we are to preserve the quota system and the idea of one vote one value. With a sudden increase in the price of copper or of silver-lead, or of both, we

might have this anomaly—that the Flinders electorate in twelve or eighteen months might have 40,000 electors in it. It is not difficult to visualise that, with a big price for silver-lead, a place like Mount Isa alone, attracting as it would all the unemployed in the State, might have a population of from 20,000 to 25,000. In fact, it is more than probable that the increase in population there will take place on a rapid scale if the price of silver-lead increases. That price, by the way, is lower now than it has been in our time, as the hon. member for Warrego can testify. It can be imagined, therefore, that, with a rush from city electorates of unemployed seeking work at Mount Isa, augmented by people who would follow that employment in order to establish businesses, the Flinders electorate might easily have 40,000 electors, whilst many city electorates, being thus depleted, would be well below their quota. I go as far as to say that, with an improvement in primary products generally—with a big increase in the price of wool and a proper advance in the price of metals—every seat in Western and Northern Queensland would contain from 10,000 to, in the case of Flinders, 40,000 electors, and city seats would have less than 6,000 because of the depletion. It does not require any great stretch of imagination to realise that that could happen.

Mr. GRIMSTONE: How does it come that Brisbane is below the quota now?

Mr. POLLOCK: Simply because quite a large number of people who lived in Barry parade were forced to remove because of the resumptions for park purposes. It is estimated that over 1,000 persons have shifted from the Brisbane electorate since the last redistribution, because factories and parks have taken the place of residences in that electorate. Immediately after the last redistribution was made, the Brisbane electorate had its full quota under the Electoral Districts Act and under the redistribution. Naturally changes take place in a few years.

Take my own electorate as another case in point. The Gregory electorate, which comprises 106,000 square miles, and is larger than the State of Victoria, had 9,300 electors the last redistribution because factories and number of places that were then in the Gregory electorate had to be removed from it in order to bring the electorate down to the minimum quota for a country electorate—Prairie, Hughenden, Torrens Creek, Stamford, and other places had to be cut out in order that the Gregory electorate should not have above its quota. Since then conditions have not been normal. The electorate at the last redistribution and immediately after that redistribution was arranged contained its proper quota of electors. It was then in a normal condition. To-day, because of the four-years drought and because of the reduction in the price of wool on top of that, this electorate is in the worst condition that it has been in since I have known it, and that is over twenty years. Probably it is in the worst condition as regards the number of voters that it has been in for forty or fifty years. All those factors go to show that these electorates are not normal. I am not stating my own case out of selfishness, but as a reason why redistributions can take place to-day, and with an alteration in market prices for our primary products a redistribution can be equally necessary within six or twelve months' time. If you

[*Mr. Pease.*]

add to the Gregory electorate to-day to make up this quota, it may be necessary to include in the Gregory a further 60,000 square miles of country; but immediately there is a return of good seasons—immediately there is an increase to a payable price for wool—then there will be at least 3,000 or 4,000 people over the quota in that electorate; so obviously these redistributions that are alleged to be so necessary from time to time adjust themselves if you take periods one with the other. Stations in the electorate that I represent are employing the fewest number of employees that they have done for forty years. That applies in almost every case. Selectors are employing nobody because they cannot afford to pay wages. They are in the hands of banks in many cases, and are reduced to the barest necessities. Because of that local authorities have had to cut their staffs down to the irreducible minimum. As a general result business in these places is at a standstill. Men and women employed in business have had to go to the coast in search of a living. In many cases they have had to join the throng on the dole. The people and wage workers generally in that electorate and in similar other western electorates have been driven to the cities. A redistribution in the case of these western electorates is being made at the worst possible time, and because of the factors that I have mentioned it is only a temporary one at best.

The second principle contained in this Bill is that of a reduction of members from seventy-two to sixty-two. One might well ask what was the reason for reducing the number of members in the first place. Was it economy?

We were told by the Minister when introducing the Bill that public opinion was definitely in favour of a reduction of members; but, if we accept that as a fact—if the public are desirous, as the Minister alleges, of reducing the number of members—why is it that every newspaper article—which is supposed to represent public opinion—urges a reduction in the cost of government? A reduction in the cost of government and a reduction in the number of members of the Legislative Assembly are not necessarily the same thing. If a reduction in the cost of government is really what public opinion is aimed at—and I believe the atmosphere has been created by newspapers for a reduction of parliamentary government and other reductions of a similar nature—how does that desire on the part of a section of the public for reduced governmental expenditure square with the objective of the Government in this Bill of reducing the number of members? That reduction in the number of members will save the country £5,000 a year; but in its place is to be put a Legislative Council, which will cause an expenditure of £7,000 a year.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who told you that?

Mr. POLLOCK: That is the plan as outlined by the papers; and experience has shown us that the plans the papers outline to-day are the Government policy of tomorrow. Certainly the plan outlined in this particular reduction of members is alleged to be one for which the papers have been asking for some time; and obviously what they asked for yesterday to some extent is the Government's apparent

policy to-day. As I said, the Legislative Council would cost an extra £7,000 a year; so, while on the one hand the Government are reducing members sufficiently to save £5,000 a year, they propose on the other hand not only to waste that £5,000 a year, but to add the expenditure of another £2,000 a year to it in order to establish the Legislative Council. The point I want to make is that, if, as the Minister says, public opinion is in favour of a reduction of governmental costs, then it is obvious that this plan, which is a prelude to the establishment of an Upper House, is an increase in the cost of government, and does not meet the desires of public opinion at all in that regard. There are only two big ways in which Parliament can create a reduction in public or governmental expenditure—firstly, by a big reduction of members, and, secondly, by a reduction in the salaries of the existing members; and for the same reason both of these schemes have been passed over by the Government. Why is that? It is because both these schemes, if effected, would mean that Government members would have to make some sacrifice. If there were what the Minister alleges the public ask for—a desire for genuine economy effected by a reduction to thirty or forty members—quite a number of Government members would have to go. If economy were effected by a reduction of salaries, then obviously all Government members would be forced to make the same sacrifice as Opposition members; that is to say, if the reduction in expenditure were made on salaries alone, then obviously every member of the House would be called upon to participate in whatever sacrifice was made. But a simultaneous reduction of ten seats, together with a redistribution, has partially solved the problem for the Government and enabled them to say—not with any degree of truth, but to deceive the public into believing it—that real economy is being effected, whereas greater governmental expenditure will be the result after the Legislative Council has been established.

How was this reduction of ten seats arrived at? The hon. member for Toombul said quite frankly the other night, "After a great deal of investigation we fixed on a reduction of ten seats as the right number."

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I deny that. I never said it.

Mr. POLLOCK: "Hansard" reports the hon. member as having said so.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have denied having made the statement, and the hon. member for Gregory should accept my denial.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Toombul having denied having made the statement, the hon. member for Gregory must accept his denial.

Mr. POLLOCK: Certainly, I have no objection to accepting his denial. That is quite a proper thing to do; but I want to point out that, whilst accepting his denial that he did not say that, I clipped from "Hansard" this morning the report of what he is credited with saying. In answer to an interjection by me—

"How was that number arrived at?" the hon. member said—

"That number has been arrived at after a great deal of investigation."

Mr. Pollock.]

And, although I accept his denial, I heard him say it. (Opposition laughter.) Why would there be any need for an investigation to that extent if this was the simple effect of an economy? I say deliberately that the investigation was made to ascertain just what reduction would disturb Nationalist interests least and injure Labour interests most. I believe that was the basis upon which this investigation was made. The investigation proved that a reduction of ten seats could be made without injuring the Nationalist Party to any extent whilst inflicting the greatest possible injury on Labour. I believe that the investigation, which the hon. member for Toombul is reported as having said was made, showed that, if more than ten seats were cut out, some Nationalist seats would have to go. Obviously, if more than ten were cut out, some Nationalist seats would have to go. I propose to prove that statement. If fewer than ten seats were cut out, not enough Labour seats would be cut out to make sure of the success of the Government at the next election—that is, in their opinion, although in redistributing schemes Governments have proved that they cannot always correctly gauge the feeling of the public. Under this scheme I believe that at the very least eight seats out of the ten that will be cut out will be Labour seats; and I believe that is why the ten seats were agreed upon. So far as I can see, and so far as I can learn from discussing the position with people who seem to know the intentions of the Government, apparently it is intended that they shall lose at the very utmost only two Nationalist seats as against eight Labour seats.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Now you have been making investigations.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have been making investigations into the investigations made by the Government. Of the two Nationalist seats to be cut out, one is represented by a member who is likely to drop out of politics altogether. Rumour has it that he was going to retire, and his seat could be utilised in an endeavour to make safe—I say “endeavour”—two seats at present held by Nationalists. The other seat is likely to be that of a gentleman who is not very popular in ministerial circles, and whom they do not very much mind losing, because of that fact, and because they would probably lose him anyhow if he had to go to the election on his present boundaries. That is the hon. member for Kurilpa.

Mr. CLAYTON: Do you think that you can beat Dick Bow?

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member shows a knowledge of the desires of the Government that is very difficult to understand if it has not already been arranged as to how the redistribution is to be made. It is an extraordinary thing that from time to time the Premier and other Ministers, apparently knowing just what seats are to be cut out before the redistribution commission begins its job, have been able to ask eight or ten members on this side of the House whether they will be able to defeat other members in a plebiscite. How do those Ministers know that the hon. members referred to will be called upon to contest a plebiscite if they do not know what seats are to be cut out? Their knowledge on that subject discloses an extraordinary knowledge

of what the redistribution commission is likely to do. I am merely discussing what a number of Government members have publicly hinted will be the likely action of the commission.

The present state of parties in this House is: Nationalist-Country Party 46, Labour 26. If the proposal of the Government is carried out in the manner in which they intend it shall be carried out, then, on going to the electors, the numbers will be Nationalist-Country Party 44 seats—if they lose only two seats—and Labour 18 seats, if we lose eight seats, as we anticipate the Government intend. Then, we would have to win fifteen seats to obtain a working majority in this House, a majority of four being regarded by me as a working majority. That would give the Labour Party 33 to 29 on the other side; but the redistribution and the reduction in the number have been so arranged that Labour will have to win six seats from the Nationalists in order to arrive at the relative strength of parties that exists in the House to-day. I suggest in all sincerity that the investigation referred to has been made so that Labour will be placed in that position. If the true proportion had been preserved to Labour in the proposed reduction, it would have been necessary to win only ten seats instead of fifteen seats to provide us with a working majority in the new Parliament. That is the difficulty with which Labour will be confronted because of the reduction in the number of members, which is to take place simultaneously with a redistribution of seats. That is the sole reason why the proposal was agreed to “after a great deal of investigation,” to quote the reported remarks of the hon. member for Toombul.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I never said anything of the sort.

Mr. POLLOCK: If necessary, I can secure “Hansard” to prove that this is how the hon. member is reported. I have accepted his assurance that he did not say that, and will merely content myself with assuring him that that is how he has been reported.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Read the text of the report.

Mr. POLLOCK: Parliamentary procedure insists that I accept the denial of the hon. member, but I heard him make that remark.

The question of the quota is another important principle contained in the Bill. It would be necessary to arrive at the quota by dividing the number of electorates into the number of electors to retain the principle of a uniform quota, and, if that principle were to be preserved, each electorate in the State would contain 8,029 voters. But that does not happen under this Bill.

The principal of one vote one value is recognised, and for many years has been recognised by Australian Parliaments. In Victoria they go a great deal farther than we do in that respect. Why is that quota departed from in the case of country electorates? Why is it that we have a smaller number of electors in electorates far removed from the seat of government than we do in the city electorates? It is because we have always recognised that principle, which was contained in “The Electoral Districts Act of 1910,” which was passed by

[Mr. Pollock.]

Mr. Kidston. It was recognised in that Act that one voter in the city at the seat of government has more pull than one voter in more remotely situated electorates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you accept that principle?

Mr. POLLOCK: I do; and so does the hon. gentleman, as it is contained in this Bill. But, while the Government have accepted that principle, they have departed from the uniform quota. Once they have departed from the uniform quota they show that they have recognised that a voter in the city has more power, more pull, and more influence in the affairs of State than the voter who is away from the city. After having recognised and departed from that principle, the only question remains: How far should that departure be carried? I do not say that I am speaking the views of my own party. I am speaking my own personal view when I say that I believe the margin ought to be at least 33 per cent. I shall endeavour to substantiate that by saying that I represent an electorate that is approximately 1,000 miles from the seat of government, which contains 106,000 square miles of country, and which contains such towns as Boulia, Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie, Jundah, Stonechenge, Kynuna, and all the other places known to the hon. member for Wide Bay as "Woop-woop." They are a long way from the seat of government. None of these little communities have newspapers to state their case. As a matter of fact, only one newspaper is printed in the electorate I represent. Hon. members will see from that that people in remote places such as that, without even a newspaper to advocate their claims, situated weeks from the seat of government by letter and days at least by aeroplane communication, cannot be expected to exercise the same influence on public affairs as a similar number of voters in the city would do. I suggest to the Government that the Bill should include a proviso allowing the redistribution commission when delineating these electorates to take into consideration the principle of remoteness from the seat of government, and to take into account that principle to a greater extent than 20 per cent. To say that five electors in Boulia have the same influence in governmental affairs or get the same representation in Parliament as four electors in the city is to state what is obviously an absurdity. In all probability it would take at least a dozen electors situated in such places, with their limited facilities for approaching the Government and departments and having their cases ventilated by newspapers, to exercise the same influence on the body politic as four electors in the city. I do not believe that is an exaggeration. Once you accept the principle of a marginal quota, the object must be to say, as far as possible, just what that margin shall be in order to give country people fair representation. I am surprised at the Country Party, which alleges that it stands for country interests, not having insisted sufficiently on this principle to see that country rights were safeguarded. Apparently the members of that party are satisfied to be swallowed whole by the Nationalists. Apparently they are not very much concerned with the interests of the country, with the representation of the country, and with all the other things that vitally concern the country.

If hon. members want an illustration of just how difficult it is for the people in country districts to get representation and to have influence upon the government of the State, take any public question; but, if it is desired to be specific, take the question of State schools. In the far western centres there is a little State school in each town. Sometimes the school is quite adequate; sometimes not nearly so adequate as it ought to be. In many cases it is lacking in the facilities that a school should have, and in some instances does not get the pick of the teachers, obviously, because there is not the same number of children to teach there. These are all disabilities that the western and northern districts of Queensland and bush people generally labour under. If we compare the difficulties under which those schools labour, which the children have to face, and which the parents have to bear, with the conditions pertaining to the schools in the city, where children have not to ride or walk 6 or 7 miles to school, and where there is a complaint to the Minister and a newspaper article if schools are situated more than a mile apart—when we compare these things, it is not difficult to see what the big bulk of representation in the city has done to improve the status of the city at the expense of that of the country. That is so under any Government, whether it be Labour, Nationalist, Tory, Country Party, or anything else. The fact that the bulk of the representation is in the city places country people at a very distinct disadvantage; yet, in a Bill such as this, which is the only time in the history of a country when we could make provision for the safeguarding of country interests, we are asked to believe that five electors in the country have the same power and influence on government and on the destinies of the State as four people have in the city. No man in his right senses would believe such an idea.

The western seats have temporarily fallen below their quota. I use the word "temporarily" advisedly, because I proved that a few moments ago. In the case of the Gregory electorate the four-years drought has been responsible for that, and the position has been accentuated by the fall in the price of wool. In the case of the Flinders electorate it will probably be found, before this Bill becomes operative, that there will be five times the number of electors, if there is an increase in the price of silver-lead. The Government's answer to the electors who refuse to vote for them is this: Whereas the western electorates for thirty or forty years would stand no other than a Labour man representing them, the Government have decided that, if they cannot beat the members in those electorates, the next best thing is to cut out some of the electorates.

That is the basis of this Bill—the desire to cut out the seats that they cannot win—the desire to place this party at such a disadvantage that on paper it will appear impossible for the Labour Party to defeat the Government. But I would like to remind the Government that redistributions have been made by Nationalist Governments before with the same object, and they failed to gauge public opinion accurately. If the swing which we believe is against the Nationalist Party, if the disgust at their actions which is manifest throughout Queensland, is given a reasonable opportunity to

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show itself on election day, then no redistribution of this kind and no reduction of members of this kind in the Government's interests can possibly save the Government.

Mr. MAXWELL: Then why worry?

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not worrying. I am trying to show that the Government are endeavouring at all costs to put off still further the evil day. They are trying to dodge their responsibility. They went to the electors at the last election under an Elections Act which enabled every nomadic worker in the country and every worker in the State over twenty-one years of age who had been a month in an electorate to record a vote. To-day they have adopted a similar policy to that which Nationalist Governments have always adopted when they were in danger and saw their doom impending. Instead of appealing to a common jury, where every man had a vote, they decided to appeal to a special jury comprised of those whom they are prepared to allow to vote. The nomadic workers throughout the State—shearers, drovers, rouseabouts, general station hands, and thousands of men whom the legislation of the Government has placed on the track—are men who will not be in any electorate long enough to enable them to get on the roll. In addition to removing them from the roll and wiping out eight or ten Labour seats, they propose to do everything they possibly can to prevent the common jury that elected them from having the opportunity of diselecting them if they feel disgusted with their action.

There is one other principle contained in this Bill which, through my time having expired, I shall not have an opportunity of dealing with. I merely say that, except for conceding to the Government, or any Government, the right to redistribute seats when such a thing becomes necessary, the balance of the principles contained in this Bill are principles in which I can see no good, and which are introduced for the one purpose—to keep the Government in power at all costs irrespective of public honour and public decency.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) [3.38]: It is perfectly clear that the Opposition are not averse to a redistribution of the electorates. If any party should have been seized of the responsibility of doing that, surely it should have been the Labour Party, who are occupying the Opposition benches to-day. I am quite aware that the complaint we have heard from the last speaker is that the country districts are not represented as they should be, and that practically the basis will be about 33 per cent. more in the cities. I want to know how it is that the Opposition members have been so negligent of their absolute duty to the great bulk of the voters as not to have given consideration to their rights during the years they were in power. What consideration have they given to the industrial classes they profess to crave so much consideration for? They have absolutely neglected them, as the figures will show. Of course, I quite understand that the Opposition would like the handling of a Bill of this kind; but Queensland can remember to her cost the maladministration which came about largely because a redistribution of seats did not take place at a very much earlier date than is proposed.

Hon. members opposite have previously argued that the proper basis to adopt is

one vote one value; but, judging from what they say now, their arguments in that connection are thrown to the four winds. I concede that; and every country member concedes it; and there are members on this side who stand up for the country people. I have never been considered other than a country man, and my sympathies are with the men in the country. One is disposed to give them the fullest consideration with regard to their representation in Parliament. After all, it is a very fair thing when there is a margin of 20 per cent. below and 20 per cent. above, which really makes it equal to a difference in their favour of 40 per cent. If hon. members opposite wish to do anything more than that, then they are not giving due consideration to the industrial classes whom they profess to serve; and I charge them to-day with having neglected to give the consideration which they should have given to the vast army of men in and around them. Some hon. members opposite are to-day practically arguing for putting forward a policy that would relegate the workers to the position that their representation would be only one in three. Is it fair that the labourers of the land should be reduced to a position of that kind? Surely hon. members opposite cannot be so disobedient to duty and so blind to the actual demands of the people as to express themselves as they have been doing through the mouth of the hon. member for Gregory?

It seems to me that there was never a greater need for a redistribution of seats than there is at the present time. This is a simple Bill, and sets out in clear and simple language what it is proposed to do.

Mr. POLLOCK: How do you arrive at a reduction of ten?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If it had been twenty, does any hon. member dream for one moment that the opposition of hon. members on the other side would have broken down, and that they would have said, "It is identical with our calculations, and you are doing just what we would have done." It would be an impossibility for this side to do anything in that direction with which the Opposition would agree. All is wrong to them that is done by the Government.

Mr. POLLOCK: How do you arrive at a reduction of ten? You were in favour of fifty a couple of years ago—how do you arrive at sixty-two?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Personally, I am not very particular about the number; yet, when you make it sixty-two, you probably strike a via media, which is the happy and the right thing to do.

The argument of the hon. member for Gregory that this proposal is simply to make way from an expenditure point of view for the re-establishment of the Upper House is too weak altogether. No consideration of that kind has arisen, and, however hon. members opposite may magnify that in their own minds, it does not apply in the least to the attitude of the Government, nor has the idea entered into calculation in the proposal to reduce the number of members to sixty-two.

Hon. members would want to know how we arrived at any figure, no matter what it was; and I have no doubt that the hon. member would like the handling of the

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redistribution of seats. The history of voting in Queensland has been shocking for years. When you go back and remember the stuffing of the rolls that occurred in the olden days—

Mr. KIRWAN: The "bulcocking" of the rolls.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That was not good, if it was done.

Mr. KIRWAN: It was done.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not going to condone that any more than I can condone what I am going to quote now. On 8th May, 1920, there were 484,212 names on the State rolls, whilst on the Commonwealth rolls at the same time there were only 449,061 names, the excess on the State rolls being 35,151. At the elections in 1920 the number on the rolls was 445,681, whilst, according to the census in 1921, the number of voters was 423,123—an excess of 22,558. How are hon. members going to explain that kind of thing?

I have turned up some facts contained in the memorial presented to His Majesty the King in connection with the abolition of the Legislative Council, which is to be found in the parliamentary papers for 1922. That memorial states—

"At the general election of 6th March, 1918, the then Labour Government were returned to power by a majority of twenty-four votes in an Assembly of seventy-two. At the general election of 9th October, 1920, their majority dwindled to four; and the present strength of parties in the Assembly is—Labour Government 37 (including the Speaker) and Opposition 35. At the last general election there was an extraordinary disproportion of votes, ranging from 2,000 to 12,000 in the various constituencies; and it so happened that the Government, although securing a slender majority in the Assembly, nevertheless, are now in a minority by over 20,000 votes, if the aggregate is taken of votes cast for or against them by Queensland electors."

Those figures no doubt were checked and found to be correct before they left Queensland. It is extraordinary that, whilst at that time there were thirty-seven Labour members and thirty-five anti-Labour members, the former were 20,000 votes short of what they should have had to enable them to say that they represented a majority of the people. In the 1923 election forty-three Labour representatives were returned and twenty-nine anti-Labour, yet the Labour minority in the constituencies was 14,369 votes. It will be seen from that that it is absolutely necessary that consideration should be given to the electoral laws of Queensland.

I have also turned up an interesting speech containing relevant figures delivered by the hon. member for Windsor—now Mr. Speaker—reported in "Hansard" for 1923, at p. 530. The hon. member stated—

"I do not want to detain the House or delay the Treasurer delivering his Financial Statement, but in reference to the delay that has taken place it is only right and proper that these things should be known.

"The Attorney-General a short time ago supplied some figures to the press.

The remarkable part of the hon. gentleman's figures was that he only supplied figures for sixty-four electorates. There were eight electorates which he did not mention at all in those figures, and of those eight electorates for which no figures were supplied seven are represented by members of the Opposition side of the House and one by a member of the Government. The least that can be said about the figures, therefore, is that they are not accurate. I would not say that this was done for the purpose of misleading, but they were not as accurate as they should have been. The electorates for which figures were not supplied were Albert, Cooroorra, Fassifern, Sandgate, Stanley, Toombul, and Wide Bay, all held by the Opposition, and Barcoo which is held by Mr. Bulcock, a member of the Government Party."

Hon. members opposite would benefit considerably by reading the whole of that speech for themselves. The hon. member concluded his speech with these figures—

"Total anti-Labour vote ...	198,931
Total Labour vote ...	184,562
Anti-Labour majority ...	14,369 "

The figures show that, although Labour ruled in Queensland, they did not rule by virtue of representing the majority of the people of the State. The cost of that condition of affairs is too patent for any man even to mention it to-day. We are in the throes of a lot of trouble that we might have escaped if such an order of things had not been maintained.

The present anomalies are so great that I wish to submit some figures in justification of a redistribution of seats. I have before me the figures with respect to thirteen seats, eleven of which are held by hon. members opposite, for which the enrolment at 30th June last was—

Brisbane	4,790
Burke	3,905
Charters Towers	3,925
Chillagoe	3,336
Cook	4,142
Flinders	3,377
Grgory	3,686
Leichhardt	4,539
Mitchell	4,490
Mount Morgan	3,120
Queenton	4,056
Townsville	4,798
Warrego	4,205
Total	52,419
Average	4,032

I have also taken five electorates, all held by members of the Government Party. They are—

Bulimba	12,294
Enoggera	12,939
Logan	12,697
Nundah	11,162
Oxley	11,665
Total	60,777
Average	12,155

The comparison would probably have been still more interesting from the point of view of my argument if I had quoted the city electorates represented by hon. members opposite. Hon. members on the Government side are showing the only real concern to give the people full representation.

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Hon. members opposite, especially the representatives of the city electorates, are not showing the concern that they should show in order that these people might exert the full power of the franchise. It is wise under the circumstances to indicate some of the solid facts which should be patent to everyone who believes that there is an absolute need for the redistribution of seats in order that some degree of fairplay should be given to voters generally by coming near to the proportion of what is their rights as regards the representation they should have in the Parliament of the land.

Mr. A. JONES (*Durke*) [3.46]: This Bill is supposed to be "for the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament." I do not see how the Government can give the Bill that title, seeing that its objects apparently are to cut out at least eight Labour representatives in this Chamber. This Bill, in conjunction with the Election Acts Amendment Act which was passed last session, is directed mainly against the western and northern portions of the State. Hon. members on the Government benches have gone to some pains to show that the quotas of some Western electorates represented on this side of the House have shrunk; but every person knows that during the last four or five years Western Queensland has had rather a bad spin. The country has just passed through a drought that has lasted for four or five years, with the result that a number of people have left that part of the State. As the hon. member for Gregory mentioned, it will be only a matter of a few years, probably, when we have experienced a few good seasons and there has been a slight rise in the wool market, when the population of those districts will revert to what it was at the last redistribution. Very few people have any idea of the vastness of the electoral districts in the south-western, western, and north-western portions of this State, and the inconvenience representatives of those districts meet with in visiting the various centres of population. My electorate is not by any means the largest in the State. It is the third largest in area; but I will quote a few instances in order that hon. members may visualise the great distances between the various centres of population and the difficulties which I, as the representative, must meet with. When I desire to travel around the electorate and start from Hughenden, I proceed along the Great Northern Railway to Julia Creek, a distance of about 200 miles. From there I proceed to Normanton, another 300 miles, by motor car or some other vehicle. From thence to Burketown is a further 150 miles journey by road, while from Burketown to Dobbyn, the nearest railway town, is an additional 230 miles. That is but one instance of the hardship of representing electorates of the vastness of the Burke electorate; but it is not to be compared with the area represented by the hon. member for Gregory.

Mr. KIRWAN: He must travel via Adelaide in order to visit one portion of his electorate.

Mr. A. JONES: That is so. Representatives of city areas have no idea of the vastness of the western areas. The hon. member for Nundah compared the number of electors in Nundah, Bulimba, and other city electorates with the number in certain

Western electorates. There is no comparison.

Mr. KELSO: I was making a comparison between city seats.

Mr. A. JONES: As I said, this Bill, together with the Act passed last session, is mainly directed to whittling down the representation of the western districts of this State. Despite the statement of the Attorney-General that he did not consider the nomadic workers would be affected by the amended electoral law passed last session, it is clear to anyone who is conversant with conditions in Western Queensland that the position of these workers will be seriously prejudiced. In my own electorate over 1,000 names have been struck off the electoral roll since the passing of the measure to which I have referred. Ordinarily 700 or 800 of those people would be entitled to have their names retained on the roll; but, with the three months' residential qualification imposed by the Government, these men have been disfranchised. I know personally of four mobs of cattle which have left North Queensland for Adelaide. The men in charge of those cattle will be absent from their home centres for six or seven months. They do not reside in one place for any definite period, but are compelled to move about in order to secure a livelihood. So also with many shearers and other workers, who will have no hope of remaining electors in view of the three months' residential qualification. Quite recently I met a body of men who were going from Wellshot shed, Ilfracombe, to Southern Queensland, in pursuit of their shearing occupation. Those men reside in Central Queensland, and will probably be absent five or six months; and that fact will be responsible for their names being erased from the electoral roll; and, as it will be necessary for them to reside permanently in one place for three months before becoming eligible to vote, it will be apparent to anyone who knows the nature of their work that they will never be enrolled as electors in the State of Queensland. These isolated instances are typical of the position that affects also station hands, prospectors, and numerous other workers in the west. I am satisfied that the amended legislation which imposes the three months' residential qualification will deprive the people of Western Queensland of one member in this Assembly. As I have said, 1,000 names have been struck off the roll in my own electorate; and, as other constituencies such as Balonne and Mitchell are similarly affected, it is safe to say that from 5,000 to 6,000 persons at the very least will be disfranchised, and that number, on the quota basis, will represent the loss of one member in this Parliament.

When giving evidence before the Electoral Commission in 1927 Mr. Turner, the Commonwealth Electoral Officer for Queensland, considered that, in order to give the nomadic worker a fair chance to enjoy the ordinary privileges of citizenship, the residential qualification for enrolment should be less than one month. The present Government have seen fit to make it three months; and I say emphatically that they did that knowing what the effect would be on the country districts. The position is well known to those who are conversant with the conditions in the west. A shearer friend of mine writing to me from North Queensland recently said that, although there were only seventy-two members in the shearers' mess at his

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shed, actually eighty travellers sat down at a recent Sunday midday meal after the shearers had finished their meal.

He pointed out that this had the effect of increasing the cost of living in that mess from about 30s. or 35s. a week to 50s. a week mainly through the feeding of swagmen. I mention that to show what a large army of unemployed is travelling about the bush, who also will be disfranchised. In the past dozens of swagmen who were on the roll never stopped at a hotel or a boarding-house. These swagmen always camped on the reserves in the town. Their names appeared on the roll as residing on the town common or reserve, and they were entitled to vote. Some of the finest men in Western Queensland will have no chance of recording a vote under this Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Nonsense!

Mr. A. JONES: The nomadic worker is the greatest problem we have in Australia so far as providing a fair and equitable roll is concerned. Quite a lot has been said by different members of the Government Party about arresting the drift to the cities. Unless the Government are prepared to give some consideration to those men who go out into the wide spaces to open up the State, this drift to the cities will continue. These men have been put on a lower scale than the aboriginals, and in some cases on a lower scale than the coolies in India. Not so long ago I pointed out the conditions in Western Queensland, and I stated that quite a number of bushmen, especially station hands, are working for lower wages than are paid to aboriginals. I pointed that out to the Premier, and he said that inquiries would be made. It seems that the trend of the legislation of the present Government has been directed against Western Queensland, and this Bill is following along those lines. Ever since they have been in power the Government have attempted to do everything they possibly can to retard the interests of Western Queensland. They suspended the station hands' award, and immediately afterwards they agreed to an extension of pastoral leases. Since then an agitation has been set up by different members on this side of the House against these extensions; and just recently the hon. member for Gregory led a deputation from Winton asking for an increase of areas to the small grazing selectors; but that deputation got no satisfaction. The whole trend of the legislation of the Government is against the interests of Western Queensland. In Victoria I understand there is what is known as a "remote quota." In the case of electorates far removed from the seat of government—and they cannot be very far removed from the seat of government in Victoria because it is a very small State—special provision is made for a smaller quota. I am of the opinion that the margin in Queensland should be at least 25 per cent. above and 25 per cent. below the quota in order to provide fair and equitable representation to the vast electorates in the western portion of the State.

We have heard quite a lot recently, especially in the press, about the cost of government. So far as Australia as a whole is concerned, it compares more than favourably with any other country in the world with regard to the cost of government. The one country we can best compare with Aus-

tralia is Canada. If we take the different provinces of Canada, we find that Queensland compares more than favourably with them. I shall just give the four principal provinces of Canada to show how they compare with this State. Queensland, as we know, has an area of 678,000 square miles. These are the figures with regard to Canada—

Province.	Popula- tion.	Area. Sq. Miles.	Total No. of Members.
Manitoba ..	639,000	250,600	61
British Columbia ..	501,000	272,630	63
Quebec ..	2,361,000	594,600	198
Alberta ..	607,584	255,235	63

That shows that the cost of government in Australia compares more than favourably with the cost of government in those provinces. It is interesting to note that in the House of Commons in Canada the salary of members is 4,000 dollars per session; and I understand that, if two sessions of Parliament are held in one year, members are entitled to two salaries for that particular year.

The same thing applies in regard to the representation in the different States of America, in which there are more parliamentary representatives, relatively, than in the provinces of Canada.

In conclusion, I consider as a Western member that the Government should at least take some notice of what has been said by hon. members on this side in connection with the consideration being given to the different country electorates, taking into consideration the vastness of the electorates, the areas it is necessary to cover in order to get round the electorates, and, in addition, the bad times they had had to go through during the past few years. I trust that at the Committee stage the Minister will agree to certain amendments which may be moved from this side so as to remedy these disabilities of the Western electorates.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) [4.4]: To hon. members on this side, who occupied the Opposition benches during the reign of the Labour Government when the redistribution of seats took place, the opinions which have been expressed by hon. members opposite are ridiculous and in a good many instances contradictory. Hon. members opposite who want to pose as individuals who are looking after the interests of the country people—they alone and nobody else—must take the blame for the unsatisfactory method of redistribution of seats which then took place. We who sat in opposition at that time remember the tactics adopted so far as proxy voting, for instance, was concerned.

Let me remind hon. members opposite that, when the results of the redistribution made by the Labour Government were announced in this House, the then Home Secretary, Mr. McCormack, remarked, "That is the end of Peterson."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: When was that?

Mr. MAXWELL: Hon. members opposite would contradict anything.

Mr. KIRWAN: Can you show it to us in "Hansard"?

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Mr. MAXWELL: I notice the hon. member for Herbert hanging his head and laughing, knowing full well that that is exactly what Mr. McCormack said. The hon. member for Brisbane also heard him say it, if he was not deaf. The affection hon. members opposite have for the people in the country is marvellous. Did they not cut out four country members altogether; and did not their redistribution enable them to come back into this House with a majority of about fourteen?

Mr. DASH: You have more than that now.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have, and we are worthy of them. Our Government are carrying out one of the promises they made in their policy speech. I can quite understand the feeling that seems to permeate some hon. members on the other side. They are considering who are likely to lose their seats. It matters not to the Government if we lose seats. We shall take it in a sportsmanlike way, just as the hon. member for Mount Morgan took his gruel.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are prepared to sacrifice us for your own sakes.

Mr. MAXWELL: No; but we are prepared to give effect to our election promise, and not play with the question, as hon. members opposite did.

Mr. KIRWAN: That will not go down with us.

Mr. MAXWELL: And some of the statements of hon. members opposite will not go down with me. They demand contradiction. We have been told by the hon. member for Flinders and other hon. members on the other side that the reason for the differences in the number of electors in electorates held by Government members and Labour members respectively is that workers in the pastoral and mining industries have had to come into the cities owing to lack of employment. Let me analyse that statement. In the case of the Balonne electorate these are the figures—

BALONNE.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	2,971
1923—No. on roll	...	...	5,285
1926—No. on roll	...	...	5,116
1929—No. on roll	...	...	5,999

Hon. members will see that there was only a slight falling off in 1926, not worth mentioning, and that in this, one of the pastoral seats where we were told there had been a falling off because industry was in a bad way, the numbers had actually increased in 1929.

Let us consider these figures for the respective years—

BARCOO.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	3,770
1923—No. on roll	...	...	*5,574
1926—No. on roll	...	...	5,736
1929—No. on roll	...	...	5,522

* No contest.

It is true that there was a falling off there of 200 odd—

DALBY.

1920—Votes polled	4,244
1923—No. on roll	6,623
1926—No. on roll	6,292
1929—No. on roll	6,644

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MARANOA.

1920—Votes polled	4,797
1923—No. on roll	5,551
1926—No. on roll	5,296
1929—No. on roll	5,874

There was no falling off there. The argument of hon. members opposite cannot hold water. I have exploded their arguments so far as they apply to those pastoral areas—

MITCHELL.

1920—No contest.	...	...	—
1923—No. on roll	...	...	5,735
1926—No. on roll	...	...	4,972
1929—No. on roll	...	...	5,341

Mr. POLLOCK: Quote the latest figures.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have taken the last election returns.

Mr. POLLOCK: You have later figures.

Mr. MAXWELL: I will not be led astray by the hon. member for Gregory.

Mr. POLLOCK: I knew that you would not be fair.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not going to be trapped by the hon. member for Gregory. I am quoting from the returns that have been laid upon the table of this House. Let me proceed—

MURILLA.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	4,731
1923—No. on roll	...	...	6,059
1926—No. on roll	...	...	5,300
1929—No. on roll	...	...	5,341

NORMANBY.

1920—No. on roll	...	...	4,788
1923—No. on roll	...	...	5,131
1926—No. on roll	...	...	4,784
1929—No. on roll	...	...	4,679

There was a falling off there; but that happened in the case of the present Home Secretary. Hon. members opposite have stressed the position of the mining industry, and have endeavoured to lead people outside to believe that the whole of Queensland is practically like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." An attempt has been made to mislead the people into believing that there was nobody in the Flinders electorate. Let me now quote some of the mining centres—

BOWEN.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	6,650
1923—No. on roll	...	...	6,347
1926—No. on roll	...	...	6,403
1929—No. on roll	...	...	6,781

There is an increase in that case—

BREMER.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	6,046
1923—No. on roll	...	...	5,090
1926—No. on roll	...	...	6,300
1929—No. on roll	...	...	5,435

Now I come to the Burrum electorate.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why take the coalmining centres?

Mr. MAXWELL: Hon. members opposite do not like the figures. They have claimed that the decline in the pastoral and mining industries is responsible for the electoral anomalies that exist to day.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are only "cooking" the figures for your own use.

Mr. MAXWELL: I throw that interjection back in the teeth of the hon. member just as bitterly as he has given it to me. I do not "cook" figures. I am not a figure faker; the hon. member and some of his clan could teach me how to do so.

Let me continue to quote further electorates—

BURELM.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	3,924
1923—No. on roll	...	...	6,794
1926—No. on roll	...	...	6,770
1929—No. on roll	...	...	6,797

There is no falling off of voters there.

FLINDERS.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	4,059
1923—No. on roll	...	...	3,938
1926—No. on roll	...	...	2,741
1929—No. on roll	...	...	3,116

There was a falling off in the figures for 1926, but they recovered somewhat in 1929.

MOUNT MORGAN.

1920—Votes polled	...	...	3,891
1923—No. on roll	...	...	5,470
1926—No. on roll	...	...	4,573
1929—No. on roll	...	...	3,376

There has been a depreciation in the number of voters in Mount Morgan. Hon. members in their arguments in this Chamber appeal for consideration for, as they term them, their friends in the country—the men they desire to assist, whom they term the bone and sinew of the State. They have an opportunity on the scheme of redistribution of electorates to assist those men. I would refer the hon. member for Gregory and some of his colleagues to "Herald" for 1922. They will there find on page 501 the views of Mr. Bebbington, the then member for Drayton, regarding the sympathy of hon. members opposite for the people in the country as exemplified on the question of redistribution of seats. They will find on pages 513 and 514 the views of Mr. J. H. C. Roberts, the then member for Pittworth, on the same question. They will see there the treatment their Government meted out to the people on the land. And then these Simon Pures come into this House and accuse this Government of attempting to gerrymander the electorates! The Leader of the Opposition has gone so far as to say that maps in connection with the redistribution have been prepared. Notwithstanding the denial of the Attorney-General, the hon. member still goes around among the whisperers and urgers saying, "They have got the maps. Don't you know what they are going to do? The maps are prepared."

Mr. KIRWAN: There is no need to whisper and urge.

Mr. MAXWELL: Hon. members opposite have been displaying great anxiety in connection with the matter. I can appreciate their difficulty, and their anxiety to know exactly what the Government are going to do. The Government intend keeping their promise to the people. They told the people of Queensland that, if returned to power, they would bring in a Bill for the redistribution of seats. Hon. members opposite do not like these things being told to them; nor do they care to be reminded of the fact that they declared that, with the consummation of federation the cost of government would decrease. We have the

Federal Government, the State Government, and local authority government. The taxation burden is almost unbearable; and the Queensland Government are trying in some small way to relieve the people of that burden.

It has been stated by most hon. members opposite that the Elections Acts Amendment Act passed last year was a trick on the part of the Government to prevent the enrolment of men. How any person with any intellect could make such a statement passes my comprehension. Surely hon. members on the Opposition benches realise that a person who constitutes his home in a certain town can vote for the electorate in which that town is situated?

Mr. POLLOCK: He cannot.

Mr. MAXWELL: I prefer to accept the statement of the Attorney-General, who says that he can.

On the question of the work done by the Labour Government for the proper representation of the people in this Parliament, I desire to refer specifically to the following article which appeared in the Sydney "Bulletin" of 28th October, 1920:—

"THE VERDICT IN QUEENSLAND.

"Opposition Seats—

Voters in ten electorates—78,926

"Ministerial—

Voters in ten electorates—25,294

"The figures explain how a minority of voters come to elect a majority of representatives. It asked the electors for an endorsement of its boisterous finance and light-hearted repudiation of contracts, and the electors have replied—so far as stuffed rolls and gerrymandered constituencies permitted their voice to be heard—that perfidiousness and the prospect of insolvency don't appeal to them at all. In fact the lesson of the Queensland elections is that the Australian people are not educated up to the methods of government practised in greaser republics, etc."

It was in the same issue of the "Bulletin" that a well known cartoon appeared. Hon. members opposite may recall that striking cartoon, because it was particularly revealing. It showed the return to power of Messrs. Theodore and Fihelly over the bodies of dead voters and skeletons. (Laughter.) Surely hon. members opposite will accept the "Bulletin," which has so frequently been referred to by them as the most democratic paper in the Commonwealth? But perhaps they are no longer prepared to accept the "Bulletin," seeing that that paper is not prepared to sanction the entrusting of government to the class of hon. members who at present occupy the Opposition benches.

The hon. member for Balonne spoke with a knowledge of the gerrymandering of seats, and he made one of the most ridiculous statements that I ever heard an hon. member make. He practically made a threat. He said that if the Government did not do what he asked for "I shall go out to the Western electorates, and I will raise the people there and demand a new State for Western Queensland"—with the hon. member, I suppose, as Premier. Did anyone ever hear such a ridiculous statement? I thought the States were to be eliminated,

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and that a spirit of comradeship and brotherly love was to permeate us when federation became an accomplished fact. But we find we have an apostle for the creation of new States! We shall watch with interest the attempt of the hon. member to "bulldoze" the electors of Balonne.

The following Country Party electorates were wiped out by the Labour Party:—

Drayton, represented by Mr. Bobbington; Musgrave, represented by Mr. Cattermull; Pittsworth, represented by Mr. J. H. C. Roberts; and Kennedy, represented by Mr. J. Jones.

Mr. POLLOCK: Is that why the hon. member for Toombul said that punishment has been long delayed?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Kennedy was not eliminated.

Mr. MAXWELL: Mr. Jack Jones was a good man, and hon. members know it.

There was not a better man sitting in the House.

Mr. POLLOCK: He was eliminated by the electors.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member cannot put that over me. He was not eliminated by the electors. He never contested the Kennedy seat.

Mr. PEASE: Of course, he did.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. MAXWELL: One of the Opposition members got up the other day and admitted that Mr. Jack Jones said it was no good him contesting the electorate on account of the manner in which the redistribution had been made.

The following comparison of the different electorates at the last election will give some idea of Labour's idea of representative government:—

Electorate.	Represented by—	No. of Electors.	
		Government.	Opposition.
Enoggera	Mr. Kerr	12,241	
Flinders	Mr. Mullan		3,116
Logan	Mr. King	12,591	
Mount Morgan	Mr. Stopford		3,970
Nundah	Mr. Kelso	10,276	
Gregory	Mr. Pollock		3,819
Toowong	Mr. Maxwell	9,478	
Charters Towers	Mr. Wellington		4,318
Sandgate	Mr. Sizer	9,409	
Queenton	Mr. Winstanley		4,224
Windsor	Mr. Taylor	9,107	
Burke	Mr. A. Jones		4,884
Totals .. .. .	.. .. .	63,502	23,731

Is that fair representation? Nothing of the kind. It is time there was a redistribution of seats; and at the same time wherever we can save the people any money by economising we have a duty to do it.

Mr. PEASE: Why did you not do that in connection with Mungana?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not desire to get out of order, but I would like to refer the hon. member to the statement he made in this House—that he desired the Government to push on with that matter, as it was the right thing to do.

The Leader of the Opposition said that at the time of the last redistribution all seats had a fair quota on their rolls, but the slump in the mining and pastoral industries had denuded many areas of population. I have answered that. I have shown how ridiculous his statement is. He further said—

"The proposed reduction was an evidence of fear on the part of the Government because the report of the commission appointed would not be available till next February. The Government would have absolute command of the situation just before the next election."

A most ridiculous statement! Hon. members opposite know full well that the party in power has control of elections. How does that statement compare with the statement that was made by the hon. member for Gregory, when he said that we were not

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game to go to the people—that we were afraid, and that when we did go to the people we would be slaughtered?

The figures I have quoted show the unfair methods which have been adopted by their party; yet, in the face of that, they now say that the Government have only one object in view in introducing this Bill, and that is to prevent representation of the people by hon. members of their political opinions; but, irrespective of that, we are going to take the risk of what the people think. I venture to think that the people will say that we are an honest Government.

Mr. PEASE: You have kept none of your promises to the people.

Mr. MAXWELL: We will leave that to the people. I want to quote some remarks from "Hansard" for the benefit of the hon. member for Rockhampton, who seemed to wax wroth over the matter.

Mr. DUNLOP: I am ready for you.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member has made his speech. I wish to quote from "Hansard" for 1920, page 87, from the speech of the hon. member for East Toowoomba—

"I move that all the words after 'that' be omitted, with the view of inserting the following words:—

"The motion be discharged from the business-paper with a direction to the Government that this House is prepared

to consider an amendment of the Constitution providing for a reduction of the number of representatives to fifty."

Mr. POLLOCK: Is not that motion in favour of a reduction to fifty?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member knows it is not. No one knows that better than the hon. member for Gregory.

The Government are perfectly justified in introducing this measure. It will meet a long-felt want, and it is the performance of a pledge given by our Government to the people. As one of the members supporting this party I congratulate the Government on keeping another of their promises to the people.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) [4.34]: The debate on this important measure has been very interesting. One of the statements made by the Attorney-General as a justification for the introduction of the Bill was that it is a Bill "to make provision for the better representation of the people in Parliament." That is a principle to which all those who believe in democracy can certainly subscribe. There has been, generally speaking, a great agitation during years gone by in the direction of broadening the franchise, thereby admitting to the rights of citizenship and the privilege of exercising the franchise a greater number of voters every year.

One of the last acts of the Baldwin Government in Great Britain was the passage of a Bill which enfranchised 5,000,000 additional voters, not only for the election of members of the British House of Commons, but also for local government purposes. Contrast that with one of the principal moves made by the Government opposite last year, when they altered the basis of securing the franchise in this important State by lengthening the period of residence in an electorate necessary for that purpose from one month to three months. I can recall the urging of hon. members opposite when in opposition in favour of a uniform roll for the Commonwealth and the States; yet one of the first actions of the Attorney-General, who is a responsible member of their Cabinet, was in the direction of an amendment of the Elections Act which prevented that desirable state of affairs from being brought about. They seemed to be more concerned about disfranchising electors and making it more difficult for people in the West, especially, to get on the roll than to put into practice one of the leading principles in which they professed to be such strong believers when they sat on these benches.

The Attorney-General pointed out the necessity for the introduction of a Redistribution of Seats Bill. I do not think any hon. member will dispute the necessity for a redistribution of seats. Queensland is a State in which the population is more or less migratory, largely because certain seasonal and other industries are responsible for providing a large proportion of the work of the electors of the State and that conditions in those industries are not always uniformly prosperous. In 1923 and 1924 about 20,000 men were following the occupation of mining in Queensland. A large section of them worked in the electorate of the hon. member for Flinders, because the mines in and around Cloncurry were then in full

swing, and producing a large quantity of metal as prices were favourable, and that could be done at a profit. To-day that number has been reduced to about 5,000, so that about 15,000 are now compelled to seek employment in other industries. That is one of the reasons why the hon. member for Flinders does not now represent the large number of electors that he represented in those days. A similar remark applies to the hon. member for Mount Morgan, and possibly to the hon. member for Cook, and hon. members like the hon. member for Charters Towers and the hon. member for Queenton, who represent districts in which mining is one of the leading industries.

The hon. member for Cook made such an extraordinary statement that one finds it difficult to discover the reason which actuated him. He said quite definitely and clearly that, owing to the legislation and administration of the Labour Government, affairs in North Queensland had become more or less stagnant. As a matter of fact, the progress made by North Queensland was such that the people who lived there, irrespective of their politics, were prepared to admit that the Labour Government were not unmindful of the requirements of their districts, situated as they were so far from the seat of government. The people in North Queensland and in the Western portion of the State were convinced that the Government were certainly not a Queen street Government.

I want to give a direct contradiction to the statement by the hon. member for Cook; and for that purpose I intend to submit the numbers on the electoral rolls for ten Northern electorates in 1915 and again in 1929. We shall then be able to judge of the truth or otherwise of the statement made by the hon. member. These are the figures—

Electorate.	No. of Electors on Roll.	
	1915.	1929.
Cairns	4,557	8,307
Cook	3,125	4,587
Burke	2,049	4,884
Bowen	5,392	6,781
Chillagoe	2,093	4,581
Eacham	3,724	7,186
Mackay	5,163	7,024
Mirani	3,920	7,011
Mundingburra	5,210	7,072
Townsville	5,659	5,216
Totals	40,810	62,649

There is an increase of 21,839. Evidently, when the hon. member for Cook went to school, subtraction was utilised with a view to showing an increase is a decrease. The statement is often given prominence in the press, not only in this State but throughout Australia, that we are a much over-governed people. I do not subscribe to that view. Australia is a vast continent with vast spaces in which there are a number of varying industries and varying interests. If the Commonwealth or the State is to be developed, then, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Gregory, it is only fair that there should be parliamentary representation for the far-distant parts. The city has

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the assistance of three or four daily newspapers, not to mention the weekly press, to advocate its requirements; but, as the hon. member for Gregory has pointed out, there is only one newspaper in his electorate—no doubt a weekly paper. It is more difficult for people in those areas to place their views before Ministers of the Crown and the Government of the day, irrespective of their political views; whereas it is quite an easy matter for electors in metropolitan constituencies to have the whole of their grievances well ventilated in the public press and brought under the notice of Ministers before breakfast each day. The following statement appeared in the "Sydney Bulletin" of 29th July, 1931, under the name "Solomon Malaprop":—

"Most Australians one meets in the street or holding forth on the platform are prepared to swear that our Commonwealth is a sort of baby miracle in the way of over-government, but that only signifies that their capacity for being misled amounts to genius. The following list, which covers six English speaking countries and three others, has some bearing on the case. The number of Parliaments includes the Federal one where it exists—"

—	No. of Legislatures.	Average area per Legislature.	Inhabitants per Legislature.
		Sq. miles.	
Australia	7	425,000	925,000
Canada	11	319,100	903,100
Brazil	21	156,000	489,000
Maoriland	1	103,722	1,344,469
United States ..	49	60,700	2,505,000
Newfoundland ..	1	42,734	266,401
British Isles ..	6	20,271	8,133,000
Switzerland ..	26	614	156,000

"So our Commonwealth has the smallest number of Legislatures among nine compared with area, and the smallest number among six compared with population."

At 4.45 p.m.,

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. KIRWAN: This article would make it appear that the statement so frequently made and published that Australia is over-governed is not entirely correct when we make comparisons with other countries.

In the course of his second reading speech, the Attorney-General went to some pains to impress on the House and the country generally that the Government were only animated by one desire in introducing this Bill, and that was to bring about an equitable system of redistribution of seats and to provide for the full and proper representation of the people in this Legislature. Whether the hon. gentleman will be able to say that his statement has been fully justified when the redistribution actually takes place is another matter. Personally, I believe that he will have considerable difficulty in attempting to square his forecast with the actual realities. We know that right down the ages anti-Labour Governments and Tory legislators have not differed.

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They have at all times bitterly opposed not only the extension of the franchise, but the extension of privileges generally to the great masses of the people. John Boyle O'Reilly, one of the great American poets who lived away back in 1844, wrote a short poem, "The Tory," and, as his views are just as apropos to-day as they were then, I propose to read it—

THE TORY.

"Patrician, Autocrat, Tory—what—
Ever his age or name,
To the people's rights and liberties
A traitor ever the same.
The natural crowd is a mob to him,
Their prayer a vulgar rhyme,
The freeman's speech is sedition,
The patriot's deed a crime.
Whatever the race, the law, the land,
Whatever the time or throne;
The Tory is always a traitor to
Every class but his own."

We can only judge how this particular redistribution scheme will operate by comparing it with a similar scheme of redistribution which was made in Victoria four years ago. The hon. member for Toowoong went to some considerable pains in an endeavour to show what the position was regarding a number of electorates in this State; but he overlooked the fact, as I pointed out in my opening remarks, that the increase in the number of electors in some cases was due to the shifting and growing population. Certain electorates represented by hon. members opposite have shown a tremendous increase in population during the last ten or twelve years. In the district represented by the hon. member for Enoggera is the growing suburb of Mitchelton, which many years ago contained one house on the crest of the hill. There was no other house for miles around. To-day that suburb is fast becoming a populous one, and contains street after street of homes, mostly workers' dwellings and workers' homes. As a matter of fact, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Flinders, a redistribution took place following upon the influx of population in those electorates.

I can do no better than give figures showing the position in Victoria under a redistribution scheme which was carried out there. Following the example set by the hon. member for Toowoong, I shall quote five country electorates and compare the position there with five city electorates. The figures, which are taken from the Melbourne "Age" of 14th February, 1927, show the position following a redistribution that was carried out as a result of legislation passed by the Allan Government:—

Metropolitan Electorates.	No. of Electors.	Country Electorates.	No. of Electors.
Richmond ..	24,749	Gippsland East ..	7,035
St. Kilda ..	24,563	Benambra ..	8,017
Prahran ..	24,567	Mildura ..	8,750
Caulfield ..	23,873	Swan Hill ..	8,775
Collingwood ..	23,702	Wangaratta ..	9,091

It will be seen that the people in the country have about one vote for every three electors in the city.

The position so far as the Legislative Council of Victoria is concerned is even more pronounced, as the following figures will show:—

Metropolitan Electorates.	No. of Electors.	Country Electorates.	No. of Electors.
East Yarra	57,970	Bendigo	11,337
Melbourne	23,101	Gippsland	17,645
Melbourne East	20,181	Nelson	11,855
Melbourne North	52,252	Northern	15,940
Melbourne South	30,072	North-Eastern	12,969
Melbourne West	22,540	North-Western	21,053
		Southern	16,844
		South-Eastern	45,630
		South-Western	21,931
		Wellington	11,600
		Western	15,706
Total	216,419	Total	202,526

As a result of the operations of that particular redistribution scheme in Victoria, a most extraordinary position arose at the last election, as the following figures will disclose:—

Total electors on roll	903,000
28 Labour members were returned, representing	539,000
15 Nationalist members were returned, representing	234,000
10 Farmers' Union members were returned, representing	100,000
Majority for Labour	200,000

It will be seen that, although Labour represented a majority of the electors, it was only possible for that party to secure twenty-eight of the sixty-five seats available. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to talk about gerrymandering the electorates. I have given a striking illustration of first-class gerrymandering under a Nationalist Government, aided and abetted by supporters of the Farmers' Union Party.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What has that to do with Queensland?

Mr. KIRWAN: The only way we can judge as to the probable attitude of the Queensland Government in a matter of this kind is to view what their colleagues have done in similar circumstances in Victoria. (Government dissent.) It is no good hon. members opposite acting as Pontius Pilate did—washing their hands, and disclaiming responsibility.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about Lang?

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member for Toowoong was very chirpy here when a paragraph appeared in the Brisbane press stating that the Savings Bank of New South Wales had closed. Some hon. members sitting on the Government back benches asked the Premier had he noticed a paragraph in the press that the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales had closed.

Mr. MAXWELL: It was not I.

Mr. KIRWAN: I did not say it was the hon. member; but I do say that the hon. member and a few more had a real good laugh over the unfortunate position in New South Wales. But the chickens came home to roost, and there was no laugh when the House met on Tuesday owing to a similar unfortunate position in this State, when two banks which are solvent had temporarily to close their doors.

I have already explained what was done in Victoria; and I have no hesitation in

saying that the present Government in this State will do identically the same in Queensland, because they are out to achieve the same purpose. The Melbourne "Age" of 19th March, 1927—one of the leading Nationalist papers of the Commonwealth—had this to say about the redistribution scheme when the new electorates were mentioned in the daily press:—

"Figures showing the electoral strength of the State constituencies as now recast emphasise the infamy of the Argyll Redistribution Act. . . ."

"The miserable part of the story is that the effect was not only known, but deliberately planned, and the motive was only too obviously politically dishonest. All principle went down before the determination of those who had seized office to so 'rig' the constituencies that they would have a very good chance of coming back from the elections with sufficient numbers to claim another turn at the Treasury. Everybody knows this. It is, therefore, particularly nauseating to hear Mr. Lawson, leader of the Nationalist Party, following up his apology in the policy speech with an attempt to convey the impression that some other purpose beside unprincipled political self-interest inspired the drafting of the redistribution scheme and justified its bludgeoning through Parliament."

I have no hesitation in saying deliberately and with a full recognition of my responsibilities as a member of this House that what the Nationalist Government did in Victoria the Queensland Government will do here, if they do not do something worse.

The following extract from an article written by a barrister appeared in the Melbourne "Age" of 24th January, 1927:—

"The fusion seeks to substitute for majority rule and an honest electoral law a degraded form of government, consisting of a cabal dominated, not by honest convictions or sound principles, but by intrigue and the silent operation of money bags."

Mr. KEPP: That does not fit.

Mr. KIRWAN: I have taken an interest in the politics of my native State ever since 1888; and I know something of the methods adopted following on the appearance in this Chamber of the first batch of Labour members in 1895. The numbers gradually increased until 1915, when Labour assumed the government of the country.

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I can well remember a circular being issued by a gentleman named Robert Bulcock, who was the secretary of the "Political Ass.," as it was then called at that time—the political association of which, strange to say, the Premier of the day, the late Sir Hugh Nelson, was the president. This gentleman had the brazen effrontery to issue a circular to every electoral registrar and to every justice of the peace in the State whose names he could secure giving them directions as to how they should prepare the rolls.

Mr. KERR: We are past those days.

Mr. KIRWAN: We are past those days, because Labour Governments have purified Queensland politics. (Government laughter.) The hon. member and his party recently attempted in a certain action to fix certain discreditable work on to the shoulders of two ex-Premiers of this State, but the "four just men" on whom the onus was cast acquitted them, notwithstanding that we heard about "irresistible inferences" and "the hand that came out of the shadows."

The Attorney-General in his address yesterday afternoon saw fit to make an attack on the hon. member for Flinders, who was Attorney-General in the late Labour Administration, by making certain references to a regulation which was brought into operation prior to the last election. That particular regulation was certainly issued. Although the Attorney-General read the regulation, I am going to read it again, and I want to read something else in connection with it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I suppose you remember the day it was passed?

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes, I do; and, although the hon. gentleman did not say anything about it, I know a great deal in connection with that matter. I am quoting from the "Queensland Government Gazette," of 10th May, 1929, p. 1205. The regulation reads—

"51 (a) For the purposes of section 69 of the said Act, if any elector is unable to read or is blind he may sign the endorsement upon the envelope as required by subsection 2 of the said section by making his mark thereon in the presence of the presiding officer, and if they desire to be present in the presence and sight of the poll clerk, candidates, and scrutineers, and the presiding officer shall upon such endorsement certify that the questions and answers so endorsed on the envelope were previously read over and explained to such elector previously to his so making his mark, and that such elector understood the nature and contents thereof.

"(b) For the purposes of subsections 6 and 7 of section 69 aforesaid, the presiding officer may record the vote of any elector referred to in the last preceding paragraph by writing for such elector in the presence of the persons specified in the aforesaid paragraph hereof, the name of the candidate, or (in the case of a contingent vote) the candidates for whom such elector desires to vote.

"(c) For all the purposes of section 6 aforesaid, the mark so made by any such elector as hereinbefore specified shall be his signature."

What is wrong with that regulation? What is all this attempt to create an atmosphere?

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Then the hon. gentleman, after reading the regulation, went on and said something about the peculiar coincidence which had occurred. Then he read out the absent votes for the Brisbane electorate, but did not read out the absent votes for any other electorate. The only suggestion made by the hon. gentleman was that I owe my seat in this House to the passage of that regulation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: To the absent votes.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the hon. gentleman says that it is due to that regulation that I owe my seat in this House, I feel like saying something that might bring me into conflict with the Chair.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Before you do that, tell us why you passed the regulation just on the eve of the election.

Mr. KIRWAN: The policy of the Labour Party has always been to endeavour to make the opportunities for people to record their votes as easy as possible. That is in marked contrast to the policy of hon. members opposite, who make it as difficult as possible. If the regulation issued by the late Attorney-General was such an infamous regulation, why did the hon. gentleman not repeal it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I did.

Mr. KIRWAN: When? The hon. gentleman does not know the date.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I repealed it before the first by-election.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman no doubt repealed it quite recently. That particular regulation was recommended by the officers who administered the Act. Any Minister on the front bench who is prepared to tell the truth will admit that, if any of his officers suggest to the Minister the necessity for certain regulations under the Elections Act or any other Act, and those regulations do not involve any question of Government policy, but are simply required for the smoother working of the Act in question, generally speaking, the Minister agrees to them without taking them to Cabinet. If, on the other hand, they involve a question of policy, the Minister concerned would feel it incumbent upon him to take them to Cabinet, explain them to his colleagues, and point out where he thought they conflicted with the policy of the Government or prevented it from being effectively carried out.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Would you call a special Cabinet meeting before the elections just for that?

Mr. KIRWAN: No, I did not say that. The hon. gentleman knows the Cabinet meeting at which that regulation was dealt with; and he ought to know that Cabinet meetings are held on Tuesdays, and Executive Council meetings are held on Thursdays or Fridays, and that a regulation cannot be published until it receives the signature of the Governor. I want to point out also that the principle involved in that regulation, to which the hon. gentleman has taken such strong exception, has been in operation in the Federal arena for a number of years; and the Bruce-Page Government did not find that any terrible results accrued from it. The instructions to presiding officers issued by the Commonwealth of Australia under the

Commonwealth Electoral Act contains this provision—

"ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN ELECTORS VOTING AS (a) ABSENT VOTERS OR (b) SECTION 91A, 121 OR 121A VOTERS.

"43. (1) If any voter, being an absent voter or a Section 91A, 121, or 121A voter, satisfies the presiding officer that his sight is so impaired or that he is so physically incapacitated that he is unable to vote without assistance, the presiding officer shall take the following action:—

(a) Fill in the form of declaration with the required particulars as requested by such voter;

(b) Read over to the voter the form of declaration;

(c) Require the voter to sign the form of declaration—

(i.) In his own handwriting, if he is able to do so; or

(ii.) With his mark, as his personal signature, if he is unable to sign his name in his own handwriting;

(d) Cause the signature of the voter, if made by means of a mark, to be witnessed by a scrutineer present, or, if no scrutineer be present, by the poll clerk or the person appointed by the voter;

(e) Complete and attest the declaration;

(f) Permit a person appointed by the voter to enter an unoccupied compartment of the booth with the voter, and to mark and fold the ballot-paper or ballot-papers (as the case requires) for the voter;

(g) Enclose the ballot-paper or ballot-papers in the envelope bearing the voter's declaration and duly addressed in accordance with the directions thereon;

(h) Securely fasten the envelope and deposit it in the ballot-box. (See Regulation 50.)

"(2) If any voter to whom paragraph (1) of this instruction applies fails to appoint a person pursuant to that paragraph or if any voter who claims to vote as an absent voter satisfies the presiding officer that he is so illiterate that he is unable to vote without assistance, the presiding officer shall take the action indicated in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) inclusive of that paragraph and shall, in the presence of such scrutineers as may be present, or if there be no scrutineers present, then—

(i.) In the presence of the poll clerk, or

(ii.) If the voter so desires, in the presence of a person appointed by such voter, instead of the poll clerk,

(a) Mark and fold the ballot-paper or ballot-papers (as the case requires) for the voter;

(b) Enclose the ballot-paper or ballot-papers in the envelope bearing the absent voter's declaration; and

(c) Securely fasten the envelope and deposit it in the ballot-box. (See Regulation 50 (2).)"

That regulation is in operation in the Commonwealth sphere, and no doubt was seen either by an officer of the State Electoral

Office or the Department of Justice. I cannot remember at the present time whether the regulation was suggested by Mr. Cole, the Chief Electoral Officer, or by Mr. Carter, Under Secretary, Department of Justice, as a result of their experience in conducting elections; but I do recollect that the regulation was brought under my notice, and it was pointed out that a similar regulation which had been in operation in the Commonwealth sphere for a considerable number of years had conducted very largely to the smooth working of the law by granting facilities to unfortunate people suffering from disabilities, enabling them to record their votes. A similar regulation has now been repealed by this Government. They are out to make it as difficult as possible for people to record their votes, particularly blind and illiterate people; and the Attorney-General glories in the fact that his Government are responsible for repealing a regulation framed for the specific purpose of granting these facilities.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have asked you for an explanation which you have not yet given.

Mr. KIRWAN: I have given a sufficient explanation to satisfy people who are interested in an explanation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: All that I can say is, that I do not believe your explanation.

At 5.11 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman can say what he likes. The Federal regulation permits an elector to nominate some people to record a vote for him. If a person suffers from impaired eyesight there is nothing to prevent him from nominating some relative or friend to go into the polling booth with him, take the ballot-paper from the presiding officer, go to the receptacle provided, and record the vote in accordance with the wishes of the elector. That is not permitted under the regulations in operation in this State. I mention that because it demonstrates that the contention of the Attorney-General is quite wrong. He sought to convey the impression that something highly improper had been done with a view to favouring me as against my opponent in the Brisbane election. He endeavoured to suggest that the regulation referred to was responsible for my return to this Parliament. I expect no quarter from the hon. gentleman, his Government, or his party; and I never get any. I have always fought a fair and clean fight in every Brisbane contest, and will do so on the next occasion. At any rate, I have never been associated with a party or a Government that endeavoured to get to the Treasury benches by bribery and corruption.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw that expression; it is quite unparliamentary.

Mr. KIRWAN: In deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [5.15]: There can be no disagreement on one point, and that is that an amendment of the Electoral Districts Act of 1922 is very much required. When we have electorates containing 3,000 electors, and other electorates containing 12,000 elec-

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tors and over on the roll, it must be apparent that the anomaly is so great that it is time a more equitable distribution of voting power was brought about. That is what this Bill seeks to do.

There has been such a continual stream of charges of malpractice, invective, and so on from hon. members opposite, that I propose to examine them in detail. The disparity at present between electorates represented by hon. members opposite, who have a disproportionately small number of electors in their electorates, and electorates represented by hon. members on this side has been allowed to remain year after year in total opposition to the principles of the Act and the principles of democracy. It has been said that the present anomalous conditions are in the main due to the decline in the mining industry, and that at the time the Act was passed, in 1922, they were not apparent. That statement made by the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly untrue. I have figures showing the number of electors in the various electorates in 1921, just prior to the last redistribution. I have the figures of three farming electorates which were abolished under that Act on the ground that they did not possess the number of voters to entitle them to separate representation in Parliament, and I have also the figures of the enrolments in three electorates represented by hon. members opposite showing that they were smaller than the three farming electorates that were abolished; yet the latter are represented in Parliament to-day on the other side. At the time of the redistribution in 1922 I find that the total number of electors enrolled for the three farming constituencies abolished were—

Drayton	...	...	...	...	4,502
Musgrave	...	...	...	...	3,786
Pittsworth	...	...	...	...	4,170

Knowing the regard hon. members have for the farmers, it is not to be wondered that these electorates were abolished, and that the farmers resident therein were deprived of separate parliamentary representation. Regarding the three seats represented by hon. members opposite which were not interfered with, I find that their voting strength was—

Burke	...	...	...	...	2,053
Chillagoe	...	...	...	...	2,053
Queenton	...	...	...	...	3,204

What is the use of hon. members opposite talking of justice and fairplay when they were guilty of such a glaring example of maladministration as that? Two of the farming seats I have quoted contained more than twice the number of electors in two of the mining seats represented by hon. members opposite, and which were retained. The position in England prior to the introduction of the Reform Bill of 1832 was not worse than that. It will be seen that hon. members opposite deprived the primary producer of representation in this Parliament, and yet retained pocket boroughs for themselves.

This measure seeks to bring about the equitable representation of the people in Parliament. It seeks to affirm the principle that the quota of electors for city electorates should be higher than the quota for country electorates because of the large areas comprised in country electorates. The hon. member for Brisbane and other hon. members on the other side have spoken in favour of that

principle; therefore, although they took these seats away from the farmers, in theory they admit that it is desirable that a margin should be allowed to country electorates. When hon. members opposite had the opportunity to apply that margin to the country electorates they did not do so, but applied it rather to the city electorates. That shows clearly that their theories are not in any way in accord with their practice.

Had there been an equitable distribution of voting power in past elections, the Labour Party would not have been returned as the Government of the day; but would have been consigned to the Opposition benches much sooner than they actually were. Election after election they represented a minority of the electors in this State; but they still became the Government because of their gerrymandering the electorates. Even that action, however, did not prevent their defeat at the last election. They are now out of office, and are likely to remain in that position for many years to come.

Figures have already been quoted showing the true test of the opinion of the Queensland electors, and it is hardly necessary for me to repeat them. I do, however, desire to refer to the question of the residential qualification for enrolment purposes. Undoubtedly there has been duplicate and triplicate voting in the past. For instance, in 1920 there were more voters on the State rolls than there were adults in the State. A comparison of the following figures showing the number of voters on the State and Commonwealth rolls for the year 1926 will be illuminating to those hon. members who have any doubt that irregular voting took place—

Number on State electoral rolls	...	...	...	484,000
Number on Commonwealth electoral rolls	...	...	...	449,000
Excess on State electoral rolls	...	...	...	35,000

When we find that under the legislation of the Labour Government there were more voters enrolled than there were adults in the State, the only inference to draw is that double voting occurred in some instances. All that this Bill will do is to ensure the franchise to those who are entitled to it.

It is surely not too much to say that a three months' residential qualification is fair. At any rate, it obviates the injustice which occurred in the past, when, just before polling day, voters were rushed to certain electorates in order to avert what otherwise would have been a defeat for followers of the Labour Party. The intention of the present Government is that the hard-working thrifty people in a district shall not be swept out of existence by any wave of nomadic voters brought temporarily to a district. We have had instances where navvies have been sent into electorates just before an election when there was absolutely no work for them to do nor even shovels to work with. Again, in the sugar districts people have come to work on the wharves and in the canefields a few days before an election, and they have been put on the roll for the district. That sort of thing is not right; and any measure that will prevent that kind of thing in the future should have the support of every right-thinking man and woman.

Various charges have been made by hon. members opposite in regard to the intention

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of the Government; but, if honourable members opposite abuse their opponents for some particular misdemeanour, it can be taken almost as an axiom that they themselves are guilty of that misdemeanour. They abuse the other fellow for doing something that they do themselves. Anyone who has studied politics will realise that that has been the case in this instance. I do not intend to speak at any length, as the subject has been well thrashed out; but I wanted to deal with the figures in regard to country electorates which have been wiped out, because I do not think they have been referred to before. The figures I have quoted give a glaring exposure of the real attitude of the party opposite towards the farming electorates. They wiped out farming electorates containing double the number of electors on the rolls of seats which they retained for themselves.

On several occasions the expenditure of loan money has been used for electioneering purposes. The total appropriation of loan money for the year 1925-26 was £5,579,557. For the first eight months of the year the amount expended was £2,712,436, while in the following four months—during which time the elections took place—the expenditure was £2,867,121. During 1923 the expenditure from loan funds was as follows:—

	£
Quarter ending 30th September, 1922	677,065
Quarter ending 31st December, 1922	878,821
Quarter ending 31st March, 1923	826,265
Quarter ending 30th June, 1923	1,319,597

It was during the last quarter of the year that a general election took place. Then it is well known that in the year 1923 the Willowburn works were started in Too-woomba just prior to the election and closed down after the election. It was kept closed down until the next election came on, when it was again restarted.

In view of the various happenings to which I have drawn attention it ill becomes hon. members opposite to state that it is the intention of the Government to do an improper thing in regard to this legislation. The hon. member for Brisbane went back thirty-five years to find something that he thought might reflect in some way upon hon. members on this side of the House. When he had to go back to that remote period for a concrete case we can rest assured that our conduct in this respect has been most exemplary.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*) [5.30]: A very interesting discussion has taken place on this question. Hon. members opposite have specifically dealt with one aspect of the matter, and have lashed themselves into a fury over the figures with regard to the number of electors in three or four metropolitan constituencies in comparison with some of the remote country electorates in which the numbers are small. If the position with regard to those country electorates was as bad as represented, and city electorates had suffered in consequence, there might have been something in the argument of hon. members opposite; but the figures show that the latter electorates are more advantageously dealt with than far-away electorates which have been mentioned. Everybody knows that the metropolitan electorates have their interests looked after by the City Coun-

cil, progress, ratepayers', and taxpayers' associations, and many other organisations and institutions, which are all practically within ten minutes of the Government offices. The people in these electorates can wait upon the authorities and place their grievances before them, whereas people in the outside districts are utterly without all these opportunities. I say without hesitation that the metropolitan electorates have a great advantage over the country electorates in many ways.

Again, the numbers on the State rolls compared with the numbers on the Federal rolls have been quoted by hon. members opposite, and statements have been made about the excess numbers on the State rolls. The point is that we on this side have been charged with manipulation of the State rolls while we were in power owing to the excess numbers thereon and with doing something wrong. The present Government have been in power for two years; and, if they had done everything right, the numbers on the Federal and State rolls would correspond; but we know that that is not the case, and there is an excess number of names on the State roll, in spite of the thousands of people they have taken off. Everyone who knows anything at all about the matter knows quite well that the Federal authorities have always struck off the name of an elector when he has left not merely the electorate but the division in which he has lived. Consequently, there is always a large number of names in course of transition from one subdivision to another, as well as from one electorate to another in connection with the Federal roll. As a consequence there are always a lot of names which do not appear on the roll. Yet, if an official roll was published quarterly instead of at a general election those names would be there. All the talk about the discrepancy between the numbers of electors in country as compared with city electorates, or as between Commonwealth rolls and State rolls, amounts to nothing when we investigate the matter.

It appears to me that there are three outstanding principles in this Bill—reduction, redistribution, and retribution. The remarks of the hon. member for Toombul in connection with the Bill led one to that conclusion.

I listened to the Attorney-General's speech; and I am not sure whether it can be more aptly described as an explanation, an apology, or a defence of what the Government are doing. But, whatever it may be termed, I do not think the hon. gentleman was able to convince even himself, much less anybody on this side of the House, that the Government in introducing it, and especially in introducing it just before the elections, were actuated by disinterested motives, or motives as pure as those which they would try to suggest they really possess. The real reasons set forth for the introduction of the Bill were not the correct reasons. Put this alongside the Elections Act—and we know what can be done under the Elections Act—and it seems to me that the real reason for the passage of the Bill is to provide cities of refuge for members of the Government Party to protect them from the wrath that they know is going to come. They are trying to make their position as secure as they possibly can under very difficult circumstances.

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I do not know whether the title of the Bill is intended as a piece of delicate irony; but it is so beyond question, for we are told that it is a Bill, amongst other things, for "the better representation of the people of Queensland in Parliament." One cannot help smiling at that. It is often said that one cannot tell a sausage by its skin. Certainly one cannot judge this Bill by its title, because, when one comes to dissect it, and when one has listened to the speeches made in support of it, one can come to only one conclusion, and that is that the intentions of the Government and the effects of the Bill are in quite a different direction from what one would gather from the title.

On the question of the representation of the city as against that of the country, it has practically always been admitted that country electorates should not be expected to contain as many voters as city electorates. That principle was conceded in the first Electoral Districts Act and in the second Electoral Districts Act, and, the principle having been admitted, the only question is how far that principle should go. My contention is that in this Bill it does not go far enough. I think that a margin of 20 per cent. above or below the quota is not sufficient. If it had been 25 per cent. or even 30 per cent., it would not have been too much. If electorates far removed from the centre of government were permitted a margin of 30 per cent. below the quota, I do not think anybody would have suffered.

All the figures that have been quoted and all the points that have been made by hon. members opposite have been quoted or made upon circumstances which ruled immediately preceding a redistribution. After the redistribution of 1910 the numbers were fairly equitable; and after the redistribution of 1922 they were fairly equitable also; but, after years have elapsed, especially in country districts where industries fluctuate and workers migrate, it is almost impossible, without a redistribution every year—which would be too costly and inconvenient—to keep the numbers equitable. My contention is that nobody is suffering very much. As a matter of fact, this Bill is doing what the present Government have very often done—that is, professing to give something with one hand and the next moment snatching it back with the other. For instance, country electorates are supposed to be allowed smaller enrolments than town electorates; yet electorates within the boundaries of which there is a city or part of a city must have a larger number than the permissible minimum or than they otherwise would require. Take Charters Towers. When Charters Towers was proclaimed a city, it was worthy of the name. It was the second city in the State, and had a population of between 25,000 and 26,000. At the present time its population is far below that; and the electorate which includes Charters Towers is to be penalised by reason of that fact. Although it is a city within the meaning of the Local Authorities Act, it is really a country town; and my contention is that it should not suffer on that account.

I have already pointed out that country constituents have only one representative at the seat of government, and that is their parliamentary representative. He is the only connecting link between the constituency and Parliament, and is the only connecting

link in many other directions. A member representing a constituency 1,000 to 1,200 miles from Brisbane has quite a lot of things to do besides representing his constituency in this House or at the departmental offices. His representations are often of a commercial and industrial character, and sometimes of a domestic nature. He does quite a lot of things that he is really under no obligation to perform, because his people know that he is willing to do anything he can for them. He gets quite a lot of things to do that have practically nothing to do with his political duties. The hon. member for Gympie admitted that his time was fairly well occupied, and I can well believe it. Any member who does his duty and does his best in the interests of his constituency will find his time fully occupied. The hon. member for Gympie stated that two or three days a week of his time were taken up in visiting Government departments; but the hon. member for Toombul took the opposite view. He stated that State members had less work to do since federation than they had previously. He speaks for himself; and I am sure that is not the experience of quite a number of members. In fact, they have had more to do since federation, rather than less. Hon. members on this side know that they have to attend to such matters as old-age pensions, maternity bonuses, and other things connected with Federal departments. Very often they have more work to do in connection with Federal departments than State departments. It does seem to me that members have quite enough to do if they do their duty properly. I should like to quote an extract to show that things have not changed very much in some directions from conditions that existed long years ago. A member of the British House of Commons wrote to his constituents in connection with his representations on their behalf. I suppose they had found fault with him for some reason or another, and this is what he said in reply to them:—

"I canvassed you through your affairs and not your persons. I was not only your representative as a body. I was the agent, the solicitor of individuals. I ran about wherever your affairs called me; and, in acting for you, I often appeared rather as a shipbroker than as a member of Parliament. There was nothing too laborious or too low for me to undertake. In this case where the theory is not consistent with the practice, I prefer the practice to the theory."

That was the experience of Edmund Burke, and it is a fairly good example to follow. The work of a member of Parliament in many directions is much more onerous today than it was in those times.

This Bill has been introduced not only to provide for a reduction of members and a redistribution of seats but for retribution. The hon. member for Toombul rendered very good service by being so frank as to say that we were going to be punished for our sins. What those sins are probably he knows or imagines that he knows better than we do. I want to remind him that it is a risky thing to practise retribution, and that it is a greater authority than he who says, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." Retribution may follow this action of the Government. They may think they are doing the correct thing, but they will probably find that they are doing the wrong

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thing. Some people are hoist with their own petard.

The hon. member for Nundah interjected during this debate that this party had one redistribution in fifteen years; but his party had one redistribution in fifty years. If numbers were anything to go by, then the position when the hon. members opposite made their redistribution called for such action; but nobody grumbled very much, and no one suffered very much. It has also been stated this afternoon that under the redistribution made in 1922 some seats were cut out; and that fact was held up as being some diabolical thing that any Government should be ashamed of. The hon. member who made that statement forgot that under the redistribution scheme of his Government four seats—namely, Croydon, Carpentaria, Clermont, and Bulloo—all held by Labour, were abolished. Not only were those seats abolished, but eleven constituencies previously returned two members were so redistributed that the return of at least one Government member was made possible. That was considered quite the correct thing to be done at that time; but, when some other Government does something much less than that, it is held up as a vice. The Attorney-General and the hon. member for Toowong said that under the redistribution scheme of 1922 Mr. John Jones's seat was annihilated. What happened was that the electorates of Kennedy and Queenon were amalgamated, and made one seat. Certainly some additions were made at the western and southern ends of the electorate. Mr. Jones thought the seat was his, and that he had a right to it. The hon. member for Toowong denied that Mr. Jones was a candidate at the next election. Mr. Jones was a candidate, as he was my opponent; but, when the numbers went up, I had a majority of 250 votes. If anybody got a fair opportunity to run for his own seat, it was Mr. Jones. The only way that Mr. Jones suffered by the redistribution was that he could not win his seat. He had nothing to be dissatisfied with in the redistribution, and certainly this party had nothing to be ashamed of.

One of the reasons advanced in connection with the reduction of members is on the score of economy. These are times when people must practise economy. There would be something in the argument if the Government made the economy real, and if the economy they were making was worth while. The question has been asked repeatedly, but up to the present it has not been answered, why stop at a reduction of ten? Why not make it twenty? If the Government agreed to reduce the representation in this House by twenty, their action would have some appearance of economy, and there would be some saving in comparison with ten members. The simple reason for their not doing so is that by making a reduction of ten members the Labour Party will be called upon to make the biggest sacrifice. If the Government made a reduction of twenty, they would be compelled to make some sacrifice themselves. It is astonishing how sacrificial some people are when others have to bear the sacrifice; but it commonly happens that those who bring about such a sacrifice suffer afterward themselves. Many people wonder what the public are thinking at the present time. I am satisfied that, if public opinion could be consulted in connection with this Par-

liament and quite a number of similar institutions they would be wiped out altogether. Evidently the Government think so, because they intend establishing another place for the express purpose of thwarting the express will of the people through their representatives in this Chamber. The Government do not propose to allow public opinion to exercise any influence on the matter. We know from practical experience that sometimes people are carried away by their feelings for which they are sorry afterwards. We had proof of that only a few days ago in Brisbane. Public opinion changes rapidly. The fact is that public opinion is quite different to-day from what it was a year or two ago. People who were prepared to shout "Hosannah! Hosannah!" when the present Government were returned to office are prepared to-day to cry aloud "Crucify them! Crucify them!"

This Bill, in common with most of the legislation introduced this session, is in the nature of panic legislation, showing the fear complex which is animating the Government, who are doing things to-day which in years to come they will regard as purely idiotic. Of course, the aim of the Government is to ensure their return at the next election; but they would do well to bear in mind that, notwithstanding all the precautions they may take, they may find themselves at the next election in the cold shades of Opposition.

Mr. COOPER (*Bremser*) [5.53]: I would not have said anything on this measure had it not been for some of the speeches made by Government members this afternoon.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Aren't you satisfied?

Mr. COOPER: I have nothing to be satisfied with in the case put forward in support of the passage of this Bill. The speeches of hon. members who have spoken from the Government side have been a long recital of alleged ills and woes from which they have suffered in the past. They have talked about redistribution as if it were something this party did not believe in. There is no dispute so far as we on this side are concerned about a measure of redistribution of the seats in Queensland. There is, however, a decided dispute as to how that redistribution should be made.

The Bill we are now considering repeals an Act which has been on the statute-book for many years. That Act provides there shall be, as nearly as possible, a quota of electors, and it also makes an allowance for 20 per cent. above and below for a particular purpose. That purpose is to allow the gentleman in charge of redistributing the seats an opportunity of observing certain facts, such as community of interests, and matters of that kind. The Bill now under discussion preserves that 20 per cent.; but it goes much beyond that. We on this side recognise that 20 per cent. is a fair margin to give country constituencies a lesser voting strength than constituencies near the seat of Government. That is recognised as making for fairness and equity that is not otherwise obtainable. This Bill, while preserving that 20 per cent., goes much farther. It destroys that equality in representation of which we have been so proud. It is provided that electorates within the cities shall have at least a voting strength of 8,000; that constituencies partly within cities shall have a voting strength of at least 7,000, and that

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constituencies outside cities shall have a voting strength of at least 6,400. The provision of 20 per cent. that was allowed above the quota or below the quota operated generally in allowing boundaries to be fixed to preserve community of interests, and also operated in the direction of giving country constituencies a lesser number of voters than city constituencies. The percentage ranged on an average of about 10 per cent. either way, showing that the 20 per cent. allowance was probably fully utilised in many instances. The objection to the inequality in this Bill is that it definitely prescribes a higher percentage in city electorates and a lesser percentage in others. That is the main objection that I, at any rate, have to the measure. It gets away legislatively from the equality of representation; and equality of representation is something about which there have been bitter struggles in the past, and about which much has been written.

I suppose some of the most interesting chapters of English history are those containing the history of the fight of the people of England for equal representation in the Legislature. Legislation is mostly a history of attempts to restore justice. Something that may have been considered justice ten years ago by a tendency towards injustice becomes injustice to-day, and that is why, in the main, legislative Acts are amended to restore justice. The tendency is towards inequality in electorates. A population which is shifting because of the rise of various industries and the dying of other industries tends to a great inequality of representation, and the reason for a redistribution is to restore that equality, and this Bill, in departing from that desire to restore equality, fails, and fails in a very bad direction because it legislatively fixes an inequality against which there has been a strenuous fight for many generations. This equality about which I speak is considered by many people to be a chimera, and could never be reduced to practice. The tendency to inequality is inevitable, and if the tendency to inequality is inevitable should it not follow that we should try our best to remedy it? If it is the case that the force of circumstances tends to destroy equality, then the object of legislation must always be to maintain it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What do you suggest?

Mr. COOPER: I suggest that the quota which was in the old Act should be retained, and that the inequality in this measure fixing a quota much lower in some electorates and much higher in other electorates should be eliminated, and that it should be left to the commissioners who will make the redistribution to make allowance for fair representation in the different constituencies, as has been done in the past. The chief burden of the song on the part of the Government in the past was that there was great inequality in the electorates. By this measure they are making that inequality a legislative act. They are providing, not for an inequality that occurs occasionally, but for a definite inequality fixed by legislation. The very thing they have been complaining about they are now fixing by this Bill. Government should be for the benefit of the whole nation—the whole State. If I remember rightly, the ancient boroughs of England were, perhaps, the most glaring example of corruption that English history discloses, and it was because the government of the boroughs was

not for the benefit of the whole of the people in the borough but for the benefit of the few. In so far as this Bill tends to restrict the people in the matter of their choice of representatives, in so far as this Bill tends to make for inequality, then so far is it tending towards evil, and no legislation can be good or just that has anything in the nature of evil for its basis.

In considering the question of government it is just as well to consider what constitutes a nation. It is certainly not land. This land of Australia was in existence 200 years ago; yet there was no nation. The American continents were in existence 500 or 600 years ago; but there was no nation there. It is certainly not land which constitutes a nation, nor is it area, for there is a vast area in the interior of Australia that has not as much nationhood about it as has the small island of Tasmania. There is a vast territory in British North America—British Columbia—that has not one-fiftieth of the nationality of the British Isles, so that neither land nor area constitutes a nation. Nor does sordid wealth constitute a nation. There is sordid wealth in India, and there is wealth in the territory of the Indian princes which would pay off Australia's national debt without the money being missed in those States; but certainly India is nothing like the nation that Australia is. The British people do not give India the same standard of nationhood that they gave Australia; so that it is not area, land, or sordid wealth, but it is men and women that make a nation—nothing else but men and women.

Then we can go a little further, and say that it is the enlightenment of the men and women in a country that makes for a great nation. China has its teeming hordes many times greater than the population of England; yet China is nothing like the nation that England is. As a matter of fact, despite its comparatively small population, England stands in the forefront of nations because she has loved freedom, and because she has stood for freedom. All her great writers and poets have emphasised the fact that England stands foremost and always for freedom, and Tennyson in his simplicity puts the case splendidly in these lines—

There is no land like England,
Whate'er the time of day be,
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be;
And these will strike for England,
And man and maid be free,
To foil and spoil the tyrant
Beneath the greenwood tree.

Mr. MAXWELL: Read that to the hon. member for Warrego.

Mr. COOPER: The hon. member for Warrego is a much greater admirer of freedom and liberty than the hon. member for Toowoong.

Mr. MAXWELL: You are no judge.

Mr. COOPER: Although the hon. member for Warrego may have his opinions about the qualifications of people from a certain country, his judgment is probably warped by coming too much in contact with men of the stamp of the hon. member for Toowoong, who do not give that just appreciation of what an Englishman is. The great defect

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of this Bill is that it gets away from equality and justice. It tends to confirm something that the Nationalist Party has always been preaching, that is, that there is antagonism between the city and the country. It encourages that antagonism, and attempts to make it a recognised state of things. Hon. members do not need to be told of the old electioneering cry in which the people of the city were told that they could not trust the country because the country wanted the industrialist to work for nothing. Neither can we forget the propaganda that was put forward that the country people could not trust the Labour Party because the industrialist section of the community wanted to take the land from them. These were the great cries that were always put up to keep the industrial workers of the city and the agricultural workers apart; and this Bill is just a continuation of that propaganda, which attempts to make the country believe that the city has no interest whatever in the country. As a matter of fact, present-day circumstances compel people to live in large aggregations. Times have altogether changed from what they were when people could live in scattered populations. That is no longer possible. In olden times there was the necessity for the market-place, to which the agriculturist could take his crops, and where he could sell them. To-day the large cities are the market places where the industrialist must go to sell his labour. His labour would be useless in the pastoral areas, for instance, where no such labour is required. His skill—the skill of the cabinet maker, the skill of the wheelwright, the skill of the engineer, the skill of the plasterer, the skill of the brickmaker, the skill of the stonemason—would be wasted in the vast expanses of Central Australia; consequently such people have to bring their commodity—which is their labour—to where the market is; that is, to the big cities. Every section of the community is vital to the progress of that community. No community can do without any section. The industrial section is necessary to the community; so is the agricultural section. One section is interdependent with the other; and it is only as the value of all sections is recognised that the nation can make a step towards progress.

During the past fourteen or fifteen years we have seen an advance in agricultural production unparalleled in the history of the world. But, great as has been that advance, there has not been a corresponding advance in agricultural population, because machinery has come to the aid of the agriculturist, with the result that he is able to produce much more at a cost of much less labour. Consequently, the country areas cannot absorb the growing population of this State; and that population must continue to centre itself in the cities. For this reason it is useless to attempt to make out that the cities are robbing the country of its just representation. Nothing of the kind happens in this case. It has been said, and said with truth, that the agriculturist is the backbone of the nation. But, as times change, so do backbones. I am not talking of the varping backbones that a number of members of this House have shown, but an absolute change in structure. Take the position as it is throughout Australia and throughout America, England, France, and Germany, for example. In Australia the seasons are good, and production is plentiful. There

was never a bigger harvest of wheat in the history of the world than there is in America to-day; yet the farmer in America, in Australia, and in other parts of the world cannot cope with the position as we see it. The world is in the throes of a financial crisis, notwithstanding that agriculture is at its top. Time was when the agriculturist was the backbone of the nation; but the circumstances of nations have so changed that they are as much dependent to-day upon the industrial worker as they ever were upon the agricultural worker. Without the industrial worker agriculture is absolutely and completely at a loss. The present times prove that, when the industrialist is suffering, the country goes down to the very depths of depression; but that is not so when the agriculturist happens to be suffering from a visitation in the nature of a drought, a flood, or other visitations that sometimes overtake that section of the community. The times prove beyond doubt that the industrial section of the community is as much a backbone to the State as is any other section. That being so, it is against justice, it is against freedom, and it is against equity to stipulate that the industrial worker shall not have as great representation in the Legislature of the State as the country worker. I just qualify that by saying that we on this side of the House recognise that, by reason of the distance from the centre of legislative action, the country is entitled to some smaller percentage of reduction; but not on the basis of its usefulness or benefit to the community.

Speakers on the other side of the House have said a number of things, and they have inferred a number of things. Above all, they have inferred that there is a suspicion that an Administration from this side of the House would not be fair to the country interests of this State. That statement needs to be challenged, and I challenge it. The history of the Labour movement in this State in its relation to the agricultural people of this State shows that at no time in the history of Queensland and at no time in the history of Australia did the agricultural interests receive so much attention and so much benefit as they did during the fourteen years of Labour Government. That is instanced by the returns from every section of the agricultural community—the butter returns, maize returns, wheat returns, the ordinary agricultural crop returns—the incentive given to agriculturists on all occasions and the impetus given to tobacco growing. Everything that was done to make the lot of the agriculturist better was introduced and fostered by the Labour Administration. Not one of the things that they did for the agricultural section of the community has been either repealed or improved by the present Government; and they have had the opportunity for two years. If there was any fear on the part of any section of the community that a Labour Administration would not be fair to the country, then it has been completely destroyed by the experience of fourteen years of Labour administration. The efforts of the Labour Government stand pre-eminent; and no assertion, no insinuation, and no inference can break down that truth, which stands steadfastly in the statistics of this State.

Mr. MAHER: What about the extortionate rural workers' award?

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Mr. COOPER: If I had not heard the hon. member say it, I have heard other hon. members opposite say that the farmers to-day are paying a higher rate than that prescribed by the rural workers' award. Over and over again they have said that the farmers have given better conditions than that award prescribed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What have you to say about the Bill?

Mr. COOPER: I am discussing the Bill. I am dealing with the inference conveyed by the Attorney-General in this Bill—if not in his own words—that a Labour Administration could not be fair to the agricultural section of the community. A lower quota is definitely fixed in the Bill for agricultural constituencies; and, if that is based on the assumption that a Labour Administration cannot be fair to the agriculturist, then it is a wrong assumption. There is no warranty for it; there is no truth whatever in the assertion. In so far as the Bill denies to the whole of the people that justice to which they are entitled and upon which English people pride themselves, in so far as it is a step backwards, and in so far as it wipes away in one act a thing for which the English people have fought for the best part of a century, then it fails, and fails badly.

Again I say, we on this side can have no objection whatever to a scheme of redistribution. Redistributions come in the natural order of things because of the tendency to inequality in the distribution of the population; but we do say that any redistribution that does not recognise the equality of the whole people is a redistribution that ought not to take place.

Mr. HANLON (*Ithaca*) [7.15]: I have no objection to a redistribution of seats in Queensland. We on this side of the House realise that it is an impossibility for any distribution of the electoral districts of Queensland to last for any great length of time, because in a young country like this the population moves from one place to another. With the Government, we also realise that, notwithstanding the manner in which they distribute the seats to-day, within a year or so there will be seats above and seats below the quota. For that reason I have no objection to a redistribution of seats. We must naturally accept it as the population of the various parts of the State alter.

In discussing this question hon. members appear to make out that in some mysterious way the late Government compelled electorates held by hon. members opposite to take in huge tracts of thickly-populated country, and deliberately retained seats held by a Labour member with a low number of electors. In the 1921 distribution the seats within the limits of a 20 per cent. margin were equal. There was a margin allowed by the Act, the same as is allowed by this Bill, of 20 per cent. above or below the quota. The seats as distributed in 1921 were quite satisfactory. In Brisbane, particularly, there has been a great change since 1921. Hon. members opposite have quoted the large number of electors in Bulimba, Logan, Oxley, Nundah, and Sandgate electorates, and have drawn attention to the fact that the Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, and South Brisbane electorates are under the quota. That could not be otherwise in view of the

fact that in the years prior to 1921 and onwards this State, governed by the Labour Party, made progress, and the people became more and more prosperous. As their sons and daughters married and established homes of their own, they were in a position to establish homes in a nice clean neighbourhood, and also build a good class of home. As a result of the prosperity of the people, the young people married and established homes—not in Albert street, or Spring Hill, or the congested parts of the city, but on allotments in those parts of the city where there was plenty of room. Electorates like Bulimba, Logan, Oxley, Nundah, and Sandgate have plenty of space available; and, as a result of the Administration of the Labour Government, the young people were in a position to buy nice allotments containing 30 or 40 perches of land and erect homes of their own. Any one who takes the trouble to go around these electorates, which have grown so much during the last ten years, will see that the newly settled areas contain an excellent class of home, and that a good many of those homes are workers' dwellings, workers' homes, or war service homes. They are a better class of home than the ones erected by their parents in starting off in life. That is due to the fact that in these days the people have enjoyed prosperity. In the other city electorates quoted by hon. members opposite as being below the electoral quota there was not a great deal of vacant space. In Ithaca there was only one vacant corner, the Rainworth Estate; but this has been built upon, and has led to an increased number of voters in that electorate; but the increase in population there has not been anything like the increase that has taken place in the electorates of Bulimba, Oxley, Logan, Sandgate, or Nundah. It is important to remember that in those areas good land and plenty of it was available at more or less reasonable prices. For example, whereas 32 perches of land around Paddington, within a penny tram section of the city, would bring at auction £300 or £400, the same area of land further out from the city, probably having a nicer situation by reason of its not being so congested, could be obtained for half the money. Of course, there was the disadvantage that it was further removed from the city. At any rate, it was those factors which caused the expansion of certain constituencies, whereas, on the other hand, electorates like Brisbane, Paddington, and Fortitude Valley showed a decreased number of voters, as portions of the residential areas made way for factories and warehouses. During the past ten years large warehouses and factories have displaced what were residence of poor working-class people. Those hon. members who have lived in Brisbane for any length of time will remember when the bulk of Adelaide street consisted of residential blocks. I can recall the little old house covered with a creeping vine which was later used as an employment agency. All through the city such places have disappeared, and that fact has meant a decreased number of electors. Further, both in North and South Brisbane extensive resumptions of land have cleared working people out of the district. For example, we know that the resumptions for the Kyogle railway terminus in South Brisbane were responsible for the displacement of hundreds of people from the residential areas there. It must be borne in

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mind that the conditions prevailing in those years of Labour rule, when young people marrying were able to secure a nice home in the suburbs, are now being reversed. To-day the tendency is for a drift of population back to the more congested areas of the city. No longer are houses going up in districts like Enoggera and Logan. Young people getting married must seek cheaper accommodation because they cannot afford the class of house that was built eight or ten years ago. The consequence is that there is more likelihood of a growth of population in the city area than there was previously, because the tendency is for people to live in rooms and flats and as cheaply as they possibly can.

It is important to remember also, when considering the goodly change in the density of the population in Queensland, that in regard to what the hon. member for Toombul stated the other evening as the representation of industries we find the disparity of representation in the House is not as great as hon. members opposite appear to indicate. My main objection to the speeches of hon. members opposite is that their sole cry, complaint, or moan has been because certain electorates are represented by people of certain political opinions; their grievance being that a district is represented by a Labour man. In all cases contrasts have been drawn between electorates returning Labour and electorates returning Nationalist members of Parliament. In a matter dealing with the redistribution of seats and alteration of representation in this House, hon. members should endeavour to address themselves to the question without considering whether a redistribution will favour the Nationalist Party or the Labour Party. When we glance at the present representation, we find that the disparity is not as great as hon. members opposite have endeavoured to suggest.

We find, first of all, as with the big increase in city populations all over Australia, the metropolitan areas have a larger enrolment. In the twenty metropolitan seats the average enrolment was 8,736. The enrolment for the twenty seats was 175,726. If you take twenty agricultural and dairying seats, they have a total enrolment of 138,314, or an average of 6,915. Then the ten grazing seats have a present enrolment of 52,945, being an average of 5,294. The eleven mining seats have a total enrolment of 58,836, or an average of 4,985. The fifteen country towns and cities have a total enrolment of 102,856, or an average of 6,857. Agricultural and dairying seats have practically the same representation as the country towns and cities. In the metropolitan area, of course, the electorates average much higher, but in the grazing and mining districts—the districts which have suffered most by the present depression in world's prices—of course the numbers are lower, but not to the extent, when you group them, that hon. members opposite endeavour to make us believe. In the grazing seats, which, with the exception of one, are represented by hon. members on this side of the House, the average enrolment is 5,294, whereas the average enrolment in the agricultural seats is 6,915. We have to recollect that dairying and agriculture are on a pretty sound basis in this State. The dairying people are exceptionally prosperous at the present moment in comparison with other industries, while in

the grazing districts the reverse is the case, because they have suffered from extensive droughts, and are also suffering from depressed prices for their commodities; consequently, when you are comparing dairying districts with grazing areas, you are comparing the enrolment in districts which are prosperous with the enrolment in districts where the drought and depressed prices have driven people temporarily from their homes. Naturally when things again become good in the grazing districts these people will immediately return to their homes. If the working people got sick and tired of bolstering up the butter and agricultural industries, there would be an exodus from the agricultural and dairying districts. If the working people said, "Since we are getting so little consideration from the Government to-day, seeing that the worker is being treated so harshly, we shall no longer agree to be taxed in the price of our bread and butter to keep these industries solvent," then we would immediately have a large reduction in the enrolment in electorates where dairying and agriculture are carried out. In the same way, if a serious drought overtook the dairying and agricultural districts, we would immediately find an exodus from those districts, with a corresponding reduction in the number of people on those electoral rolls.

The same applies to mining districts. The present depression in prices has caused men who have spent their whole lives in mining to congregate around this city working for wages, or to go on the track somewhere looking for work. One of the problems we had to face when the Labour Government were in power was the number of people arriving in Brisbane from the mining districts because the mining industry was closing down. We had thousands of men from mining areas in Queensland employed in and around Brisbane at various labouring callings, and particularly on the sewerage works. The men employed on the sewerage works in Brisbane did not want to stay here. Apart altogether from the position which has developed since, immediately there was work for these people at metalliferous mining they would have left Brisbane and gone back to the calling that they understood and liked. They were never satisfied to mine in the sewers around Brisbane. When we group the various interests of Queensland representation, we find that the representation is not so disproportionate as hon. members opposite would like to make it. Immediately a redistribution takes place, people shift to other electorates, and it is no time before another redistribution is necessary.

There is a good deal of nonsense talked in this Chamber by hon. members opposite about roll-stuffing and about dead men being on the roll during the time the Labour Government were in office. Surely the Attorney-General and other hon. members opposite are not going to suggest that there are no names of dead men on the rolls to-day. There are names of dead men on the roll to-day, and that must always be so while people who are entitled to be on the roll die.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They should not vote.

MR. HANLON: I challenge hon. members opposite to give an instance of a vote being recorded in the name of a man who was dead. If they can do so, they are aiding and abetting in the fraud if they have not given information about the case to the police. While

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I have been in the House I have heard hon. members opposite making loose charges about dead men voting. Last session the hon. member for Toowoomba made a great mouthful about people enrolled under fictitious names, at some hotel in Toowoomba having voted. I challenge the Attorney-General to give an instance of anyone who has wrongfully voted in Queensland. If he can do so, he would, if he were an honest man, let the police know about it. When the Labour Party was occupying the Treasury benches I have no hesitation in saying that if any member of the Nationalist Party could have given an instance of fraudulent voting having taken place immediate steps would have been taken to punish the offender. I have no doubt the present Government would do the same. If any hon. member knows where such a case has taken place, any Government would see that the police did their work, and that any such offender was punished.

If people die their names must be on the roll until they are erased, and if rectification is not made promptly the names may remain on the rolls for years. I can give an instance in my own experience. A person at the address I live at was on the Federal roll for many years, although such a person never existed. For many years the Federal roll for the subdivision of Ithaca bore the name of Michael Hanlon—my father. In addition to my father's name there was my name—Edward Michael Hanlon—and there was also the name "Michael Hanlon, junior." No such person existed. That name was on the roll for years, and I kept my eyes open to see if anyone ventured to vote in the subdivision under that name. Rolls were made up when there was an election later on, but no application for enrolment was ever filed, yet the name still appeared on the roll.

Mr. NIMMO: Who registered the name?

Mr. HANLON: No such name was ever registered in the district in which I live; no such name was registered as at that address, and no application for enrolment under that name was ever lodged. That is an illustration of how easily mistakes can happen. I had a similar experience at the last Federal election, when I went to fill in a postal vote paper for an old lady whom I knew very well in Paddington. She was confined to her house, and I found on investigation that she was off the roll. She had never been away from her home for years, other than to be taken out in a car for a drive. When I made inquiries at the Commonwealth electoral office, the electoral officer looked up records, and found that a person of the same name had been reported dead, and this old lady of the same name but a different address was removed by the officer in error. That happens in every electoral office, and it is impossible to guard against it. At the State election before that some person came to see me complaining that his name had been removed from the roll, although he had never been away from the district. I knew that person quite well as a railway employee, living in his own home. I went down to the State Electoral Office, and I found that the person next on the roll to him had died, and in error the wrong line had been lifted from the type when the notification of death was being given effect to, with the result that the name

of the man in Paddington who was alive was removed and the name of the man who was reported dead was left on the roll. Accidents of that kind must happen, as they happen in every electoral office in the world. It is impossible to guard against them. Many names appear on the roll which should not be there, but I would much prefer to know that the names of men who are dead had been left on the roll than that the names of men who are alive had been removed, and that is what hon. members opposite seem so pleased to do. They seem delighted with the opportunity of removing names from the roll.

Dr. KERWIN: You do not mean that.

Mr. HANLON: I do mean it. There can be no other justification for the actions of hon. members. No other purpose could be served by altering the residential qualifications than to get people off the rolls. Only a person of certainly less than the average intellect would believe otherwise than that that is the idea behind the minds of the Government in altering the qualification. One month is sufficient for the Federal elections; and one month has been sufficient for the State election; but hon. members opposite altered it to three months, thereby disfranchising those who have not been three months in one electorate.

In their endeavour to make out a case for themselves, hon. members opposite have talked a good deal of nonsense, and have also displayed a good deal of ignorance. It is a tragic thing that the hon. member for Toowoong should attack the Labour Government for the redistribution of 1921, and, in support of his claim that the redistribution was unfair and that the Government went to the 1920 election on gerrymandered electorates, should quote a Sydney "Bulletin" report of 1920. The facts are that the electorates were not altered until 1921, and that paragraph was published before the electorates had been altered. The election to which that paper referred took place on the seats as distributed by the Denham Government; but the hon. member was so ignorant of what took place and of what he was talking about that he used that newspaper to condemn the distribution in 1921. He must have been ignorant, or he would not attempt to mislead this House and the public. But, whilst it may be excusable for hon. members like the hon. member for Toowoong to make these foolish blunders, I contend that it is not permissible for a Minister of the Crown to display equal ignorance of the subject he is handling. The Attorney-General yesterday referred to the 1922 Act, and said that it was brought in to favour the late Government. The facts are that it was brought in to change the names of the electorates which had been distributed in 1921. How could the 1922 Act affect the position of the Government? The 1922 Act was introduced a year after the seats had been distributed, and all that that Act did was to alter the names of the electorates as they had been distributed by the commission the year before. The Attorney-General again displayed his absolute lack of knowledge of political happenings when he referred to the 1922 Act as being brought in to favour the Labour Government. He also said that the 1922 distribution was unsatisfactory. Passing over the palpable mistake he made in

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referring to the 1922 distribution, because there was no distribution in 1922—it was in 1921—passing over his ignorance of the happenings of 1921 and 1922, in what way was it unsatisfactory? In 1921 the commission redistributed the electoral seats in Queensland in accordance with the existing Act, and allowed a margin of not more than 20 per cent. above or below the then quota, and renamed the electoral seats. It did not cut out any seats at all. The number was left at seventy-two. It was necessary to rename some of the seats because the boundaries had been altered, and the old names were misleading. Two of the new names were Wynnum and Sandgate, seats that were won by hon. members opposite. As soon as the distribution was made known, the Treasurer left Bulimba and went to Wynnum, thereby showing excellent judgment. Nobody on this side thought for a moment that either Wynnum or Sandgate would be Labour seats. That disposes of the statement made by the Attorney-General that the 1922 distribution—in fact, it was the 1921 distribution—was unsatisfactory.

I want to refer to a more serious aspect of the discussion on the part of hon. members opposite. I much regret the attitude adopted by Government members and their press in defaming the electors of Queensland. They are continually crying out that the Labour Government were returned to power on the basis of fraud. The statements made by hon. members opposite and by their press amount to a libel on the people of Queensland. I am quite satisfied that the overwhelming majority of the people of Queensland are clean, honest citizens, who do not wish to practise any fraud or corruption, or to have anything to do with it. Any attempt to return members of Parliament by the adoption of fraudulent means or corrupt methods would be promptly exposed by the people of Queensland, the bulk of whom are overwhelmingly honest from the point of view of citizenship, and in no circumstances will stand for any corruption or underhand methods in returning members of Parliament. Hon. members opposite know that, and that is what makes them fear the people at the next elections.

In addition to regretting the action of hon. members opposite in defaming and libelling the citizens of Queensland in this respect, I regret also the libel by the hon. member for Toowong and other hon. members opposite on our electoral officers. Hon. members opposite have frequently asserted that the Labour Government stuffed the rolls with names that should not have been on the rolls. If that is the case, then hon. members opposite should root those corrupt officials out of the electoral office neck and crop. If it were possible for the Labour Government to stuff the rolls, then they must have acted with the connivance and the consent of the officials of the Electoral Office; and, if the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff are "crooks" and are corrupt officials, then this Government should waste no time in rooting those officers out of that den of corruption. I am not going to take any denial from the hon. member for Toowong. He made that statement this afternoon. Hon. members opposite have made it every time they have had an opportunity since they have been a Government. They made the statement at every opportunity

when they were in opposition. The hon. member for Toowong and his colleagues who have supported him in these accusations should either insist at the next party meeting that the Government root out these corrupt officials from the Electoral Office, or they should publicly apologise to those officials whom they have defamed. I do not know the Chief Electoral Officer very well; but, so far as I am able to judge, I believe that he is a thoroughly honest and reliable public servant and man; and any hon. member opposite who gets up under the shelter of the privilege of this Chamber and accuses him of being a corrupt public servant and accuses him of corruption and connivance in the falsification of electoral rolls indulges in a cowardly action. If the accusation is true, then the Government should take action to see that these Tammany Hall people are rooted out of the office.

A more serious statement was the libellous and defamatory attack by the Attorney-General on the Under Secretary, Department of Justice, and Mr. Ferry, Industrial Conciliation Commissioner. When speaking in this House yesterday the Attorney-General accused the redistribution commission with which those gentlemen had been associated of being bribed by the Labour Government.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I never mentioned their names.

Mr. HANLON: No; but you mentioned the commission.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Why leave out Dunlop?

Mr. HANLON: I will mention Dunlop. In 1921 the previous Government appointed a commission of three public servants to carry out a redistribution of seats along somewhat similar lines to what the present Government are doing in this case. I presume that this Government will appoint three Government servants who can be trusted to do the redistribution. The Attorney-General stated yesterday that the late Government took a hand in the redistribution, and that they bribed Mr. Dunlop, one of the commissioners, by giving him promotion to redistribute the electorates in a gerrymandering style to suit the Labour Party.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Was it true?

Mr. HANLON: I do not know; perhaps the Attorney-General knows more than I do. The Attorney-General is betraying his trust as a Minister of the Crown if he assents to a "crook" continuing in an Under Secretaryship, and another "crook" continuing to act as a Judge of the Industrial Court. Either they are "crooks" or the hon. gentleman's statement is a slanderous one. If the Secretary for Mines feels concerned, he can also act on his oath of office and clean up this corruption also. A report was brought in by the members of that commission. It was signed by the three commissioners, Messrs. Carter, Dunlop, and Ferry. If there was corruption on the part of one of those commissioners, then there was corruption on the part of the three of them, because the report was a unanimous one. I do not know Mr. Dunlop; I was not in Parliament at the time; but the Attorney-General justified his charge of corruption

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against the late Government by saying that Mr. Dunlop received promotion after the presentation by the commissioners of their report. I want it to be clearly understood that that charge must also fit both Mr. Carter and Mr. Ferry, for subsequently Mr. Carter had his salary raised by £100 per year, and Mr. Ferry was afterwards appointed a judge in the Arbitration Court. If the promotion of Mr. Dunlop was proof of his corruption, then the increase in salary to Mr. Carter was also proof of his corruption, and the appointment of Mr. Ferry to the Arbitration Court Bench was also proof of corruption. If these people are "crooks" and "spielers," it is the job of the Attorney-General to get rid of them. If the Attorney-General permits these men to remain in their jobs, he is aiding and abetting them in corruption. If he takes no action, we have no alternative but to believe that he has slandered these officials, because they have no opportunity of replying to his charges made in this House. Let the Attorney-General go out on the street corner and say that Mr. Carter and Mr. Ferry were bribed as the result of their report in connection with the redistribution scheme, or let him write a letter to the newspapers under his own signature and say that they were bribed. We shall then have some respect for him. It ill becomes any man occupying the position of a Minister of the Crown to make a charge of corruption in this House under cover of privilege. He not only owes a duty to Mr. Carter and Mr. Ferry, but a duty to this House to clear up the charge of corruption made by him.

The reduction in the number of members of Parliament is a matter I do not desire to dwell upon at any length because other hon. members on this side have stated the case very well. I fully endorse their remarks that the Government are hopeful of saving their political skins by this Bill. It is quite an easy matter to work out. At the present time Parliament is composed of seventy-two members, of whom twenty-six are representatives of the Labour Party. If these seventy-two members go before the electors next May, the Labour Party will require to win only eleven seats to regain the Treasury benches, and the present Government know they would have no difficulty in doing that; but it is always harder to win sixteen seats than eleven. It is only a little sum in arithmetic to prove where the difficulty lies. By cutting out ten Labour seats we shall hold sixteen seats only out of sixty-two when Parliament is dissolved; and we shall then have to win sixteen new seats to be the Government of Queensland. In order to stave off defeat and save their political skins hon. members opposite will so redistribute the seats that it will be more difficult for Labour to win an extra five seats to secure its return as the Government.

The talk about economy is pure bunkum. The Government talk about economising by reducing the number of members of Parliament by ten, at the same time that they are talking of electing an entirely new House of Parliament and increasing the total number of parliamentarians to ninety-two. The talk about economy is so much eye-wash, and is not worth replying to.

This Bill differs somewhat from the old Act in one very important particular. Hon.

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members opposite have complained bitterly at times about the fact that certain seats had a bigger enrolment than others. Unlike the Act which is being repealed, the measure now under discussion makes legislative provision for large and small constituencies. Under the old Act it was possible, although highly improbable, for the State of Queensland to be cut up into seventy-two equal seats. Under this measure, however, a separate quota is laid down for the metropolitan area, for the cities, and for the rest of Queensland, so that this measure makes legislative provision for the fixing of the boundaries of constituencies on a broadly varying basis. It was permissible under the old Act for the Electoral Commissioners, in their wisdom, to take into consideration various things which they still have to take into consideration; but it was permissible for them to go 20 per cent. above or below the quota. This Bill differs in the fact that the commission will be given legislative instruction to make certain seats large and other seats small. Therefore, when hon. members opposite cry out about the inequality of the voting power of the people of this State they must realise that they are giving legislative instruction to that commission to make the constituencies of varying sizes.

Mr. KENNY: Do you agree with that clause?

Mr. HANLON: I agree that it is necessary for the commission to have a certain amount of latitude in fixing the size of electorates; but I do not agree that there should be legislative instructions for the seats in some districts to be small and for those in others to be large. The best purpose was served when the commission was given instructions to take a definite quota, which they could vary after a consideration of various factors, as, for example, accessibility of the area and the community of interests of the people. Discretion should be entirely in the hands of the commission, and no legislative instructions should be given that people resident in certain parts of the State should have less representation than other people living in other parts. The discretion of the commission was amply provided for when they were given a 20 per cent. margin on which to work.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [7.54]: It has been the endeavour of hon. members on the Government benches to prove that this Bill will make for economy. Many rash statements have been made by these hon. members—so much so that they are all contradictory.

No hon. member on this side has any objection to a redistribution. We do, however, take exception to the method by which the Government are endeavouring to secure their return at the next election by having a reduction of members as prescribed in this measure. I have no objection to the redistribution of seats so long as certain fundamental principles are kept in mind and a sensible system based thereon. It is even necessary to decide on the principle on which representation should be founded. That nothing should count in that matter but actual population may appear logical at first sight. That line of argument has been adopted by hon. members opposite who have spoken on this measure. If the population was distributed equally throughout the State that argument would be unanswerable, but, unfortunately, that is not the case, because one-third of the population of Queensland is

concentrated in the metropolis, and it is fantastic to say that one-third of the members of Parliament should be elected from an area no larger than the Chillagoe electorate, represented by the Secretary for Mines. Brisbane comprises an area of 318 square miles, while the Cairns electorate has an area of 300 square miles, but whereas Brisbane has twenty members Cairns, Chillagoe, Eacham, and other electorates have one member each. This Bill is not going to give fair representation to the far northern and far western portions of the State. They will not have the representation which they have had in the past, and which is the right of the people in those areas. Considering the very unequal distribution of the people, to obtain fair representation in Parliament, area must be taken into consideration in fixing the electorates. The Federal electoral law and also the State law recognise a margin of 20 per cent. above and 20 per cent. below the quota, and, in my opinion, it would not do any harm to increase the quota to 25 per cent. above or below, and it should be compulsory on the commissioners to consider area as well as population. The Attorney-General represents about 1 square mile of territory, whereas the hon. member for Cook represents 98,000 square miles; and, if population is taken as the sole determining factor, representation in South Brisbane should be much greater. Every country in the world takes area into consideration, and I cannot understand why the Queensland Government should be afraid of the far Northern and far Western electors. A Parliament of seventy-two members cannot be considered unwieldy, and a small Parliament may be dominated by one or two strong personalities, which is a danger in any State. Other countries have greater representation according to numbers, and of a more costly nature than the State of Queensland. In the early days, when Queensland was an independent colony, the Parliament consisted of fifty-nine members besides an Upper House of forty members, and in 1837—forty-four years ago—the number was increased to seventy-two in the Legislative Assembly, and it has consisted of that number ever since.

At the time the representation was increased to seventy-two members there was a population of only 366,940, and counting the Upper House, there was a member for every 85,276 persons in the State. Queensland has to-day twenty-seven members of Parliament less than she had forty-four years ago, although the population now has almost reached 1,000,000. It is the intention of the Government in this Bill to reduce the number of seats by ten. We know that the design of the Government in introducing the Bill is to get rid of Labour. (Government dissent.) The Government are endeavouring, on the plea of economy, to bring about this redistribution of seats, which they think will kill Labour strength. If they want to economise and to give fair representation to the State, it would be very easy for each hon. member on the front bench opposite to forgo £500 of the amount which he receives more than the ordinary members, which would mean £5,000 per annum—the amount which is going to be saved by knocking out ten Labour seats. That would give us the same representation as we have to-day without any greater cost to the State. (Government dissent.) In round figures, each member of Parliament in Queensland, State and Federal, represents

11,075 people. This is much lower than in other parts of Australia, lower than Canada, nearly as low as the United States, and much below other new countries. Yet it is proposed to make a further reduction in the number of members of the Queensland Legislature!

In speaking at the introductory stage of the Bill, I compared the number of members in Queensland with the number in many other countries of the world, and made reference to the United States and the Union of South Africa, Transvaal, Natal, and the Orange Free State. All these countries have a greater number of members in proportion than the State of Queensland taking as a basis the population and the area.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What about Russia?

Mr. O'KEEFE: The people in Russia have done more for their country than the Attorney-General and the Government have done for Queensland. If the Government opposite can do as much in the interests of Queensland as the Soviet Government have done in Russia, they will have nothing to be ashamed of. The hon. gentleman has no reason to complain about what the Russian Government are doing. We cannot get away from the fact that the only reason for the introduction of this measure is to kill the Labour vote. Apparently the Government did not consider sufficient was done in that direction last session by the amendment of the Elections Act. As the result of the Attorney-General introducing that measure, hundreds of hard-working men and women whose names were on the roll were disfranchised, and they will not have an opportunity of exercising a vote at the next election.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES interjected.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I did not get out of Combo Flat; and, if the Minister does lose Chillagoe at the next election, I will see that Palm Island is made available for him. If the Government cannot do anything better to defeat Labour than to remove from the electoral rolls the names of thousands of good honest men and women, they are not worth much at the hands of the country. At the present time under our electoral system as it has been amended by the present Government provision is made for gunmen, for men who should be inside the walls of Boggo road gaol, for the women who carry on their trade in houses of ill-fame, whilst at the same time hundreds of honest toilers throughout the State are disfranchised, because they are faced with unemployment and have to travel from place to place. It is a crying shame that any Government should be afraid to meet their masters at an election, and that, because they are afraid, they should deprive people of the opportunity of being on the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are a bad tipster.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I may be, but it does not matter to me. The idea that the Labour Party stuffed the rolls is all moonshine. In the electorate of Chillagoe 3,700 electors voted at the last four elections; and I guarantee that, if there were an election to-morrow, the same number would vote again. In 1926, when I won the Chillagoe seat at the by-election, there were 3,700 voters. Four

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months afterwards, at the general election, there were 3,700 voters, and three years and four months afterwards there were the same number of votes. Yet we are told that the roll is not clean!

I enter my protest as a northern member against a Bill of this description. It reduces the representation of the far Northern and Western districts because of the scarcity of population there. The Government do not consider that those people should enjoy the representation they have had for many years past.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are worrying about your seat.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am not worrying about your seat.

Mr. KENNY: Move an amendment to cut out half the city seats, and I will second it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The hon. member has enough to second amendments of that sort in his own caucus meetings.

Mr. KENNY: You move it, and I will support you.

Mr. O'KEEFE: All I want to do is to retain the representation of the people of North Queensland. Why should hon. members opposite be afraid to meet their masters—the people who put them on the Treasury benches about two years ago? They have deprived people of employment and transferred public servants in order that they may not take any part in the elections. They are afraid to meet the electors.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You sound as though you are frightened.

Mr. O'KEEFE: I am not frightened, because even if I am defeated, I shall be able to get an honest crust, as I did before I entered Parliament. I do not want anything from my friends on the Government benches; and I know that, if I did, I would probably be disappointed. Hon. members should be men enough to see that every adult man and woman has a chance of exercising a vote at the next election. Why are they afraid? Because of the rash promises they made at the 1929 election, which they cannot stand up to now. They are afraid to ask the electors to return them again at the polls; and the only way in which they can achieve their end is this cowardly way of disfranchising them and introducing a Bill to deprive them of the representation they enjoy to-day. I enter my protest against a measure of this description.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*) [8.10]: I wish to thank the Attorney-General for his courtesy in supplying an advance copy of the Bill; but that is all I intend to thank him for. I am not going to thank him for the contents of the Bill. I am not going to thank him for his speech on the introductory stages of the Bill; nor am I going to thank him for his second reading speech. He simply abused the Labour Government, and did something that he had no right to do—he slandered three public servants. I quite understand that he is good at doing that. I understand that quite recently he started with the Chief Justice of this State, so that it is nothing new for him.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. I understood the hon. member to say that he understood that I had slandered the Chief Justice of this State.

[*Mr. O'Keefe.*

Mr. PEASE: I did understand that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I ask for a withdrawal of that remark.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. PEASE: I merely said that I understood that he had done so.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. PEASE: I withdraw. In any case, the Attorney-General refused to go into the witness box in connection with his second reading speech on this Bill. He refused to answer pertinent questions directed to him by the hon. member for Flinders. The Attorney-General should have gone into the witness box, particularly in view of certain remarks concerning a recent civil action. It is a strange thing that twenty-one years ago this September this Parliament was engaged in debating a similar Bill. The Tories were then in power, and Labour sat in opposition. One of the members of the Cabinet was our present Treasurer; and anyone who cares to peruse "Hansard" for 1910 will find that Labour members were pointing out to the Government exactly what Labour members have been pointing out during this debate. In 1910 the Labour members were reminding the Tory Government that they had lost the confidence of the people, that they were afraid to face the people under certain conditions, and were anxious to load the dice against the Labour Party. The present Treasurer was a party to that attempt to load the dice so that the people of this State would not be able to give a true expression of their political opinion at the ballot box. Like the present Government, they were afraid to face the people. The present Government are now making a survey in an endeavour to escape the wrath of the people. In 1910 the hon. member for Croydon, who was then a Labour member sitting in opposition, pointed out that the Bill under discussion should have been described as "a Bill to try to dish the Labour Party." That is what is happening to-day. The present Government have introduced the Bill—not to give the people of Queensland better representation, but solely to dish the Labour Party. The hon. member for Toowoomba and other hon. members opposite who have spoken during this debate have asked, "What did the Labour Government do?" What did we do? We did the fair thing, which this Government will never do. We accepted the Bill introduced by the present Treasurer in 1910, the object of which was to dish the Labour Party. We accepted that Bill, and we did not repeal it, as the present Government are proposing to repeal electoral legislation passed by the Tory Government. We took the same Bill which the Treasurer, when he was in power, tried to dish Labour with, and gave that to the commissioners as the basis upon which they were to draw up their scheme of redistribution. We appointed a fair commission. I challenge the Attorney-General to say that Messrs. Carter, Dunlop, and Ferry were not fair-minded men, and that they did not do their duty properly.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PEASE: Hon. members opposite are slandering men who they know are not in a position to reply. I feel strongly for those men. Messrs. Carter, Dunlop, and Ferry are men of honour. I heard the Treasurer speak on this side of the House after the redistribution was made in 1921, and say that it was a fair redistribution. Parliament had a fair opportunity of debating that redistribution. Who complained? Two Labour members. The redistribution was made, and the Bill was framed against Labour. Labour did not make a Bill by first loading the dice. Labour does not play the game like that. (Government interjections.) They did not load the dice. They accepted the dice which the Treasurer loaded against Labour, and gave that to the people to decide what to do. What did the people do after Labour in 1922 had accepted the principles of the 1910 Act?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have come out in your true colours to-night.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member for Toombul let the cat out of the bag in respect to this measure, just as he did during the last municipal campaign. He distinctly said what had been done. He said the scheme was the punishment of Labour, which had been long delayed. He intended to convey thereby that the Government had decided to punish Labour, and that was why this Bill has been brought down. There is an old saying in a Book with which the Treasurer is familiar—

"Whosoever diggeth a pit shall fall into it."

The Government should take care that they do not fall into the pit they have dug for Labour.

Why was sixty-two selected as the number of members for this Parliament? Why was the number of members not reduced by twenty or thirty-six? If the Government are the champions of economy that they claim to be, why are they reducing the number of members of Parliament by ten only? Why are the maps and everything else already prepared? Why do all Government members know who are going to be cut out, and all the rest of it? They know all about it. Why select ten as the number that the present number of members of Parliament shall be reduced by? That is the only way the Government can succeed at the elections—by loading the dice against Labour. No one outside the Government would believe for one moment that the Government Party placed certain numbers in a hat, and that ten was the number selected from the hat in order to reduce the representation in this House by. Why do hon. members opposite pull our legs in this manner? If hon. members opposite would speak the truth, they would admit that this is the only way in which they can load the dice against Labour. As our leader said, a preliminary survey has been made. Every member of the Government Party knows that maps have been prepared, and knows exactly what the sixty-two electorates are to be; and knows that by this means an attempt is being made to prevent Labour from getting proper representation in this House.

The TREASURER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Herbert in order in stating that every member of the Government Party has loaded the

dice, and knows exactly what is proposed to be done by the commission that is to be appointed under this Bill? I ask that the hon. member be made to withdraw that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do I understand that the Treasurer denies the truth of the statement?

The TREASURER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I ask the hon. member for Herbert to accept the denial of the Treasurer.

Mr. PEASE: In view of the Treasurer's denial, I withdraw the remark. I shall call the hon. member for Toombul as a witness. He said that the number sixty-two was selected after careful investigation. Let us develop that argument. How could the hon. member have careful investigation if he had not seen the maps. (Government dissent.) I know the hon. member for Toombul is a keen, careful business man. (Laughter.) I accept his statement at its face value, knowing him as I do, because the hon. member would not accept a business account without surveying every aspect of it. The hon. gentleman's statement in "Hansard" was that sixty-two had been selected. I ask, "Who selected the sixty-two?" Every member of the Government party selected sixty-two. Why? Because they looked out and saw exactly what I say is right. The Treasurer knows that when the hon. member for Toombul said "carefully selected" he said what he meant.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You never say what you mean.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I deny the statement attributed to me by the hon. member for Herbert. This is what I said, as reported in "Hansard."

Mr. STOPFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Toombul in order in quoting this year's "Hansard"?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! What is the point of order of the hon. member for Toombul?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I did not use the words attributed to me. I said that the sixty-two—

Mr. DUNLOP: Why don't you get hold of your original proof? I know what you said. I took it down in shorthand.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I did not use the words attributed to me, Mr. Speaker. What I did say is to be found at page 587 of "Hansard" of this debate. It reads—

"That number has been arrived at after a great deal of investigation, and taking into consideration the various factors that must govern all systems of representation."

(Government applause.)

Mr. DUNLOP: Why don't you produce your original proof? (Uproar.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PEASE: I desire to refer to the remarks published by various newspapers regarding this proposed redistribution. First of all, I shall quote a very good paper,

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namely, the Cairns "Times," which, under date of 1st September, said—

"LOWERING PARLIAMENT'S PRESTIGE.

"Queensland at present has one legislator—Federal and State—to each 11,075 of population."

Hon. members on the Government side have attempted to justify this method of redistribution by reason of the large number of parliamentarians in Queensland in regard to both the State and Federal activities. But surely those hon. members would not suggest that one legislator to each 11,000 of the population is too many? When we draw a comparison with other countries, we find that we have a lower representation here than any other part of Australia, and closely approximate the position that exists in the United States of America. It would appear, therefore, that the Queensland Government are doing something which no other State of the Commonwealth or part of the British Empire is attempting to do. The representation in Queensland is lower than it is in any other part of the British Empire; the only part of the civilised world where it is greater is in the United States. Therefore there is nothing in the argument that this reduction is necessary because of the Federal Parliament. Again the Cairns "Times" had this to say—

"Forty years ago Parliament was increased with the avowed object of giving the North and West better representation."

Are the hon. member for Cook and other hon. members who represent electorates in the north and west of Queensland going to stand up to the taking away of representation from those parts of the State? Are they going to stand up for a Queen street Government? The Opposition have no objection to a redistribution; but we have an objection to the reduction of ten seats. That is why we are voting and fighting against this Bill. We think it is unfair. Where did the request for this reduction of members come from? First of all, it came from the Tory press who support the Government; and they support an Upper House and urge immediate action in that connection. All the time they are saying "Reduce the representation in the Legislative Assembly and appoint an Upper House." Where does the economy stunt come in? It goes by the board, because, if you are going to appoint an Upper House, the expense will be much greater. The Nationalist Party political conference went into the matter, and told the Government to reduce the number of seats in the Assembly, and also urged the Government to restore the Upper House. The other day a deputation waited on the Deputy Premier asking the Government immediately to restore the Upper House. Why? The Constitutional Club are asking the Government to restore the Upper House because they know that what I say is correct—that once the Government get to the public that will be the end of them. The most amusing part is that, while the press talk about reducing the number of members of the Queensland Legislature, they are also asking that the number of legislators in the Federal Parliament, as far as Queensland is concerned, be increased by one. What glorious inconsistency! The press say we do not want so many legislators in the Queensland Parliament

because in the State House they want to get rid of some Labour men; but in the same papers they say "We want greater representation in the Federal Parliament." Is that not inconsistent? I wish to quote the "Telegraph" of 7th August, 1931, in this respect—

"Every State with the exception of Queensland is correctly and fully represented so that, if Queensland were given the extra member to which it is entitled, the total number of members of all States would be increased from seventy-five to seventy-six."

Then it continues—

"It seems it would be competent for the authority to give Queensland its extra member immediately."

The very papers that are howling out to reduce the number of State legislators by ten say that it is competent for the Federal Government immediately to give Queensland another member.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Don't you want Queensland to have fair representation?

Mr. PEASE: Yes; I want Queensland to have fair representation in this House. I do not want to be two-faced; I want to be one-faced. (Interruption.) If hon. members opposite are double-dyed, I am not. The whole of Queensland can only be properly represented by seventy-two members in this House, and I also say that Queensland is entitled to another member in the Federal Parliament. The only justification for a reduction is on the score of economy; but what are the Government saving? They may save £5,000. I venture to say that the Attorney-General spent more than £5,000 in his own office in the Mungana case. What about all the commissions the Government appointed? What about the purchase of Swifts meatworks? They cost more than £5,000. What about the proposal to establish the Upper House? How much is that going to cost? If we examine statistics, it will be found that the cost of the Queensland Parliament is lower than the cost of any Parliament in Australia. I want to say that a survey has been made of this redistribution, and the Government know what it is going to be. After making another careful survey such as the hon. member for Toombul talks about, the "Courier" says "Ten seats are to go," and it defines what the ten seats are. It says three metropolitan and seven country seats are to go. The "Courier" is able to tell us what the Minister will not tell us. I ask members of the Country Party how they are going to justify the loss of seven country seats as against three metropolitan seats? The Federal Country Party has issued a recent bulletin in which it condemns unification in exactly the same way as the Government Party here are doing, on the ground that the rural areas are not at present treated fairly by Parliament, which is dominated by city interests. That is the view of the Country Party in the Federal arena, supported by hon. members opposite, whereas the Country Party in the State arena by allowing this Bill to go on, is prepared to let Queensland lose seven country seats. Surely hon. members opposite are not going to justify that! What is the Federal Country Party going to say about it? I am sorry the Premier is not here, because I want to

[Mr. Pease.]

put him in the witness-box. I am just wondering where he stands in regard to this Bill. I wonder whether the Attorney-General is pushing this Bill on while the Premier is away and taking advantage of his absence. I want to know if the Premier is in accord with this Bill, because I will prove by his own utterances that he is not.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Why do you want to put him in the witness-box? Is it because your conscience is pricking you?

Mr. PEASE: I want to cross-examine him. In 1922, as reported in "Hansard" for that year on pages 502, 503, and 504, a motion was brought forward by Mr. Bebbington, the then hon. member for Drayton, to provide a better quota for the country districts. The motion was seconded by the present Premier, who, in the course of his speech, said—

"We want to have greater representation in the country than in the towns. If a redistribution is made every time there is an increase of population in the cities, the time will come when the country will be practically unrepresented. To-day we have to settle the large open spaces of the State and we want men to represent those spaces."

Then here is something else which he said—

"Hon. members who represent northern constituencies must recognise that a wrong principle has been adopted."

That is the principle that is in this Bill. He went on to say this—and this is the gem of the whole thing—

"We will certainly recognise it the first opportunity we get, and we will make it possible for the people living in the outside districts to have a better opportunity of having their views expressed in this Chamber than they have at the present time."

What are hon. members opposite going to do about it? Are they going to repudiate their present leader? (Government interjections.) I think they are taking advantage of the absence of the Premier, and pushing this Bill through. The Premier said, "We," not "I." He said—

"If we get over there, we will do something."

What are hon. members opposite doing? They are allowing seven country seats to go, although the Premier said even at that time, when the country was represented as it is to-day, that it was not fair, and he said that, when his party got over to the Government side, they would do certain things. Hon. members opposite are repudiationists.

I also want to refer to the local newspapers—the "Courier" and the "Telegraph." the "Mail" was more decent. The "Courier" had this to say on 2nd September—

"It was the Labour Party that passed an Electoral Act that was the very negation of democracy."

Labour never passed an Electoral Districts Act. We took the 1910 Act and made a redistribution under that Act; yet the political organs of hon. members opposite in this city are unfair as usual. Even when it was pointed out that they were wrong they had not the decency to recant. I say

that in 1922 Labour accepted the Act passed in 1910. The present Treasurer was a member of that Government. If that Act was a negation of democracy, it was passed by the Government of which the present Treasurer was a member. That is the Act which hon. members opposite are repealing.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: You altered it.

Mr. PEASE: We did not. The "Telegraph" of the 2nd instant said—

"The howl of indignation from the Opposition benches in the Queensland Parliament at the proposal of the Government to redistribute the electorates in accordance with the provisions of 'The Elections Act of 1910.' . . ."

The "Telegraph" there declared that the Government were going to have this redistribution in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1910, whereas the "Telegraph" knows as well as I do that the Attorney-General is repealing that Act. The "Courier" blamed us for passing an Act we did not pass; and now the "Telegraph" says that we are going to have this redistribution under the 1910 Act; and both are wrong. We are trying to show the people of Queensland what a loaded Bill this is. We are trying to make them realise the position by telling them the truth. I repeat that we did not alter the Act of 1910; and I refer hon. members to page 1852 of "Hansard" for 1922, where they will see that on 26th September of that year, the hon. member for Flinders, then the Attorney-General, moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the alteration of the names of certain electoral districts."

Mr. Theodore, who was then Premier, answering the Opposition, who were saying something similar to what hon. members opposite are saying to-day, said—

"The redistribution was done under the provisions of the 1910 Act passed by the Denham Government."

The Treasurer, who was then in opposition, knew very well that what Mr. Theodore said was true. I say that Labour is fair. Labour was satisfied to act under the measure passed by the previous Government. Labour never loaded the dice. Labour played the game fairly. This Bill is entirely based on party lines to give the Government a political advantage.

We have the hon. member for Carnarvon, as reported in the "Courier" saying—

"The scheme to reduce electorates to sixty-two would not interfere with the Darling Downs seats, although there would most likely be an alteration in boundaries."

Taken in conjunction with the statement of the "Courier," that declaration shows that the redistribution was to be controlled by the Government. How could the hon. member talk about the "scheme"? What is the "scheme"? Let hon. members go to the dictionary and see. The hon. member for Carnarvon was man enough to give the thing its right name—a "scheme." He knows that what I have said is true, and every man of the Country Party knows it too. How can the hon. member say that these things are going to take place if the Government are not going to control them?

Mr. Pease.]

At 3.37 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Roberts, *East Toowoomba*) relieved Mr. SPEAKER in the chair.

Mr. PEASE: In 1910, when the Denham Government—of which the present Treasurer was a member, and when he evidently had more political decency than he has now—the redistribution of seats was undertaken in the second session of Parliament, so that the commission's report would be available for the third and last session. Why? The Government then were fair enough to allow the report to come to Parliament so that hon. members could discuss it. They will not do that now. Why has the Premier lost his political decency in that respect? Why did he not cause this distribution to be undertaken in the second session of Parliament, as was done under the Denham Government? The Premier has been corrupted by the rest of the Government. (Government interruption.) Hon. members opposite believe in corruption. The rest of them have adopted corrupt methods.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would like to draw the attention of hon. members that the debate has become quite out of order, and the language on both sides of the House quite unparliamentary.

The TREASURER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask that the statement made by the hon. member that Parliament had corrupted the Premier be withdrawn.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Herbert to withdraw.

Mr. PEASE: I withdraw. Again, I want to point out that the Labour Party was fair.

Mr. KENNY: Mr. Deputy Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Herbert in order in saying that the Premier of Queensland is corrupt?

Mr. PEASE: I never said that.

Mr. KENNY: That is the statement made by the hon. member for Herbert.

Mr. PEASE: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: My attention has been called by the Treasurer to a statement made by the hon. member for Herbert. The hon. member for Herbert has withdrawn the statement, and I have accepted his withdrawal.

Mr. PEASE: Labour has not at any time feared the people. We have never loaded the dice. Whatever we did we did fairly and squarely.

Mr. MAXWELL: You said that before.

Mr. PEASE: And I propose to say it again and again until the hon. member understands it. When Labour carried out a redistribution of seats, the number of electorates was not altered. We followed the practice of the Denham-Barnes Government of introducing the measure in the second last session of Parliament, so that hon. members could consider what had been done. We did that because we desired to be fair to members on both sides of the House. We did not attempt in any way to influence the commission. I never even saw the members of the Commission.

Mr. BRAND: Your organisation did.

[Mr. Pease.

Mr. PEASE: We were fair. We could have adopted the practice now being adopted by this Government of withholding the redistribution scheme until the last session of Parliament and submitting it only to the members of the Cabinet. We could have thrown both sides of the House into a state of chaos, but we were absolutely fair.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You had nothing to do with it.

Mr. PEASE: We had more to do with it than hon. members opposite have had to do with their scheme. In our caucus members had something to do with it, and it was arranged that the redistribution should take place in the second session of Parliament so as to give every member of Parliament a chance to see what was done. The present Treasurer was quite satisfied with the redistribution carried out by the Labour Government. He was then a member of the "Rump Party," and he gave the redistribution his blessing. On behalf of the Opposition, I desire to protest against the unfairness of the Government in introducing a Bill providing for a redistribution at a time when hon. members will have no opportunity of discussing it. It has been introduced solely to handicap the Labour Party. In 1887 Queensland, with a population of 399,000, had seventy-two members in the Legislative Assembly in addition to a Legislative Council. In 1921 the population had increased to 768,231, the number of members of the Legislative Assembly was seventy-two, whilst the number in the Legislative Council was fifty-six, or a total of 128 legislators. In 1931 the population had reached nearly 1,000,000, and the number of legislators was seventy-two in one House of Parliament. That is only a fair number to carry out the legislative work of this State in a satisfactory manner. Labour never possessed a fear complex; and I wish to prove it by submitting some figures. When we wanted a mandate from the people, we proceeded to them direct. We did not skulk in any way. We applied to the people for a definite mandate by way of an election. The Labour Party came into power on 12th July, 1915. We remained in power for two years and seven months, going to the country on 14th February, 1918, five months before the expiration of our time. Certain questions of vital public interest had arisen demanding a mandate from the people. We were returned to power, and remained in office for two years and four months. We went to the country again eight months before our time. We did not attempt to amend the legislation without obtaining a mandate from the people. On the third occasion we remained in office for two years and five months, and went to the country again seven months before our time. On the fourth occasion we remained in office for two years and nine months; and on the last occasion we remained in office for two years and ten months. I wish to emphasise that during the five Labour Parliaments the Labour Government did not remain in office for their full term. We did not hesitate to obtain the decision of the people upon any matter. We did a fair thing. We never sheltered ourselves in the coward's castle. We never put legislation on the statute-book, as this Government are doing—loading the dice against their opponents. We went to the people for a mandate on an Act of Parliament which the present Treasurer passed in 1910. We were fair. That shows

the way Labour acts. What are the Government doing? They are loading the dice against the Opposition. They are frightened to go to the people. I challenge them now to go to the people on a redistribution of the seventy-two seats, which is only fair. A redistribution is necessary. The Government can then obtain a mandate from the people to reduce the number of representatives of this House by ten and on the question of the restoration of the Upper House. The Government are going to the people with loaded dice. We are not frightened of the Government even with their loaded dice. It is wrong for them to do what they are doing. Go to the people on the basis of seventy-two seats, on which they won the Government benches, after those seventy-two seats have been redistributed by a commission! I do not care what commission is appointed. I have faith in the public service. Naturally, we on this side of the House must accept the recommendations of the commission. We will not squeal, no matter what they may be. Whatever the commission do, we will accept. We realise that the public service of Queensland is not corrupt, in spite of what the Attorney-General has said. Notwithstanding what three public servants the Government may appoint, give them not this Bill, but the 1910 Act, have a redistribution, and we challenge the Government to go to the people and let the people decide.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL (*Toombul*) [3.47]: Hon. members opposite have had a fair tilt at me in regard to what I said in the course of a speech on another stage of this Bill.

Mr. O'KEEFE: What did you say.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I am going to tell you what I said. The hon. member for Rockhampton also had something to say.

Mr. DUNLOP: Well, produce your proof. I made a note of it.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The hon. member for Rockhampton said that he took down my speech in shorthand.

Mr. DUNLOP: Yes, I did.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition also said that, while he accepted my denial of the statement he attributed to me, he was of the opinion, or suspected, that I had altered my proof.

Mr. KIRWAN: No, he said he heard you make the statement he attributed to you.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I have in my hand the original proof of my speech without any alteration whatsoever.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I propose to read it to the House.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Apologise, Dunlop!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: My original proof reports me as saying—

"The Government have decided that sixty-two will be ample to represent the State, at the same time preserving the main feature of all representation—community of interest.

"Mr. Pollock: How was that number arrived at?

"Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: That number has been arrived at after a great deal of

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investigation, and taking into consideration the various factors that must govern all systems of representation."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Opposition interjections.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Opposition should take their gruel like men. It is scandalous that they should doubt the ability of the "Hansard" staff.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We don't.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Their remarks are a reflection on the "Hansard" staff. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suspected that I had altered my proof.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: If he were any man at all, the hon. member would apologise for even harbouring that suspicion. As for the hon. member for Rockhampton, well, he is beneath contempt. (Government laughter.) I have my proof in my hand, and there are no alterations in it.

Mr. DUNLOP: At times the reporters make good speeches for bad speakers. That is what happened with yours. (Disorder.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I regret the tone of the debate.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I want to say definitely that, unless hon. members control themselves, other action will be taken. This is a debating Chamber.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: In regard to the hon. member for Rockhampton, it is indeed fortunate that we have a capable "Hansard" staff to correct his speeches. (Laughter.)

Mr. DUNLOP: Not at all. No reporter can dispute my ability. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: It would appear that hon. members opposite, whilst believing in redistribution, do not believe in the reduction of members from seventy-two to sixty-two.

Mr. STOPFORD: We don't believe in "rigging."

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Their objection is that they may lose more seats than the Government side may lose. No one knows how the seats will be allotted, and the construction which should be placed on my previous remarks is this: For some time the Government have been convinced that there is over-representation in Parliament. We have been endeavouring to arrive at a fair figure which will give adequate representation to the State. Personally, I believe in a reduction to fifty members—

Mr. DUNLOP: Why didn't you support my amendment, then?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I might say that what actuated the Government in not reducing the numbers too greatly was the fear that by so doing they might make the country electorates too big. While the basis of our voting system is one man one vote that must have for its natural corollary one vote one value, the thickly populated sections were willing to give a fair margin to the country

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centres. I agree with country members that some consideration should be given to areas.

The following figures will give some idea of the inequalities that must be removed:—

Constituencies.	Total Number of Electors.	Quota.
12 Pastoral	58,325	4,860
21 Agricultural	149,215	7,100
5 Mining	17,752	3,550
14 Towns outside city area ..	95,700	6,835
20 City of Brisbane	180,000	9,000

Year after year when the present Government Party were in opposition they urged upon the then Labour Government the necessity for a redistribution; but the Labour Government knew very well what they were doing in the last redistribution; and they refrained from giving justice to the people. After the election of 1926 the Opposition, with a minority of about eighteen representatives in this Chamber, represented more electors than did the Government. Under this Bill we are endeavouring to give a fair representation to all the electors of Queensland.

Mr. POLLOCK: If you believe in a reduction of members to fifty, why support a reduction to sixty-two?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I am prepared to give a margin to our country friends, recognising that their duties are more arduous probably than those of members representing city constituencies, and we are quite prepared to take a bigger quota in the city. We are going to allow country centres a margin of 20 per cent. below the quota; and the city seats will be 20 per cent. above the quota, so that in the actual result many of the city seats will contain 50 per cent. more electors than some of the country seats.

I have listened very attentively to the remarks of the Opposition, and to my mind a good deal of the criticism that has been levelled against the Bill would have been better applied to an Elections Bill, as they had no bearing on the Bill now under discussion. There is no doubt that a good many of the statements of the Opposition were actuated by the fear that they would be greater losers than the Government by the redistribution, and they object because I spoke my mind and said: "Suppose they lost more representation than did the Government, it would only be retribution." It was only something that was coming to them years ago, and they knew it was coming. They retained office through an unfair distribution of the electorates. Their Government retained power on a minority vote, which was most unjust. In spite of their boast about democratic principles, they made no attempt to remove those inequalities. To-night they say that because the population of Queensland has reached 1,000,000 we want more members than we had a few years ago. I have always taken up the attitude in regard to the representation of this State that our responsibilities as legislators are considerably less than they were prior to 1901.

Mr. STOPFORD: The expenditure is greater.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: It is not a question of expenditure or revenue, because those two items are relative.

Mr. KIRWAN: The job was a sinecure twenty years ago.

[Mr. H. M. Russell.]

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: Hon. members opposite will not take their gruel.

At 9 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I cannot understand why such heat has been engendered in this debate. Let us be quite fair about the matter. We must all recognise that we are not entitled to have the same number of members that we had before federation. Many of our departments were transferred to the Federal Government when federation took place.

Mr. STOPFORD: Which?

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: The Defence Department, the Post and Telegraph Department, the Customs Department, and various other activities; and we have had to face the spectacle year after year of the Commonwealth Government absorbing many further activities. Our State administration has lessened to a great degree; consequently our responsibilities are less. There is not now need for the same number of legislators that there was in 1901. If we are honest, we must admit that. I cannot understand all the caterwauling from the other side. This is a measure which has been long delayed by all parties, not only by the Labour Party, but by their predecessors. The question has been shirked session after session; and, in common justice to our own electors, we should put into effect some measure providing for a lesser number of members to represent the people of Queensland. It is a matter of opinion as to whether the number should be sixty-two or some other number. What we want to do is to see that every activity and industry of the State is properly represented. That was the main factor in arriving at the figure of sixty-two. I deny that I know what is going to happen in regard to the redistribution. One hon. member has stated that the maps are already available; but I have not seen any map. I am prepared to leave the whole matter of redistribution in the hands of the commission. I think there is a public demand for this reform.

Mr. HYNES: There is a public demand for an early election, too.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: I would not be afraid of that.

Mr. HYNES: The people will send you into political oblivion.

Mr. H. M. RUSSELL: There is a demand for a reduction in expenditure; and, while this measure will only save £5,000 per annum, I think it is a saving that we should adopt. A good deal of the criticism that has been levelled against the measure is, no doubt, founded upon fear. Some of our friends may not be here next session. Whilst I do not like to see any man penalised, politics is a very precarious game; and every man who comes into the House takes the risk of whether he gets back or not. No man has any pre-emptive right to any seat in Parliament, and we must all take the good with the bad. If it is the misfortune of some hon. members not to be returned next year, they must take it with as good a grace as possible. There is no reason why the public should have a House of seventy-two members inflicted on them when a lesser number is quite ample to carry on the government of this State.

I am quite sure that the Bill will be acclaimed by the public, and that by means

of it we shall get a more equitable representation, and, by means of the other methods we have adopted, we shall in the future not have elections won by transferring men at the last moment so as to weigh down the scales against the local candidate. Hon. members on the other side have been guilty of every sin in the political calendar; and under the measure which our Government have introduced I hope we shall have cleaner elections in the future than in the past.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*) [9.5]: Hon. members on this side appreciate the verification by the hon. member for Toombul of his statement, as reported in "Hansard" and already mentioned by several members of the Opposition. I do not want to introduce any heat into this debate, but I really think that this Bill proves that "Big Bill" Thompson, Al Capone, and "Boss" Croker were gentlemen compared with the men who introduced it.

Mr. BEDFORD: They are all out of gaol.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It is quite out of order for the hon. member to compare hon. members of this House with the persons he has mentioned. It is highly unparliamentary, and I shall have to ask him to discontinue if he proceeds on those lines.

The TREASURER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Warrego in order in making the statement that hon. members on this side are out of gaol? I ask that he withdraw that statement.

Mr. BEDFORD: Well, you are out of gaol.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not ask the hon. member to withdraw. I said that I could not allow him to continue on those lines.

The TREASURER: Is the hon. member in order in saying that I am out of gaol. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEDFORD: Well, you are.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope that hon. members will carry on this debate in the way it should be carried on.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: Lately it has been carried on in a very undignified way. The expression of the hon. member for Warrego is unparliamentary, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. BEDFORD: How can I withdraw the statement that the hon. gentleman is out of gaol? If I withdraw the statement that he is out of gaol, then he is in gaol.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. BEDFORD: I certainly withdraw the statement. He is not in gaol.

The TREASURER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to another point of order. The hon. member just said that, if I am not out of gaol, I am in gaol. (Laughter.) I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. member for Warrego to withdraw.

Mr. BEDFORD: I do certainly withdraw the statement that the hon. gentleman is not in gaol. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRUCE: When Tory Governments were in power in the States throughout Australia and in the Commonwealth Parliament,

there was no demand by the press for a reduction of the number of members of Parliament. It was only when the Labour Party got into power in the different States and the Commonwealth, and when it appeared that Labour was rightly going to take the reins of control throughout Australia that there was any agitation for a reduction of the numbers of members of Parliament. It cannot be suggested that a reduction of numbers is necessary because of the depression, because in 1895 Queensland was passing through much greater depression than now. Banks were crashing one after another, and want and poverty were stalking through the land; yet there was no suggestion of a reduction in the numbers of members of Parliament for the simple reason that Tory Governments were in power—Governments that suited the powers-that-be. So that the press cannot substantiate its agitation for a reduction of members of Parliament on the plea that it is necessary because of the depression.

The Bill contains a revolutionary political proposal, and is not introduced with the object of providing a redistribution scheme at all. It is to provide a foundation for the government of Queensland on an entirely different basis from that of the past; therefore, it is very necessary indeed to deal with the matter with great care and attention. I resided in the Flinders electorate for many years, and during a part of that time the electorate contained a number of people in excess of the quota provided by the electoral law. When the Mount Elliott Company locked its men out in 1913, 900 men left in a body and remained out of the electorate until the company reopened its mines. If the present Elections Act had been in force at that time, requiring a residential qualification of three months, those 900 men would have been disfranchised. There was plenty of work offering at the time, and boatloads of men were landed at Townsville from the old country. They were railled direct to Mount Elliott, in the Flinders electorate, and increased the electors in that electorate by 300 and 400 at different times. The arguments directed against the quota in the Flinders electorate are not justified. It is absolutely impossible for any Government to regulate the quota in that or any other district. During the mining boom in the Flinders electorate a number of people left their homes in Charters Towers to engage in the mining fields round Cloncurry. Their wives and families were maintained in their homes at Charters Towers, and in this way the quotas both for the Flinders electorate and the Charters Towers electorate were maintained. The bottom fell out of copper mining following the declaration of war in 1914, and hundreds of men were thrown out of employment. As the war proceeded and the necessity arose for the increased use of copper, thousands of men flocked to the Flinders electorate. Copper boomed and different shows were opened to produce this special metal to supply war-time needs. It slumped again in 1918, and automatically thousands of men left the Flinders electorate. Later Mount Isa opened, a mining boom occurred, and from 2,000 to 3,000 people flocked back to Mount Isa. What is the use of the Government referring to the present figures in connection with the Flinders electoral roll in support of their contention for a new electoral quota? It appears to be the intention of the Government to revert to

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the vicious system of past days by the establishment of a Queen street Government to the detriment of country interests. If the Attorney-General would frankly state that he would instruct the proposed commissioners to allow the full 20 per cent. above or below the quota in connection with Northern and Western electorates so that the people might have adequate representation, then I am quite satisfied that members of the Opposition would be content.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They must use their own discretion.

Mr. BRUCE: That is the point. We have no assurance that an adequate quota will be given to Northern and Western electorates. I am not arguing so far as my own electorate is concerned. It is a Northern electorate possessing 7,700 electors.

The Premier recently stated that an extension of leases had been made to pastoral lessees in the public interest. The Western squatters and selectors and men engaged by them require adequate representation in Parliament. It has been stated time after time that wool is, and has been, the salvation of Queensland and Australia. The raisers of wool are entitled to every consideration and the full benefit of the 20 per cent. quota should be extended to the pastoral areas in the forthcoming redistribution. Just as it is in the public interest to extend pastoral leases to assist in the production of wool, so it is in the public interest to give the people in these areas adequate representation so that their interests will be fully represented in Parliament.

There has been much talk about electoral quotas. The quotas in connection with the Legislative Council elections in Victoria have not been altered for many years. The largest quota there is something like 80,000 in the metropolitan area, and the lowest 5,000 in the country areas. If the metropolitan constituencies were distributed on the same basis as the country electorates, they would have another ten or fifteen Labour representatives. We do not want to continue any unfair system of representation of the people.

Much has been said on the economy aspect of the Bill. The saving effected will be the salaries of ten members at £500 a year, or £5,000 in all. That saving is being boosted, and £5,000 for four years will be £20,000. That is just about the amount Mr. McGill will receive from the Government for his services for the past two years. Yet we have the press supporting this Bill as effecting a worth-while saving! I believe that members of Parliament, not only on the Government but on the Opposition side as well, are stampeded by the press. We attach too much credence to their statements, and act accordingly. The press has created the impression that members of Parliament are not ordinary reasonable business men. They are continually making derogatory statements about members of Parliament; and those statements are accepted by the public. The press will next say that fifty men can carry on the work of Parliament as effectively as sixty-two, and later it will go a step further, and say that the country can do without them altogether. Members of Parliament should refuse to be stampeded by the press. We are representatives of the people as a whole; and I am quite certain that we are a reflex of the average

intelligence of the people, and that we can compare favourably with any other section of the people. If seventy-two members were necessary to carry on the work of Parliament in the past when the population of this State was only one-half what it is to-day, then there is no sane or logical reason why the same number is not necessary to-day.

In regard to the question of picking the ten seats which will be affected, there are two ways of looking at the matter. Individually, the reduction will damage some of the members on this side, because one or two, or probably three, of us may be contesting a plebiscite for an electorate, but it will not damage the Labour Party as a whole. One person will have to win the plebiscite for that seat, but let me say definitely that no Bill which the Attorney-General, the Treasurer, or the Premier may introduce can make the people vote the Nationalist way. It does not matter what redistribution takes place, or how many electorates are cut out, the Government have no power to make the people vote in any particular direction. As a matter of fact, there is such a healthy hatred of the Government and their actions during the past two years that, irrespective of how the electorates are constituted, the Labour Party will be returned with a majority in the next Parliament. Some of us may not be here after the next election, but there will be a majority in this House pledged to the Labour Party.

The Premier says that the commission, when appointed, will not be interfered with by the Government. I recall that, when I was speaking quite recently, the Premier interjected: "You won't have a seat left." That, coming from the Premier, might lead to the inference that the Premier would influence the commission. The question of whether I have a seat left or not is my business. If I cannot get one, well and good; if I can, all the better. The point is that no legislation introduced by this Government can prevent the return of the Labour Party with a majority at the next election. If hon. members opposite had the wonderful confidence which they say they possess after two sessions in office, why is it they have not given a glad message to the people, telling them what has been done towards improving their conditions? Why has no member of the Government been out on the platform since the last election date?

The TREASURER: That is not correct.

Mr. BRUCE: Has the hon. gentleman addressed a public meeting at Wynnum?

The TREASURER: I have.

Mr. KENNY: So have I.

Mr. BRUCE: Then I withdraw so far as the hon. gentleman is concerned. When I said that no man on the opposite side had been out on the public platform I was under the impression that the hon. member for Bulimba was the only hon. member who had addressed a public meeting since the election.

Hon. members on both sides have been saying that they will win. My point is that the Government have no confidence in themselves, otherwise they would have spread the glad message, because I can assure them that people outside do not know of their good deeds!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: How many meetings have you addressed?

[Mr. Bruce.]

Mr. BRUCE: Twenty-three in the metropolitan electorate and fifteen or sixteen during recent visits to the North. These meetings have been much appreciated. The chief question asked is usually: "When are you going to get that mob out who are on the Government benches at the present time?" The thing that people up north fear is an extension of the term of Parliament to five years. They say: "God save us from an extension to five years! If we have to put up for another two years with the present Government, we shall be eating one another." So long as they get the opportunity of dealing with the Government at the polls, they will be quite satisfied. Whether certain individuals in this Chamber come back to Parliament or not, the fact remains that no Bill introduced by the Attorney-General will stop the Labour Party from getting back on the Government benches the first time the electors have an opportunity of expressing an opinion at the polls.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are boasting.

Mr. BRUCE: When the redistribution took place prior to the 1923 elections, the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail" said that the commissioners had strengthened Labour seats outside Kennedy, and had made the Kennedy seat safe for the Nationalist. I won the Kennedy in 1923. Again the Tory press said that one seat that would be recovered by the Nationalist Party in 1926 was the Kennedy seat. I won it in 1926, and again in 1929; and in 1929 I increased my majority by 800 per cent. I ask the Attorney-General, therefore, to withdraw the statement that I am boasting. I am reflecting the views and opinions of the people outside; and I say to members of the Government Party that they know they are not popular. Personally some of them may be quite popular, but they are not popular as politicians. The Secretary for Labour and Industry is not popular. I happen to live at Morningside, and the hon. gentleman is not popular even with the ladies at Morningside. No alteration of the electorates by any form of redistribution will save the Government. It would have been better for them to have gone to the polls without a redistribution of seats, taken their beating like gentlemen, and suffered the consequences of the sins they have committed during the last two years while in charge of the Treasury benches. If they had done that, it would have raised the opinion of the people outside in regard to politicians. They would then have said that the Nationalists had acted like gentlemen, as the Labour Party did when they were in office.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*) [9.28]: I wish to say a few words on this Bill before it goes through. The agitation for the redistribution of seats by cutting out ten members comes mostly from the Tory press, the object being to get rid of the Labour representatives, if they possibly can, and to retain the present Government on the Treasury benches. When we consider the agitation of the Tory press for the reduction of governmental expenses, we realise that they have not cut down the costs of advertising at all. The people want to wake up to the attitude of the Tory press in connection with this campaign. They cry out about the expense of Government, when they themselves have not taken any steps to reduce the advertising charges.

The question of expenditure in connection with the electoral roll is another matter to be considered. The Attorney-General has made a regulation increasing the charge for electoral rolls from 1s. to 2s. per roll, which is a most iniquitous price.

I have taken out a few figures in connection with the electorates. There are sixteen members in the North and North-west of Queensland, representing electorates with an area of 361,003 square miles. We should all realise that the North and North-west portions of Queensland are entitled to proper representation.

The House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.