

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 1 APRIL 1949

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ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Hilton, Carnarvon, in the chair.)

Consideration resumed from 31 March (see p. 2420) of Clause 8—Appointment of Commissioners—on which Mr. Nicklin had moved the following amendment:—

“On page 8, after line 4, insert the following proviso:—

‘Provided that such three Electoral Commissioners as aforesaid shall comprise the following persons, namely:—

- (a) the Elections Tribunal Judge for the time being;
- (b) the Surveyor-General for the time being; and
- (c) the Principal Electoral Officer for the time being.’”

FRIDAY, 1 APRIL, 1949.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 11 a.m.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT REPORTED BY MR. SPEAKER.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Proclamation under the Hospital Benefits Agreement Variation Act of 1948 (17 March).

Regulation under the Health Acts, 1937 to 1948 (24 March).

BANKERS' BOOKS EVIDENCE BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the law of evidence with respect to bankers' books.”

Motion agreed to.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich—Attorney-General): I move—

“That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Friendly Societies Acts, 1913 to 1948, in a certain particular.”

Motion agreed to.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.7 a.m.): I was surprised at the attitude of the Premier towards this amendment last evening when one considers that he fought so strenuously for a similar amendment in 1931 when the Electoral Districts Act was being amended. We must consider exactly the object of the Premier in refusing to accept this amendment after the action he took in 1931. Surely, if it was right in 1931 that Parliament should appoint the commission, it is right now.

The hon. gentleman last night advanced a rather specious argument in relation to the action he took in not accepting the amendment. The Government of the day, he said, did not accept the amendment moved by Mr. Forgan Smith and supported by the Premier and the Secretary for Public Lands, the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, and others now on the Government benches.

Mr. Aikens: He is going to do something now that he condemned then.

Mr. NICKLIN: Although the hon. member makes a forecast I will not do so but point out that the Premier on that occasion strongly supported this principle. What is the reason why he now opposes it? After all, the justice of it cannot be disputed.

Mr. Duggan: It was disputed by the then Attorney-General.

Mr. NICKLIN: No.

Mr. Duggan: Yes, it was.

Mr. NICKLIN: Not the justice of it.

Mr. Duggan: He would not accept it.

Mr. NICKLIN: He did not dispute the justice of it. After all, the then Attorney-General made no declaration in regard to his Government's attitude to this question. The Premier—and he was supported by hon. members opposite—said that this was the correct method to adopt and by making that statement and taking the action he then took he published to the people of Queensland the fact that that was the policy of the Labour Party.

Just as the Premier and hon. members opposite have changed their minds very much since that period and turned many political somersaults, so here we have another political somersault because apparently it does not suit their present purpose to adopt this very excellent principle of Parliament's appointing the Commission and the gentlemen specified in the amendment.

Let us consider the question whether Parliament or the Governor in Council, in other words hon. members of the Government, should appoint the Commission. This important Commission, also the persons to carry out the work, should be appointed by Parliament. The amendment specified first of all the Elections Tribunal Judge for the time being. No hon. member can suggest or argue that the Elections Tribunal Judge is not the most suitable person who could be appointed chairman of a Commission such as the one proposed here.

Mr. Foley: No fault can be found with the men who acted on previous occasions.

Mr. NICKLIN: We are not arguing about faults to be found in persons who acted on previous occasions, and I remind the Minister that last night the Premier made some heated statements about the suggestions made about previous electoral commissions in this State, and he said that we did not want that to occur again. The best way to stop it from occurring again is for this Parliament to make the appointment, and to appoint the gentlemen holding the offices specified in the amendment.

Nobody will argue that the Elections Tribunal Judge is not a suitable gentleman to be chairman of such a Commission. Then we come to the Surveyor-General. There is more need for the Surveyor-General to be on this Commission than ever there has been before, because there are so many devious boundaries to be taken into consideration. Nobody but the man having the high qualifications of the Surveyor-General would ever be able to follow the boundaries of the zones laid down in the Bill, or give expert advice in connection with the location of electoral boundaries.

Then we come to the Principal Electoral Officer. No commission should be appointed, in my opinion, unless the Principal Electoral Officer is a member of it, because of his expert knowledge of the electoral position. I venture to say that nobody could say that the Commission proposed by the amendment could be bettered for the important job of laying out the electoral districts proposed in this legislation.

Mr. Pie: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. NICKLIN: There is no doubt about it. If the Acting Premier and his Government refuse to accept the amendment, there must be some sinister motive behind their refusal because these men are gentlemen of high repute. They have all the qualifications necessary, and they are beyond reproach. They would be appointed by this Parliament and no stigma could possibly attach

to their appointment; but if the Government appoint commissioners they immediately lay themselves wide open to the attack that those persons who may be appointed are appointed for the specific purpose of doing the will of the Government. Surely hon. members opposite do not want to lay themselves open to that charge. They do not want it to be said their commissioners had been appointed only because they knew they would do what they wanted them to do. Let the Government take away from themselves the possibility of that accusation by accepting the amendment. Let this Chamber accept the responsibility, the responsibility that undoubtedly belongs to it. It should be written into every Electoral Districts Bill. We have the example of the Federal Act, which has laid it down definitely that the commission dealing with the allocation of boundaries shall be three gentlemen holding specific positions at the time any action is taken. That is the correct procedure. The responsibility is then on the persons holding those appointments and that responsibility is given to them by Parliament. It should be given to this commission by this Chamber and we should place that commission above reproach and above any charges that might be made against it of partiality in any decision. It is only fair to the persons appointed to the commission to give them that protection. This amendment, I submit, will give them that protection because the responsibility of making the appointment will be accepted by all members of this Committee. We specify the persons and the qualifications necessary and that is the correct thing to do. I cannot understand for one moment why there should be opposition from the Government to this amendment—it is their amendment and word for word with the one that they themselves moved and so strenuously supported away back in 1931 when the Act was being amended on that occasion.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Deputy Premier) (11.17 a.m.): The Leader of the Opposition endeavoured to make a good deal of the fact that in 1931 the present Premier, then a member of the Opposition, moved an amendment similar to that moved by the Leader of the Opposition on this occasion. We can just as strenuously put forward the case that on that occasion the then Government resisted the principle that the Opposition are so strenuously advocating today. The then Government refused to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Ithaca, who was then a member of the Opposition.

Mr. Maher: It was moved by the then Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. GAIR: It came from the Opposition anyway and it was supported by the present Premier. It is equally true that the Government of that day—many of them at least—strenuously opposed that principle; if the Leader of the present Opposition can gain any political capital out of the fact that members of the present Government advocated this principle, we, on the other hand, can get an equal amount of political capital out of the fact that the present Opposition, when

they had the power to introduce this—according to the Leader of the Opposition—excellent principle, did not do it. If we are to be condemned for failing to accept it they stand equally condemned in the eyes of the public.

Mr. Heading: How many of us were here?

Mr. GAIR: How many of us were here? If hon. members opposite were not here they were the disciples and apostles of the Government of that day and they got up on the hustings and the platform and supported everything that the Moore Government did between 1929 and 1932.

There is no departure from principle. What is contained in the Bill was contained in the Electoral Districts Act of 1910 and again in the Act of 1931, which was introduced by the Moore Government and which the then Opposition, the Labour Party, attempted to amend, but the amendment was refused by the Government of the day. If there is so much merit in the principle as hon. members would have us believe, why was it not accepted by their Government in 1931?

The only consideration in this matter should be the selection of qualified men, men of integrity and impartiality, men capable of discharging the work to the satisfaction of the people, irrespective of the position they may occupy under the Crown or outside. That is the only consideration and not whether the appointee is a judge of a Court or the Surveyor-General or the Principal Electoral Officer. The aim of the Government should be to select men who are fully qualified, men with the necessary integrity and impartiality to discharge the job in a fair and decent way for the benefit of the people of Queensland.

You will not convince me that because a man sits on the judiciary he has a greater measure of integrity and honesty than some of the heads of our Public Service. I do not accept that view. No-one will convince me that because a man is taken from the bar and made a judge he immediately becomes one with super-integrity, super-honour, super-truth and super-honesty, because I know that there are men in the Public Service to-day who are as honest, as impartial, as just, and as truthful as men who have been fortunate enough to be appointed to the judiciary of the State. I am not reflecting on the judiciary when I say that they have no monopoly of integrity and impartiality. They are required to possess those qualities and qualifications before they are considered for appointment to those positions but there are similar considerations in connection with the appointment of an under-secretary or Surveyor-General or the Principal Electoral Officer. We do not put men into those positions who do not possess those qualities.

If some of the men who are on the judiciary today were in the Public Service, then according to the Leader of the Opposition we should question their qualifications to be on a commission of this kind, but immediately they were transferred to the

judiciary they would become qualified at once. The mere appointment to the judiciary does not make them any better in character. If they had not good characters beforehand the mere appointment will not give that to them. That is my objection to the amendment, and I resent very strongly the suggestion in the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and other hon. members opposite that a man has to be a judge of the Supreme Court to be a man of impartiality, fairness and decency.

Mr. Nicklin: Who said it?

Mr. GAIR: That has been said from time to time by hon. members opposite on matters of this kind.

I contend that the appointment of a commission of this kind is an executive function. An examination of similar Acts in other States of the Commonwealth discloses that to be so. Having regard to all the factors, I believe that the Government are best qualified to select the men to carry out this job fairly and impartially and in the interests of the electors of Queensland.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (11.25 a.m.): I am one of the few surviving members who sat in this Parliament on the Government side between the years 1929 and 1932. The march of time, very regrettably, has made many changes in this Assembly. I think there are only the hon. member for Isis, the hon. member for Albert, and myself who remain of the members of the Government Party of 1929-1932. I recall the debate that took place in this Parliament on the Electoral Districts Act of 1931. I particularly remember that the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition of that day, subsequently the Premier, the Hon. W. Forgan Smith, moved an amendment precisely similar to that submitted by the Leader of the Opposition last night. Mr. Forgan Smith as Leader of the Opposition then made out a case and moved an amendment that provided that the three electoral commissioners should be the Elections Tribunal judge for the time being, the Surveyor-General for the time being, and the Principal Electoral Officer for the time being. I might say quite frankly to the Committee that at that time I was a new member of the House and I did not want to take a prominent part in the debate on these matters. I was prepared at that stage to follow the party line.

The Government Party of that day by a majority decided to maintain the system of appointing public officers when effecting the electoral redistribution. In doing so they followed the principle that had been operating in the State for many years. Although I supported the Government and voted for the continuance of the operation of that system, at the same time I clearly remember that I was impressed by the argument put up by the Leader of the Opposition of that time when he made the point that the advantage of the proposal to have the Elections Tribunal Judge, the Surveyor-General, and the Principal Electoral Officer appointed lay in the fact that Parliament made the appointment. So, you see, that is an important thing.

I was only a junior member of the House in those days and I did not attempt in any way to break away from the party discipline on the matter, but I was definitely impressed by the argument of the Leader of the Opposition when he made that important point that where electoral redistributions took place Parliament should give the direction as to who the commissioners should be and it should not be left to the Governor in Council to appoint public officers.

I am not going to impute dishonest or improper motives to any Government but still the temptation is always there and there are sycophantic officers of the Public Service, who occupy high positions in it who if there is some advantage to be gained by listening to reason—I am putting it that way—from a Minister deputed to do a job, and if a redistribution is wanted in certain terms, can be got to do the dirty job. I do not want to say that one Government are above another in that respect.

I do not say that one Government or another in the past has been guilty of any such course; but still the fact remains that such things are possible. That was the very point made by Mr. Forgan Smith during that debate—that it would lift the redistribution above the risks of such happenings and put Governments in a stronger position so that nobody could level the charge against them that the redistribution of electoral boundaries had been faked or cooked to produce a result favourable to the Government of the day. I was impressed by that argument, and I have been ever since. I think all will agree that whilst I have differed from the former Premier, Mr. Forgan Smith, in this Chamber on many notable occasions, nevertheless I am bound to say that he had plenty of nous in some directions; and that was one of the days on which he really showed up to advantage—when he submitted that amendment, which in my judgment was sound and provided that Parliament should choose the officials who would handle the redistribution in order to give our democratic institution of Parliament and the members who comprise it a fair deal so that the dice would not be loaded against any member of the House.

You see, the great danger is that some members of the House, because of their tenacity of purpose, because of the persistence of their attacks on the Government, perhaps sometimes because they are able all the time to brilliantly and cleverly find the weak points in the Government's armour and thereby undermine them in the eyes of the constituencies, often become the target for a Government's hatred; and the feeling arises amongst them that they must eliminate such men, who constitute thorns in their side, by fair means or foul. Therefore the tendency exists not only to make it difficult for the official Opposition to defeat the Government, but also a heresy hunt goes on against individual members who are objectionable to the Government party. Of course,

it could happen that in pursuit of vendettas of this kind the Government would take a sadistic delight in appointing officers of the Public Service—"Yes men"—who would be prepared to carry out their request, to carry out the proposal put to them, of course, on the basis of *quid pro quo*, "I scratch your back and you scratch mine." I have lived a long time and I have crossed many dry gullies, and whilst I do not intend to impute any special motives against any particular Government, I know human nature to be frail, and knowing that, I have no doubt that some Government or other could, or perhaps have in the past, fallen for temptation in that respect. Therefore, I think individual members of the House—of the Opposition groups—are entitled to some measure of protection against any scheming Government who wish to further weaken the whole Parliamentary democratic machinery by creating electoral divisions that will make it difficult for those opposed to them, particularly those they object to most, to gain reelection to this Parliament. I think we should try to change that, and one of the most effectual means that I know is to take away that source of temptation by appointing men who, like Caesar's wife, are above reproach.

In this case the men we should choose were very clearly pointed out by a former Premier of the State, Mr. Forgan Smith, when he moved that amendment in 1931. Many members of the Parliament at that time are here today in the Government party, the most notable of all being the Premier. He strongly supported Mr. Forgan Smith on that occasion and had this to say—

"Not one hon. member opposite can say that some one better could be appointed, because nobody can deny that the Surveyor-General and the Principal Electoral Officer are particularly suited for the job. The Minister, for all I know, may have them in view as members of the commission. If that is the case, and he will accept this amendment he will be relieved of any charge of having 'rigged' the commission."

Hon. members will see from that that away back in 1931, within the mind of the Premier there was such a thing as rigging a commission; therefore I do not think members of the Government can blame me if I throw out the suggestion that such things have happened in the past and could happen again. To carry out the protective policy proposed by Mr. Forgan Smith at that time and so forcibly supported by the Premier, they asked for the appointment of high-ranking officials such as a member of the judiciary, the Surveyor-General and the Principal Electoral Officer.

Developing his case, Mr. Forgan Smith said—

"The Attorney-General, if he has stated a case against anything, has stated a case against the appointment by the Governor in Council of a commission composed entirely of public servants."

Mr. Forgan Smith saw the evils connected with the appointment of public servants and he stated his views strongly. The Premier committed himself to this principle in 1931. He nailed his colours to the mast. It was his policy then; it was his principle then that we should not appoint public servants to make a redistribution of electorates because of the obvious risks involved, but should have a member of the judiciary, the Surveyor-General and the Principal Electoral Officer constituting the commission.

Mr. Gair: You were opposed to it then.

Mr. MAHER: Is there any justification for a complete volte face; is there any justification for a complete somersault on the part of the Premier?

Mr. Duggan: Are you not making one yourself?

Mr. MAHER: I have already dealt with that phase of the matter. I did not speak in the debate in that year but, as I have indicated, I followed the party line. The present Premier was a senior member of the House at that time; he was one of the leading lights of his party. He strongly backed Forgan Smith in that amendment. He was one who stood for it on every ground of logic, reason and argument. That was his policy. Can a man be like the leopard, who is reputed at any rate, to be able to change his spots? Can the passing of a year or two radically alter a man's opinion? The Premier's opinions have not changed, but for political expediency, because he wants to gain advantages over the Opposition, which are evident from the nature of the Bill, because he wishes to zone the State into divisions that exclude the Opposition from any reasonable opportunity of defeating the Government, he now moves away from the democratic line in favour of an autocratic line and seeks so to define the electoral boundaries of the State that all opposing groups can never hold the political reins.

Because of these things he now wants a free and easy go. He wants a system of making a redistribution that differs completely from the things he expressed away back in 1931. The present Premier was one of the staunchest supporters of Mr. Forgan Smith's amendment in 1931. He was the principal speaker backing Mr. Smith up on that occasion, and if there is room for excusing any minor member of the Government party who sat in the House at that time, any lesser light, there is no room for excusing the present Premier, who is a man of strong opinion and who knows where he is going. Therefore, he stands condemned today for a complete change of thought and a complete change of principle and policy.

I go a little further. I have the feeling that the Government have little need for the appointment of commissioners at all because the Bill itself, by zoning the State in the undemocratic way it does, has really achieved the main object of the Government, which is to retain a perpetual Socialist dictatorship in this State. I should say that the readjustment of electoral boundaries within the zones contained in the Bill has already been carried

out, that it is already cut and dried, and evidence of that is accumulating in the way of reports reaching hon. members of the Opposition from different parts of the State.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the matter before the Committee.

Mr. MAHER: I am saying that abuses could occur, which make it necessary for this amendment to be considered seriously by the Committee. One of the abuses is the evidence accumulating from A.L.P. supporters in different parts of the State who are able to tell our members and others what part of this or that electorate is to be put somewhere else and what is to be added, all indicating that they have a prior knowledge of what the Bill is designed to accomplish. That shows that abuses have occurred, if those statements coming to hon. members of the Opposition are correct, and it gives us the impression that the whole electoral redistribution is already cut and dried. Therefore the appointment of a commission under the circumstances can achieve no useful purpose. The Government's intention has been achieved already. Will the Premier assert this principle to give Parliament a fair go and throw into the discard what has been done already by the Government? Let us raise again the banner that the present Premier held aloft in 1931. Let us hold it aloft again in this Chamber, let us stand for the good principle that Parliament, not some junta up in the Governor in Council's office at the Executive Building, shall appoint the commission.

Mr. ROBERTS (Nundah) (11.45 a.m.): The Secretary for Labour and Industry has, I feel sure, adequately debunked the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition that in including this clause there is something in the nature of a political somersault on the part of the Labour Party. I therefore do not propose to deal with that matter any further.

We have heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition use the phrase that there was something in the nature of a sadistic design behind the measure now before the Committee.

Mr. Pie: He did not say that at all.

Mr. MAHER: I rise to a point of order. I did not use those two words. I said that the Government would take a sadistic delight in pursuing a heresy hunt against members who opposed them in the House and whom they disliked.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): I ask the hon. member for Nundah to accept the explanation.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am prepared to do that.

We heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition condemn our public servants in round terms. According to him they were nothing but "Yes" men. Again, we heard what I considered a most improper suggestion levelled at this Government, namely, that the whole matter was already cut and dried.

I desire to say a word or two in connection with the amendment before us. I realise that there is something to be said both for and against the suggestion that the Elections Tribunal judge should be a member of the commission, but there is one very grave objection to that particular judge being a member of the commission, as I see it. We know that annually an Elections Tribunal judge is appointed to preside over any elections dispute that may arise during the year he holds his appointment. If the Elections Tribunal judge is made a member of the commission that is to define boundaries within the various zones, it is quite possible that, in the event of a dispute as to an electoral boundary arising, in effect the man who had been appointed one of those to define the boundaries would be sitting as a judge over his own work. I feel that that is a grave objection to the amendment. There might, however, be some merit in it if the Leader of the Opposition were to suggest that the Chief Justice should be a member of a commission or that some other justice be a member of the commission. Then, of course, we must realise that with an Election Tribunal judge being appointed annually, the same position might arise at a future date—that the judge sitting on the commission would in effect be sitting as a judge over his own work. That is the objection I see to the amendment.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (11.49 a.m.): It would be a pity if the consideration of this matter were confined to the taking of debating points one against the other as to what somebody said and how he voted on the matter 18 years ago. Rather it seems that this matter should be examined on this basis: is the principle right? In other words, is this a case where Parliament should take the responsibility of appointing the commission, or is it one where the responsibility should rest on the Administration? On that point I must say that there is widespread feeling in this Chamber and outside that this particular redistribution scheme is unfair and that feeling is persisting in spite of the explanations we have heard.

Because that feeling is so widespread and is as bad as it is because of the basis of redistribution, there is a greater than ordinary responsibility on Parliament to see that no further suspicion or doubt attaches to the commission to be appointed. For that reason alone I think there is an extraordinary set of circumstances that would make it wise on this occasion, if on no other, for this Parliament to take the responsibility of determining who should constitute the commission.

Much has been said about the fact that certain people who may be appointed to the commission may be got at. The whole rule regarding bias or interest is not that the persons who constitute the tribunal should in fact have bias or interest but that you should avoid any set of circumstances in which the people who depend on that tribunal feel that

there is a chance of bias or interest. That is the point. All the rules, for example in courts of law, concerning the operation of bias and interest are based on the principle that it is not necessary or relevant to show that there was in fact bias or interest but immediately the court comes to the conclusion that there is a set of circumstances in which people may feel that there is bias or interest the person who otherwise might be perfectly competent to constitute the tribunal should be disqualified for that reason.

In this case, so widespread and so deep-seated is the conviction that this whole scheme of redistribution is unfair that the Government should remove any possible feeling that the tribunal might be subject to bias or interest and so leave it to Parliament itself to determine who shall constitute the tribunal. Only in that way will the Government remove the mischief that has already followed the course they are pursuing. That feeling is added to by the great number of mischievous observations that have come, mostly from the Government side, that the work the commission will be called upon to perform has been anticipated. I am sure the Deputy Premier must have heard some of the suggestions, specific in character and detailed in observations, that have hurtled round this Chamber, round the lobbies and outside.

Mr. Roberts: The hon. member for Windsor said he knew what was going to take place.

Mr. Pie: You told me where your electorate would be.

Mr. ROBERTS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Windsor has said by way of interjection that I told him where my electorate was going to be. I have never told him that. I ask him to withdraw it and apologise.

Mr. PIE: The hon. member for Nundah told me where he thought his electorate would be.

Mr. HILEY: There has been such a flood of suggestions, specific in character and detailed in nature, that I do not think there is any hon. member on this side of the Chamber who can get out of his mind the impression that a great amount of the redistribution has already been determined upon by the Government.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order! Already every hon. member who has spoken on the amendment has put forward hypothetical arguments. They have stated that there have been rumours about the boundaries of the electorates, and that they have already been fixed. Hon. members are not abiding by the Standing Orders in putting forward rumours and hypothetical questions and arguing them as proposals under this clause. While I have

no reason to stifle debate, hon. members can see that it might reach a degree of absurdity if every hon. member discusses this amendment on the basis of rumours that have been circulated about so-and-so and so-and-so. I suggest that hon. members should debate the merits of the amendment without introducing hypothetical cases and rumours.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. HILEY: Mr. Hilton, you can rule me out of order if you feel I am transgressing the rules of debate. It appears to me to be of the utmost relevancy, when considering the constitution of the commission and the way it should be constituted by this Parliament or the Administration, that we should have regard to the influence on the public mind and the people's consideration of whether the commission that might be appointed by the Administration, if the amendment is not carried, would be subject to bias or interest. In considering that matter I can conceive of nothing more relevant than the fact that many of the rumours have emanated entirely from the Government side.

Government Members: "Your own side," and "That is not true."

Mr. HILEY: I know what I have been told. It is no use shutting our eyes to the facts. These things have been bruited for some time. Anyway, those rumours have been going about to an extent and with the freedom—

Mr. Jesson: Someone might be pulling your leg. It is very easily pulled.

Mr. HILEY: They may be, but I observe that it is rather dangerous for the Government to let other hon. members pull the leg of the Assembly on such an important matter. If that is so and the public know of it and feel that the commission might be biased or interested, all I can say is that the responsibility for the development of that feeling rests in the minds of those hon. members circulating the rumours.

Mr. Roberts: Have you not worked out what your boundaries will possibly be?

Mr. HILEY: On the contrary, I have assurances that I am to be given a perfectly safe seat and that I have nothing to worry about.

The very fact that these rumours have been so widespread is above everything else a reason why the Government should conclude that this is a case in which any suggestion of a fixed background should be removed and that, in view of the rumours that are circulating, Parliament should take on itself the responsibility of fixing the personnel of the commission.

I am not one bit concerned with what Parliament did or what was said in Parliament 18 years ago. The thing that really matters is: is the proposal right in all the circumstances? I have advanced a very cogent argument why the Government should accept the amendment.

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Minister for Transport) (11.59 a.m.): During this debate the Opposition have taken advantage of many provisions of the Bill to engage in a good deal of propaganda that is unworthy of hon. members opposite. We have evidence that this is part of a deliberate campaign for members of the Opposition to discredit individual members of Parliament and, the crux of the matter, Parliament itself. In view of certain expulsions that have taken place during this debate and the fact that the gag has not been applied it would seem that the debate has developed into license.

Those who approach recent events from a common-sense viewpoint know that the supplanting of Parliamentary government in European countries in recent times was always preceded by open vilification and destruction of parliamentary representatives and the destruction of parliamentary institutions.

Mr. Pie: Is this the amendment you are discussing?

Mr. DUGGAN: Yes, it is a relevant point, because the question of parliamentary government in this country rests upon three levels. First of all, there is the legislative level, and then the judicial level and the executive level. I want to say that I believe the appointment of these men to comprise the panel of commissioners is very properly the function of the Executive.

It has been said that the action of the Government in rejecting the amendment moved by the Opposition represents a change of face. Before dealing with that I should like to deal with the hon. member for West Moreton. Sometimes the heat of debate and perplexities of ministerial administration bring in their train some worries, but I am happy to know that these worries are lightened considerably by the introduction of some humorous contributions to debates by hon. members opposite. On this occasion I have been greatly amused by the contribution of the hon. member for West Moreton. He said that we had levelled against himself, the member for Albert, and the member for Isis the fact that they had accepted this principle when we were in Opposition in 1929-32. He endeavoured to disclaim responsibility by saying he was a very junior member and he had only just come into the party. I have known the hon. member for a long period. I have a very high respect for him and I think our personal relationship is very happy and cordial, but I am surprised to learn that even at the time he mentions—in 1931—he was the shrinking violet that he claims he was. I am told on the best authority that when he came in here he was in the full bloom of his intellectual powers and that his physical

powers were well acknowledged. Instead of being the very junior, quiet, unostentatious, unobtrusive member of the Opposition his qualifications were so marked that in a very short space of time he was advanced to the leadership of the party. If he was considered to be so devoid of the power of assimilation and so ignorant of the arts of politics, and if he did not realise the implications of what his party was doing, it is extraordinary that his powers were so great that in that short period he learnt all those arts to such a degree that the Opposition entrusted the leadership of their affairs to the hon. member. If he is, as he claims, a man qualifying as an elder statesman by being transferred to the Senate, where we must expect that the cumulative wisdom of the men in the Lower House will be utilised, and where they will have the opportunity to see that legislation is appropriately and properly represented to them, I want to say that he lacks one of the essential principles, which is that of political honesty, when it takes him 17 years to make his recantation in this Assembly because of the objectionableness of the amendment. The hon. member has been afforded countless opportunities of getting up and saying, "Mr. Speaker, in order that I might clear my conscience and put myself in a position where I can be regarded as being impartial and having the highest motives, I point out that in 1931 I was misguided because I was a political neophyte; I was unable to appreciate the implications of the Bill." For 17 years the hon. member has remained silent. Now, for political expediency's sake, he comes forward and says he feels it is incumbent upon him to give expression to the sentiments we have heard from him on this occasion. I know the hon. member feels there are occasions when the solemnity of the debate might be lightened by a contribution in a lighter tone. Before he leaves this atmosphere where he is remembered for his eloquent declamations, he has shown he is able to engage in debates in lighter vein on appropriate occasions. Therefore, hon. members of the Opposition are, in the main, sham-fighting. On this occasion they quote with very great confidence the fact that two Premiers of the State had stated that this principle was desirable.

Mr. Maher: That was a weighty argument in its favour.

Mr. DUGGAN: If it was so weighty, it is a wonder the persuasive powers of these gentlemen were not such as to win the political allegiance of the hon. member and make him transfer it from the Country Party to the Labour Party. He did not do that. He thought the two Premiers mentioned did not have the correct political philosophy to suit his requirements and that he was much better off by remaining a member of the Country Party, owing allegiance to another Premier, Mr. A. E. Moore, who was leader of his party at that time.

If the hon. member wants to quote the authority of Premiers, let us see what Mr. Moore had to say. He was the Premier of the day and a man who consistently retained the allegiance of the hon. member for West Moreton. Mr. Moore said—

"I do not propose to support the amendment, as I do not see that a Supreme Court judge has any particular qualification for appointment to a redistribution commission. We ought to be able to secure men in the Public Service with experience and who are better qualified than a Supreme Court judge to carry out the work."

Mr. Moore was able to persuade the hon. member for West Moreton that Mr. Forgan Smith and the present Premier were not more able than Mr. Moore.

He proceeded to say—

"I would like hon. members on that side to point to any appointment that we have made that we have not been able to defend."

The hon. member for West Moreton comes here now and states that the reason why this amendment was submitted at the time was that Mr. Forgan Smith felt the desire to warn the people of Queensland that there was a danger that unless we had gentlemen nominated by him the suggestion would go abroad that the boundaries would be rigged—faked or cooked, I think were the exact words used by the hon. member for West Moreton. If that was the suggestion and if the boundaries were rigged it did not stop the people of Queensland from returning a Labour Government—on boundaries that conceivably could have been rigged, faked or cooked.

Mr. Maher: The redistribution was so fair that your party won the election.

Mr. DUGGAN: Exactly, we won the election. If the Government are so manifestly unfair and their record is so poor, you can bet your socks that no redistribution of boundaries will prevent this Government from being swept from the Treasury benches.

We have heard all sorts of suggestions about percentages of votes and so on. The hon. member for Windsor talked about a 33 per cent. return.

Mr. Pie: Thirty-seven per cent.

Mr. DUGGAN: In the first instance I think the hon. member mentioned 33 per cent. I am prepared to say that we, the Labour Party, will get more votes than they at the next election. Of course, time alone will give the answer.

On the question of Parliament's determining these things, the executive actions of the Government are carried out through the Governor in Council, and if we are to have this Chamber determining the qualifications of members of the commission would not that lend itself to making these things party matters? Supposing the Government

accepted the amendment and it was desirable to proceed with the nomination of particular gentlemen for the commission, should we not see somebody in the Assembly examining in detail the qualifications of the men suggested? I have nothing personally against any of the gentlemen concerned, but I should want a longer time to consider their qualifications than would be possible in the short period allotted to members on the Committee stage of the Bill. The Governor in Council has a good deal more knowledge than is available to an ordinary member; as ministerial heads of various departments all sorts of relevant information comes into the possession of Ministers. Because there are fewer members to participate in the discussion, decisions can be given effect to more quickly and more time is available for putting forward various points of view that need consideration. The Standing Orders provide that in this Chamber members can only participate in debates on certain occasions for certain periods of time, but a member of the Governor in Council can participate as often as he wishes, subject of course to the general control of the proceedings of that authority by the chairman.

I do not want to deal with this point because the Deputy Premier dealt with it effectively, but if we are so concerned about the probity, character and honour of everyone concerned, why is it not provided that Parliament shall appoint the members of the judiciary? Is not that an equally important office where men are required to exercise the qualities of impartiality in weighing evidence, and so on? But that responsibility of selecting members of the judiciary has been vested in the Governor in Council from time immemorial. Is there any suggestion that we have been coloured in our judgments, that we have selected the wrong people for those offices? I have never experienced it, and if mistakes have been made or are likely to be made, provision is contained in the relevant Acts for a substantive motion to be moved in this Assembly to declare vacant the office of the member of the judiciary who does not conform to the standards laid down. No doubt, if Parliament felt that this commission was acting contrary to the terms of its appointment and contrary to the welfare of the people generally, similar action could be taken for its replacement or recall.

I very much regret that the Opposition consistently throughout this debate have chosen to impute improper motives to hon. members of the Government and prospective hon. members who have to carry out the terms of this Bill. I should have liked to have had something to say earlier at a stage where I should have had a freer and fuller opportunity of elaborating these points.

Mr. Pie: You were not allowed to speak on it yesterday.

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member seems to be very improperly informed. I perhaps have been personally inconvenienced to a greater extent than any other hon. member present to-day because of the fact that we are meeting to-day. I appreciate that my

primary responsibilities are here, but I was hopeful that, as the result of an assurance that perhaps all the various points would have been discussed last evening and we could have disposed of this Bill. I would have been free to do as I first intended. It was under no influence of being directed not to speak that I did not participate in the debate last evening. I resent very strongly indeed these suggestions and insinuations and these imputations of improper motives, because, as I have said on so many occasions in this Assembly, it is always the prelude to the disintegration of a political party or the disintegration of Parliament itself.

I feel that this party will be dependent for its return at the forthcoming election, not on the electoral boundaries, but upon its general legislative record and programme. I am prepared to take my place on the public platforms and claim credit for the programme that we have outlined and implemented over the years for the betterment of the people of this State. If, by statute, we accept the obligation of giving a general direction to the commissioners as to the division of the zones, then I say we are entitled to some thanks for accepting the responsibility of endeavouring to prevent an undue development of population in the cities and a consequentially excessive influence in the legislature. I feel that the Government, having accepted the responsibility of bringing in this Bill with certain specific provisions and vesting in the Governor in Council further power of implementing the general provisions contained in the Bill, we have done all that is required of us as legislators of the State. We know that the whole trend of parliamentary government to-day depends increasingly upon the executive for the implementation of legislative decisions. I do not wish to be misunderstood on this point at all, but any other process would lead to slowness and confusion and ultimately would result in a good deal of chaos in the community.

Mr. Hiley: But this amendment would actually speed the decision.

Mr. DUGGAN: I do not think it would. The Governor in Council can unquestionably come to a decision on the personnel of this Commission much more quickly than this Committee can do.

If you are going to question motive, what would happen if particular names were specified? Suppose the Elections Tribunal Judge, the Surveyor-General and the Principal Electoral Officer were named. I am not speaking for myself on this question because I have not examined the qualifications of those respective gentlemen but if I was obliged to make a decision I should examine their qualifications minutely. If I felt strongly on a point, I should raise an objection to the fitness of a particular gentleman. Impartiality is required in these appointments and if I ventilated my views as to a particular gentleman the appointment would be coloured because of my political prejudices or personal preferences or objections. I feel that it is far more desirable that the Executive Council should accept the responsibility rather than that the people, in looking at "Hansard,"

should find that so many members had voiced personal objections to the appointment of a particular officer. It is more desirable, for the sake of general probity and confidence, and the tribunal would be more adequately safeguarded, if the Executive Council decided the personnel rather than that we should have it the subject of political disputation on the floor of this Committee.

Mr. Nicklin: Are you arguing that the Executive Council is superior to Parliament?

Mr. DUGGAN: No, I did not say that. The powers given by statutes are implemented by the Governor in Council.

Mr. Nicklin: On the direction of Parliament.

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member did not want the zones to be specified and Parliament has accepted the responsibility and not the commission. We accept the political responsibility as a Government of laying down the zones and the Governor in Council is being circumscribed to a greater extent because of the very nature of the clause and the principles contained in the measure.

I feel that the Premier and the Deputy Premier and other members on this side of the Chamber are justified in the stand they are taking. In the minutes at my disposal I feel that I have effectively disposed of the wishy-washy stand taken by the hon. member for West Moreton.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Deputy Premier) (12.18 p.m.): The remarks of the hon. member for West Moreton to the effect that the redistribution of boundaries has already taken place and has been completed, and the remarks of the hon. member for Logan that there is great feeling of fear and that the redistribution is unfair and unjust in the public mind and that he personally has been informed by some members of the Government party that the boundaries have been determined, compel me to rise in my place at this stage to give those statements the lie direct—

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. GAIR: . . . and emphatically state for the benefit of this Committee and the public of Queensland generally that this is not so. There is not an atom of truth in the statement of the hon. member for West Moreton and if any member of the Government has been responsible for stating that boundaries have already been determined, that hon. member is telling a deliberate lie.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Decker: They have been to the extent of the zones.

Mr. GAIR: I said the boundaries of the respective electorates. I never spoke of the boundaries of the zones, and if the hon. member for Sandgate would rouse himself occasionally and get out of his slumber he would comprehend more quickly and take more active interest in the debate. I want to say emphatically and positively, as Acting Premier, that I have no personal knowledge of the boundaries of any of the electorates.

Mr. Maher: Then why do members of your party say this part is to go here and that part is to go there?

Mr. GAIR: I cannot be responsible for any hon. members who may engage in conjecture or allow their imagination or their feelings to induce them to make such statements. No boundaries have been determined. That will be the function of the Commission to be appointed by the Executive Council. At this stage it is important and essential that I, as Acting Premier, should tell the people of Queensland that there is no basis of truth for the statement by the hon. member for West Moreton about the alleged statements by members of my party. Such remarks are not only confusing but highly dangerous. I believe my word will be accepted by every hon. member here when I say as a member of the Cabinet that I have no knowledge of the boundaries of any electorate. That work will be done by the Commission. No hon. member has the right to say that he has any knowledge of these things, because this will be the work of the Commission itself. I could not tell you who will constitute the Commission, and up to the present I have not heard the name of anyone submitted. The personnel of the Commission has not been discussed by Cabinet.

Mr. Muller: They must keep you in the dark about everything. (Laughter.)

Mr. GAIR: If that is so then I am content to be kept in the dark on a lot of matters concerning the hon. member for Fassifern, because I am afraid that if I was let into the light I should have to discharge my duty and probably take some action against him. We should have to go into milk prices and a few other things.

Mr. MULLER: I rise to a point of order. Is the Acting Premier entitled, in the course of his speech, to imply that there is something wrong with my character, or to reflect on my integrity in any way? I do not want any innuendo. I want him to come straight out and tell the Chamber what it is.

Mr. GAIR: I am afraid that the hon. member is losing his sense of humour. It was not in seriousness that I made the remark. Laughter followed his interjection, and if the hon. member is in such a frame of mind that he cannot take a little joke after putting one on me, then I suggest that he have no contact with me at all.

Mr. Muller: You must think I am very simple.

Mr. GAIR: The hon. member is simple all right, but simple in the right way. If he wants anything serious I will give it to him.

I emphatically deny that any hon. member of the Government Party, including myself, is in possession of any information regarding the boundaries of the different electorates. I now want to deal with the point raised by the hon. member for Logan, who said that there was a feeling of distrust concerning the Commission, that the redistribution would be unfair and that the seats would be rigged

in favour of the Government. I cannot support him in that. I have no knowledge that that feeling is abroad. If it is, I am afraid it must be limited to the section of the people whose political bias is such that they will always distrust whatever a Labour Government might attempt to carry out. It is limited to that section the hon. member mixes and comes in contact with. They naturally suspect that whatever the Government do is wrong. Their political bias and prejudice are such that they cannot give the Government credit for anything. I repeat that I have no knowledge that there is such a feeling abroad in the minds of the public. Furthermore, if that feeling is abroad, some of the credit or blame for it must be attributed to hon. members opposite who in the course of the debate have implied and even suggested that there are many niggers in the woodpile and that this redistribution is being carried out to give the Government a renewed tenure of office and make it impossible for the Opposition ever to become a Government.

I conclude by saying that the commission will be appointed by the Executive Council and the only consideration in the selection of its members will be their qualifications and ability to perform the job impartially and fairly in the interests of Parliament and the people of Queensland.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (12.28 p.m.): I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing my sentiments on the amendment. The discussion both for and against it makes me surprised that the Government do not accept it in their own interests. Once this clause becomes law I am quite sure that no party in the future will attempt to take it out, if it decides on any redistribution of electorates.

There have been some heated exchanges during the debate. Big principles have been involved. Those principles are held so dearly by some hon. members that they have been prepared to suffer expulsion from this Chamber. This is quite a different matter from ordinary legislation because it deals with the personal interests of hon. members. It affects the opportunities of hon. members to retain their seats or of other men to enter Parliament. That is why the personnel of the commission should be impartial, and why the Government would be wise in getting persons from outside this Parliament to make the redistribution. No matter what we do suspicion will always rest on the Government in power, and the Government will have to accept the odium of the rumours that are being circulated. Those rumours can be broken down to an extent by Parliament's saying that there is a necessity for redistribution of seats and that the work of redistributing the electorates will be done by a commission appointed by Parliament itself, not by the Government. The Government have not only decided that there shall be a redistribution but they have indicated what the number of seats shall be and what the zones shall be. Therefore, if the Government appoint the members of the commission, you will get all the rumours in the world. You cannot blame the people for saying these

things. The time has arrived when we should curb these insinuations and innuendoes by having Parliament make the appointments of those who are to carry out the redistribution.

There must be a good deal of merit in the amendment, because in 1931 those who took a big part in legislative matters here said that this should be done. If it was right then, what is wrong with it today? It is no use saying that because you voted against it in 1931 you have to vote against it today.

The men suggested in the amendment are the Elections Tribunal judge, the Surveyor-General, and the Principal Electoral Officer. I would go further and say that the redistribution should not be in the hands of the men who are interested because then the personal aspect comes in. All the arguments that we can put up as to why the Government should appoint a commission do not carry any weight because the people will say that it is for our personal interest and when you are personally interested your judgment is likely to be warped. The Government are foolish not to accept the amendment, which they approved of in 1931.

Mr. Gair: And you opposed it.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Who told the hon. gentleman?

Mr. Gair: "Hansard" will show.

Mr. PLUNKETT: He is quite wrong; I did not oppose it. He has fallen down on his job.

It does not matter who you appoint or how honest they are, the general opinion will be that they received appointment to do the will of the Government. It is hardly a fair thing to ask them to undertake a job like that. Whatever they do, whether it be right or wrong, that assertion will be made. Let us hope that there will be no truth in it when it is made, but it will be made.

I was surprised yesterday to hear the Premier's argument on the zoning lines and I came to the conclusion that it would be very wise for the Government to allow the House to appoint the body that would do this work. Let Parliament appoint this body and if it does wrong Parliament has the responsibility. You know the criticism that occurred when it was known that the Federal authorities were going to have a redistribution, but immediately it was known that the redistribution was to be made by men occupying similar positions to those suggested in this amendment, there was no further chatter. The people recognised that they were independent men. By accepting the amendment the Government would show that they were prepared to do the right thing and let the people see that the redistribution was not what they think it is going to be.

I am very much in favour of the amendment and think it embodies a principle that should be adopted generally in Queensland. When all is said and done, what causes politicians and Parliament to be ridiculed to the extent they are? We find members, especially Ministers of the Crown and others holding high positions in Parliament, changing

their opinions. Is it any wonder that the public look upon politicians as being in politics for their own benefit? One would have expected the Premier to accept this amendment because in 1931 he said that if the then Minister accepted a similar amendment he would be relieved of any charge of having rigged the commission. He must have thought that at the time he said it, but does he think it today? If it was necessary for the Government to accept such an amendment at that time, it is equally necessary that the Government should accept this amendment now. There is this difference, of course: that if the Premier supported it in 1931 but does not accept it now the people will say that he wants the commission rigged. That will be the answer and that is why I am so serious about it. I appeal to the Minister in charge of the Bill, as the Premier is not present, to accept the amendment. Its acceptance would wipe out all the ugly statements that are being made in connection with it. The Government will be acting foolishly if they do not accept the amendment as it will show that they are concerned with the personal aspect of this Bill.

The Minister for Transport made a good speech some little time ago and in it stated that he regretted the ridicule that had been thrown about the Chamber. That did not come too well from that hon. gentleman, seeing he occupied the first five minutes of his speech in trying to ridicule the hon. member for West Moreton.

Mr. Duggan: He likes it.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. gentleman likes giving it.

Mr. Duggan: He can take it.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The hon. member for West Moreton had already spoken and therefore would not have the opportunity to reply to the Minister. That is an instance of how inconsistent the hon. gentleman can be. I hope the Minister will like it when I say that his Government are doing the wrong thing by not accepting this amendment.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.38 p.m.): I know that the Secretary for Labour and Industry, who is acting for the Premier today, was quite sincere when making his speech but he questioned the sincerity of the Leader of the Opposition. Among other things the hon. gentleman indicated that he gathered the idea that the Opposition were reflecting on the integrity of public servants. Nothing was further from the minds of the Opposition. There is a difference between members of the judiciary and public servants. Members of the judiciary would be able to examine this thing very carefully and with the utmost impartiality, whereas members of the Public Service, owing to the very nature of their office, are more or less under the direction or domination of the Government.

Mr. Power: That is not true.

Mr. MULLER: It is not a question of what members of the Committee may think as to the difference between the judiciary and

public servants, but of what the people of Queensland think. The people of Queensland expect the commission to be impartial, to be composed of men removed from any influence. If members of the Public Service are appointed, naturally the opinion of the people of the State will be that they have been more or less influenced by the Government.

You cannot form any other conclusion, because of what has been done already. If this had been left to an independent commission that was not influenced by anybody, it would have been a different matter. The fact that the zoning is done before the commission begins to act makes people suspicious of what the commissioners might do.

We have not the remotest idea of who the members of the commission are to be. The Acting Premier tells us that they have not been appointed yet, and we accept his word; but at the same time I think we might be pardoned for suggesting that he has a fairly good idea of who they are. I think he has in mind several men who might be suitable and it could be possible that before making the decision he will turn over in his mind the fact that possibly two or three out of perhaps six or seven likely appointees might lean a little towards the Opposition and so the Government would avoid appointing them. In saying that I am speaking as a citizen, not a member of Parliament, and the citizens of Queensland would like to feel that the members of the Cabinet are above this kind of thing. In the interests of Cabinet itself it would be better to appoint men who are not obliged to serve the wishes of the Government. All these members of the Public Service have their positions to consider, and although they might not be directed they are more or less influenced by the Government in their work. If the thing is done cleanly and everything is aboveboard and in the interests of everyone, there can be no suggestions of impropriety. The Acting Premier should accept the amendment.

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) (12.43 p.m.): Let us assume that the amendment has been accepted. We have to consider the positions of likely appointees. Before anyone is appointed it is necessary to consider his qualifications, virtues and vices. Any employer or person charged with the responsibility of making appointments naturally turns these things over in his mind. We all know that debates in this Chamber are privileged, that they are exempt from the provisions of the law of libel. We know also that a newspaper publishing anything that is said in this Chamber, no matter how untrue or how libellous it might be, also enjoys that protection. Things have been said in this Chamber, not by one hon. member in particular, but generally—things that were untrue. We have read about them in the paper later on and the unfortunate victim of the accusation or charge has had no redress.

Let us suppose that the Leader of the Opposition was named as being a likely appointee. His reputation would be discussed,

and, unfortunately, not impartially, by both sides. Those who did not like him could make all sorts of accusations, and he would not have the right of denying them or asking that they be withdrawn. Is it right or fair that the names of likely appointees should be bandied about in the way these things are in this Chamber? Would it not give us a licence to discuss the qualifications of likely appointees or their lack of them?

There is another aspect to be considered. We have heard hon. members opposite speaking of loaded dice—a familiarity that shocked me—and other various practices, suggestions, inferences, innuendos, and so on. The whole debate seems to me to be a definite plan to brand or tarnish or contaminate the positions before they are filled. I ask hon. members opposite whether they would like to accept one of the appointments about which there have been so many dirty suggestions and innuendos? Fancy a term like ‘loaded dice’ coming from the hon. member for Toowong, a practising barrister! We expect a higher standard and a better choice of words in this debate, and I think, in fairness to the people who will be appointed—and who they are we do not know—the less that is said about the appointments until the announcement is made the better.

Mr. BARNES (Bundaberg) (12.47 p.m.): I have just heard an apology by the hon. member for Port Curtis as to the commission to be appointed. In short, if you pursue his argument to its logical conclusion you can come to only one opinion, namely, that the character of members of the commission would not stand investigation. If so, their characters are such that they should not be appointed. If a commission of honest men were appointed by this Committee there would be nothing to worry about, but when a commission is appointed by regulation it smells for a start. I utterly oppose government by regulation. We are supposed to be legislators, but in reality we know that the people of Queensland are, to the extent of about 80 per cent., governed by regulation and not by Parliament. The buck is passed. That is a bad principle. Government by regulation is an insult to the intelligence of the people.

This Bill passes the buck to the Governor in Council. Who is the Governor in Council? In short, the Governor in Council is the Cabinet. Who is the Cabinet? The Cabinet is the Premier, and in short, if the Premier wants Jones, Brown and Smith, Cabinet agrees and the Governor in Council issues a proclamation making them the commissioners. The argument used by this side the other day is that the whole thing smells; to use the term used by various speakers, it is crooked and warped. When the big point of selecting three honest men as the commission comes up, to stop it from stinking too much the amendment is sidetracked. The Premier, in trying to fight this fight alone, talked too much. He had no case from the start and in endeavouring to put up a case made a horrible

mess of it, so much so that he called for help—he called for the help of the best debater on his side, the hon. member for Toowoomba. He called for the most capable debater on that side of the Committee to help him out. All of us have heard that hon. member debate. Without fear of contradiction, I say that he is by a long chalk the best debater in the Government. He is always sincere in debate and always serious but what was he today? He just made a comedy out of it, he engaged in a humorous debate, which is not his custom. And why? He had no ground to work on. The Premier got such a flogging that he had to call on this able debater, the hon. member for Toowoomba, to try to help him out of the mess.

As I said before, the Bill is designed to keep members of the Government on the Treasury benches. They are doing that by the zoning system but to make doubly sure they are to have a commission that will not stand up to investigation by Parliament. If it could stand up to an investigation by Parliament the Premier would not have to make his complete somersault. Today he is doing the opposite of what was the Labour Party's platform in 1931. That platform is not there now. The platform of the Australian Labour Party was one man, one vote, one value. They were proud of it and boasted of it but in the Bill it has gone with the wind.

In 1931 the Premier supported the proposal of the Labour Party, then in Opposition, that the commission should be selected by Parliament but that has gone with the wind, too. Let me tell you why. The Learned Elders of Zion, whose headquarters are in Wall Street, saw the Premier when he was abroad and told him to bring in this Bill. That is why you have the double-somersault by the Premier. He has somersaulted on the A.L.P. platform of one man, one vote, one value, and he has somersaulted on what he said in 1931. Then when it comes to the Governor in Council, or in other words, the Cabinet, or in other words, the Premier himself, the rest of the Cabinet dare not interfere with the arrangements of Wall Street. If this Bill ever becomes unsuitable to the Government, then at the next elections they will give effect to the suggestion of the hon. member for Gregory that votes in the West should have 10 times the value of the votes in the metropolis. I doubt whether there will be a second election, however, judging from the legislation that is put through this Chamber. Every piece of it contains the Communistic clause disclosing the power of Wall Street, the power of the international banking system, the power to achieve a purpose through Communistic control throughout the world. The next State election will be the last State election so there will not be any need for gerrymandering at the following elections.

A Government Member: It will be the end of you.

Mr. BARNES: I have studied the Bill and I can tell the Government that if they take out the middle or the backside of my electorate they still cannot take my seat from me. That is what hurts them. This will be the last Electoral Districts Bill to go through this Parliament. The next one will read, "I, James Jones, do hand over to the Soviet of Australia all my property situated in such and such a street." I warn the Government and the Opposition that you cannot be "yes" men to two parties, that they can only be "yes" men to the one party and that if they continue to be "yes" men to the international banking system, which controls the communistic machine, they will eventually be saying "I do hand over my property to the Soviet of Australia and be cogs in the communistic machine." Within two years they will be saying, "Barnes was right. I wish I had stood up to the communistic machine and now it is too late—I have lost my all."

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (12.55 p.m.): The Government can blame themselves from the very outset for the tone of this debate. I can say, speaking for myself and hon. members on this side generally, that our confidence in the Government has been shattered. If we may be suspicious because of rumours and suggestions, we can be pardoned for being doubly suspicious when we are considering facts. The Government have created certain electoral zones, which it is claimed will be of definite advantage to them. Can we not then be suspicious of what will be done in the redistribution of the seats? The Government as a political entity have gone to no end of pains to create the zones. Their boundaries must be fixed boundaries, and many subdivisional boundaries have to be made. As the Government have created the zones, it is not too much to say that political expediency will dictate the subdivision of those zones. When we realise that that part of the redistribution is already an accomplished fact, is it any wonder that we are endeavouring by this amendment to give some protection to the electors in the fixing of the new electoral boundaries?

The Leader of the Opposition suggests in his amendment that the Elections Tribunal judge for the time being shall be one of the members of the commission to make the redistribution. We know that he will not be subject to any ministerial direction, as a public servant may be. We must have a judge on the commission because under zoning an advantage is gained by the Government. It is, therefore, necessary that someone who is not subject to ministerial influence should be appointed to the commission to decide the new boundaries. We have supported the amendment because we are entitled to some fair play. If the Government will not accept it, then not only ourselves but the public will centre their eyes on the commission to be appointed, hoping at least that one of its members will be a judge. The Government have been foolish in drawing a red herring across the trail but they could restore some confidence in the minds of the Opposition and the people they represent by accepting the amendment.

Question—That the proviso proposed to be inserted in Clause 8 (Mr. Nicklin's amendment) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 13.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. Morris
" Decker	" Müller
" Heading	" Nicklin
" Hiley	
" Luckins	
" Madsen	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Marriott	Mr. Low
" McIntyre	" Taylor, H. B.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Larcombe
" Burrows	" Moore
" Clark	" O'Shea
" Crowley	" Power
" Davis	" Roberts
" Donald	" Smith
" Foley	" Taylor, J. R.
" Gair	" Theodore
" Gledson	
" Gunn	
" Hilton	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Ingram	Mr. Jesson
" Jones	" Keyatta

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Collins
" Chalk	" Dunstan
" Macdonald	" Mann
" Madsen	" Turner
" Pie	" Duggan
" Russell	" Farrell
" Sparkes	" Hanlon

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—Duty of commissioners—as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—Quotas—

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (2.22 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 4, after line 53, add the provisos—

'Provided that the approximate number of electors in respect of a proposed electoral district which shall be wholly comprised of a city or of part of a city shall not be less than the quota for Zone 1:

'Provided further that the approximate number of electors in respect of a proposed electoral district within the boundaries of which there is included a city or part of a city containing one-third or more of the proposed total number of electors in such electoral district shall not be less than nine thousand five hundred.'

The amendment will endeavour to rectify the differentiation in the quotas that are at present provided for as between the various cities of the State.

The Bill lays down specific provisions to guide the commission in deciding the boundaries of the various electoral districts. Among the matters that shall be taken into consideration are, first of all, community and diversity of interests; secondly, means of communication; thirdly, physical features; and fourthly, the boundaries of petty sessions districts and areas of local authorities. It will be admitted that all cities have certainly a community of interest and there

should be no differentiation between a city in the south-eastern corner of the State and those in the northern or western parts of the State. A city is still a city, it has community of interest with other cities and it has a similar means of communication. In most instances the boundaries of the cities coincide with the boundaries of petty sessions districts and, naturally, with the area of a local authority. So it can be seen that cities are the same wherever they may be situated throughout the State, and there should not be the wide variation of quotas allocated to them under this Bill.

It must not be forgotten, either, that these quotas can be varied 20 per cent. either way, but I propose using fixed quotas to illustrate my point. The fixed quota for the city of Brisbane is 10,716 electors. In the South-Eastern Zone it is 9,536, in the Northern Zone 7,852 and in the Western Zone 4,783. So we can have a wide variation of quotas allocated to different cities in different parts of the State, whereas all cities should be treated similarly because they have similar community interest, similar communication, and similar boundaries for petty sessions and local authority areas.

Let us examine some of the anomalies created by the Bill, and for the purpose of this illustration I am using the population figures revealed by the 1947 census. First take the cities of Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie in Zone 2, the populations of which are—

Bundaberg	15,900
Maryborough	14,400
Gympie	8,400

They have a quota of 9,536 under this Bill.

Compare that with the cities of Townsville, Cairns and Mackay in the Northern Zone. The populations of those cities are—

Townsville	34,200
Cairns	16,600
Mackay	13,500

It must be admitted that these cities are comparable with the three I have mentioned in Zone 2, yet the electoral quota allocated to them is 7,852.

Come now to the cities of Ipswich, Rockhampton and Toowoomba, the populations of which are—

Ipswich	26,200
Rockhampton	34,900
Toowoomba	33,900

Their quota is 9,536. Compare that with Townsville's quota of 7,852, with a population of 34,200. These and other cities would be covered by the first part of my amendment in which the whole of the electoral districts would be within the boundaries of a city. My amendment endeavours to establish that the quota for cities of that kind shall be 10,716, the same as for an electorate in the city of Brisbane. All hon. members must agree, if they look at the question impartially, that cities such as those I have mentioned should be on the same basis for the purposes of an electoral quota as the city of Brisbane.

Look at the result from the political point of view. At present Townsville has one complete seat and parts of two within its boundaries. Under this Bill Townsville could have two complete seats within the city plus a part of another that will have a country area attached to it.

The same thing will happen in Rockhampton, as it will have two and a-half seats under this Bill as against one complete seat and parts of two others at present. So you can see, Mr. Devries, that the electoral quotas laid down in the Bill will be of decided political advantage to hon. members opposite. Is that fair? These cities, which as I said are the same as to community of interest and the other considerations laid down in the Bill, will have differential quotas compared with similar electorates in the city of Brisbane. The only reason is that hon. members opposite may be able to get political advantage out of it. That is not the democratic way to fix electoral boundaries; but it is in keeping with the whole of the Bill because the Bill is wholly designed not to give a fair distribution of electorates but rather an unfair distribution for the benefit of hon. members opposite.

Mr. Roberts: In New South Wales Newcastle has a lower quota than Sydney.

Mr. NICKLIN: We have heard all about New South Wales and Victoria. What is the position in New South Wales, now that the hon. member for Nundah has raised it? There are three areas—the metropolitan area, which comprises the city of Sydney; an extra-metropolitan area, which comprises Newcastle; and every other city in the State is treated as country. There is no city of Albury with one quota and Tamworth and Orange with another, as we have in this State. The hon. member's argument will not stand examination. There is no other system of zoning or fixing areas or districts in the Commonwealth that compares in any way with the zones fixed here in Queensland. In other States there is laid down the metropolitan area, and the urban and the country area, whereas in this State we are scientifically designing zones to the advantage of hon. members opposite.

Coming to the second part of my amendment, it provides that an electorate that comprises a city or part of a city containing one-third or more of the proposed total number of electors in such electoral district shall have a quota of not less than 9,500, in other words, not less than the quota fixed for Zone 2. It would be the fair quota to establish in an electorate that comprises one-third city and two-thirds country. What could happen with regard to the present set-up in this State? Take the comparable cities of Gympie, Warwick and Charters Towers. Gympie has a population of 8,413 and Warwick a population of 7,130 and they have been allocated a quota of 9,536 because they are in Zone 2, yet Charters Towers, which has a population of 7,567—almost equivalent to that of Gympie and Warwick—because it happens to be in the Western Zone has a quota of only 4,783. Is that fair? Of course it is not. That means that in order

to make up their electoral quotas Gympie and Warwick will have to take in a part of the country. That complies with the second part of my amendment. Charters Towers will be an electorate constituted out of its own city area.

Mr. Hiley: With a lot to spare.

Mr. NICKLIN: And some to spare. Any system that provides for the differentiation between the various cities set out in the Bill and for such anomalies as I have enumerated is wrong and improper. The purpose of my amendment is to correct them by putting the cities on a more or less comparable basis and by removing the possibility of a city such as Charters Towers being made into one single electorate.

Mr. Foley: You want to give Brisbane an advantage at the expense of country towns?

Mr. NICKLIN: I am surprised that the Secretary for Public Lands should make such an interjection. As a member representing a country area, and as a man from the country, at least we are justified in expecting him to stick up for country areas. But no. What does he care about country areas? He wholeheartedly supports a Bill that permits of the anomalies I have set out. He talks about giving Brisbane an advantage over the country. He had his opportunity to show what he thought about Brisbane in relation to the country when other amendments were moved from this side of the Chamber and especially when we endeavoured to cut down the representation of Brisbane in favour of the country. Where did he record his vote on those occasions? That is the acid test.

I trust that the Acting Premier will accept the amendment and so remove the anomalous position that will exist in respect of the electoral quotas in the various cities of the State.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (2.38 p.m.): Had I been inclined to accept the amendment the case sought to be made by the Leader of the Opposition in support of it would have influenced me against that intention. Throughout the debate there has been violent opposition by hon. members opposite to the principle of zoning, yet this amendment aggravates what hon. members allege are the evils of the very principle in that it proposes to create more zones within the zones provided in the Bill. Another matter that has brought forth much criticism is the discrepancy in the quotas in the proposed electorates but the amendment will do nothing more than aggravate a matter about which hon. members opposite have complained bitterly during the past few days.

An analysis of the amendment of the Opposition shows that it will create additional quotas or zones within the proposed zones. In Zone 1 in the metropolitan area we propose to have 24 electorates, each with a quota of 10,795. In Zone 2, that is, the South-Eastern Zone, we shall have, under the Leader of the Opposition's proposal, five

electorates with a city quota or a quota similar to that of the metropolitan area, six electorates with a quota of 9,500, and 17 electorates with a quota of 8,911.

In the Northern Zone, or Zone 3, the amendment proposes three electorates with a city or metropolitan quota of 10,795, two electorates with a quota of 9,500, and eight electorates with a quota of 6,087.

In the Western Zone, or Zone 4, there will be one electorate with a quota of 9,500 and 9 electorates with a quota of 4,070. That clearly indicates that if the hon. gentleman's amendments were accepted in the proposed zone we should have contiguous electorates with differing quotas.

It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to say that Townsville should have the same quota as Brisbane. I cannot support that contention. Townsville has a greater community of interest with these electorates than with the city of Brisbane. It is more concerned with the electorates in the Northern Zone, which have an important bearing on its economic life, than with the metropolitan district.

The other point I make is that the hon. gentleman's scheme will create a greater discrepancy in quotas. The quotas in the Bill range from 4,611 to 10,795. The quota range in the amendment would be from 4,070 to 10,795. That would mean an aggravation of the matter about which they complain.

The basis of the complaint throughout the discussion of this Bill has rested on the question of zones and quotas, yet we find that the amendment proposes to aggravate the conditions that have given rise for the complaint. However, it is apparent to me that the real object of the amendment is to strengthen the Country Party in the South-Eastern Zone. In this zone there will be purely urban electorates in five seats, namely, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Ipswich and Toowoomba. In addition there will be six electorates with a third or more of the electors residing in the cities. It follows that if the amendment was accepted it would have an effect of increasing the quotas of the cities in the South-Eastern Zone. It would result in making five safe Labour seats in this zone and 17 safe Opposition seats, while six seats could be classified as doubtful. That is the real kernel in the nut. That is the reason for the submission of this amendment. We have been charged in the course of the debate with an endeavour to rig the electorates for the Government's gain.

Mr. Pie: No-one knows where the boundaries are.

Mr. GAIR: That is true; we do not know what the boundaries are. If you examine the question you will find that the Bill provides for certain zones and certain quotas and a number of seats in the different zones. That is the basis on which the calculations are made.

Mr. Decker: How do you know which is which?

Mr. GAIR: I know the zones and the hon. member should know them if he examines the matter, and also the number of electorates and the quotas. That is patent to anybody.

Mr. Muller: How can you justify a smaller quota in Ipswich than, say, South Brisbane?

Mr. GAIR: The large population and the compactness of Brisbane would have a determining influence on the quotas here. The Ipswich electorates would be far greater in size than the average metropolitan electorate. I do not think my own electorate is 2 square miles, and that would apply to many of the other metropolitan electorates. Those are factors that would influence the determination of quotas and that is probably the consideration behind the whole principle of zoning.

In this debate I have heard hon. members talking about the hon. member for Carpentaria and the hon. member for Warrego as being able to represent their electorates adequately and satisfactorily. I venture to say that those hon. members do a mighty job in their attempt to represent the people. They do it very well, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that they are required to travel long distances between towns in order to discharge their duty as representatives of those vast electorates. No-one would say that we should disregard distances entirely. It is so much humbug to say—as I heard the hon. member for Hamilton say—that we represent people and not distances. That may be so up to a point; but the fact remains that where he and I can get round our electorates—

Mr. H. B. Taylor: In 20 minutes.

Mr. GAIR: I would not say that, but we can get round them conveniently in less time than it takes the hon. members who represent these extensive electorates. It would be unfair to disregard entirely the question of distances in those places. Where people are distributed far and wide in the outposts they are entitled to the best representation they can get. That is the purpose of this Bill as far as the Western Zone is concerned. We do not say the electorates there are not efficiently represented now, but we say that in the interests of those representatives they should not be required to carry the enormous burden that is thrown upon them at the present time. Great expense is incurred by these men in going round their electorates. I venture the opinion that few men would be able to represent the Carpentaria electorate as the present hon. member does because of the great out-of-pocket expenses he must incur in representing that electorate. The same applies to other hon. members on this side who represent far distant electorates.

I can see no point in the amendment; rather do I see, I repeat, an aggravation of the matters about which hon. members opposite complain.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (2.49 p.m.): I was rather uncertain on this matter before I heard the Leader of the Opposition make his points, and I could not get any help from

the Minister's reply in regard to the discrepancies that must exist under this system. We are all in darkness on the matter. Why should Townsville have greater representation in this Parliament than Rockhampton? Why should Rockhampton have greater representation than Toowoomba? The Leader of the Opposition pointed out the discrepancies that will exist between Gympie and Mackay and the far North. Townsville and Rockhampton have a population of approximately 34,000 each, but Townsville has greater representation; but the Treasurer sits in this Chamber and agrees to that. The Minister for Transport, who represents Toowoomba, makes no protest.

The amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition has tremendous merit and I am sure the point I am making appeals to every sane-thinking person. It is wrong in principle that a city like Townsville should have greater representation than a city like Rockhampton or Toowoomba, with equal populations. Every town with equal population should be equally represented in Parliament.

Mr. Gair: Do you not think that the greater distance from the capital has anything to do with it?

Mr. PIE: That is another point that could be argued. The electorates as now formed, with their present representation, are very efficiently represented, especially if we believe the stories of the hon. members for Mundingburra, Townsville and Kennedy. According to these hon. members, no other part of the State is more adequately represented, but this Bill will divide that area still further. Is that not a reflection on those members? In effect, it is saying that they cannot represent their areas satisfactorily. There is also this reflection: we cannot see how the hon. members for Rockhampton, Keppel and similar areas do not effectively represent their electorates to the best of their ability; but the Bill will discriminate so that members representing the Townsville areas cannot give such effective representation as those in the Rockhampton area. That argument cannot be contradicted.

There is definite merit in the amendment. An analysis of the results of the last election clearly shows that there should be a relation between population of areas and their representation in Parliament. At present there can be a margin of 20 per cent. either way but, taking Townsville as an example, we see that there can be great discrepancy. If the allotment for Rockhampton is 20 per cent. more than that for Townsville it means that the Townsville representatives can enter this Parliament on a 50 per cent. less vote than the member from Rockhampton. Is that right?

It is wrong in principle. We should make certain that there is equality to all people and all districts, and the Leader of the Opposition has raised an important point.

If the Government are sincere in their desire to establish the principle of equal representation in this Chamber they must

make certain, for instance, that Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and all the other big cities of this great State have equal representation. They must make certain that one does not receive the privilege that is not enjoyed by another. If hon. members would only consider the matter without party bias they must agree that it is wrong in principle that places like Townsville should be able to send representatives here on 50 per cent. less votes than those required for representation of places like Toowoomba and Rockhampton. If we stand for principle here, we should accept the amendment.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (2.56 p.m.): I suggest that this zoning is one of the best reforms ever introduced.

Mr. Maher: For the sitting Labour member and for the Labour candidate.

Mr. JESSON: For the whole State. There is not the slightest doubt that the various amendments brought forward by the Opposition from time to time are moved with the idea of gaining political advantage for themselves. The hon. member for Windsor rightly said that the North is efficiently represented, but anyone would think that this Parliament was like a Queensland People's Party conference or a local authority conference at which delegates can vote for themselves and exercise proxy votes also. When this measure becomes law and we have 75 members of Parliament each member will have only one vote. The member who has 4,000 electors in the Western Zone will have only one vote, like the man who has 10,000 or 12,000 electors in the city.

I should say that zoning in Queensland means the rejuvenation of Queensland. We are starting out on a new era if the knockers on the other side will only let us get on with the job. Look at the great United States of America. Small States with small populations are represented there because they are rich in oil, gold and pastoral resources. They are zoned. On the argument of the hon. members opposite the United States of America should be one wide open space with no representation for certain parts of certain areas.

Mr. Pie: Do you think Kennedy would be better represented if we divided it in two?

Mr. JESSON: I will not be skull-dragged off the track by that interjection. I do not say that it will be better represented, but I believe Queensland is going to prosper. For instance, anything can happen at such places as Blair Athol in the Central West. Individual farming may be undertaken after the initial step that has been taken by the Government in the Central West now. Gold may be discovered in the Northern Territory or Cape York Peninsula or Cooktown may come back into its own. Many years ago Cooktown had 50 hotels and Port Douglas was a huge prosperous northern port. These things can happen again. Under the Bill provision is made to give those areas extra representation should these things happen, without the need for a redistribution throughout the State.

Mr. Maher: He is living in another geological era.

Mr. JESSON: Nothing of the sort. I was pointing out when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition so rudely interrupted me—and he wants to get back to his farm—

Mr. Nicklin: And you can go to the races tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. JESSON: That is my pleasure. The hon. member's pleasure is playing bowls, a sissy game. As I was saying before I was interrupted, there are four zones in this Bill and I was pointing out that prosperity could come about in any particular area. There could be, for instance, a revival of gold-mining, or the discovery of oil could bring about increased population—yes, even ramie-growing or some other big industry could be established—and we could elect extra members of Parliament to represent those people. On the other hand, if the boom faded away there could be a redistribution. For example, Cooktown at one time was a flourishing centre. Cooktown, with the area including Thursday Island, could have been a State on its own at one time. As I told the Committee before, there were 50 hotels in Cooktown itself at one time. The population was there.

Mr. Maher interjected.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member for West Moreton reminds me of a little story about a parrot on top of a perch who used to cry out from time to time "Rats." The little terrier below would run here and there in search of the rats and he looked up, saw the parrot and knocked him off the perch. The parrot then said, "I know what is wrong with me, I talk too much." The hon. member for West Moreton talks too much.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order!

Mr. JESSON: When I was so very rudely interrupted, I was saying that Parliament might see fit to increase the representation on account of the influx of settlement through the discovery of oil or the revival of mining. On the other hand, in the years to follow the particular places might lose their population on account of the oil petering out or the industries dying out, and then the Government, instead of throwing the whole of the State into turmoil, could reduce the quota. Provision for that is in the Bill.

Mr. Pie: No.

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member has not read the Bill. By his speeches he is trying to inject various morsels of propaganda into the minds of the public. The hon. member for Windsor had a great deal to say about this Bill and now he admits he does not know what is in it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The proposed provisos to Clause 10 are before the Committee and we are not discussing the question of zones generally. I

should like the hon. member to proceed with his speech and I ask hon. members in Opposition to refrain from baiting so that the Committee can get on with the matter before it.

Mr. JESSON: The Leader of the Opposition wants to break down the quotas and make them all equal to that applicable to the metropolitan district. In short, he wants the quota in Townsville to be the same as the quota in Brisbane. That is the policy of centralisation that he is always complaining about. I have pointed out that if the population declines the commission can reduce the quota without any reference to Parliament and without any dislocation in the State. I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Mr. HEADING (Wide Bay) (3.6 p.m.): Any person sitting in the gallery listening to the debate over the past few days would find it difficult to understand why the Government will not accept the amendment, especially in view of the speeches made by the Premier from time to time. He spoke about encouraging production and getting the people to go to the country. He never let up on that theme. He could think of no other argument. He dwelt on it all the time, along with certain happenings in the other States. Here is an amendment that will give the Government an opportunity of doing what the Premier pretended he desired in the way of greater stabilisation of primary industries and more people in the country.

His attitude reminds me of the story of taking the intractable horse to the water and the horse's refusing to drink. Here is the Acting Premier's opportunity to encourage the people to go to the country. That was the theme of the Premier's speech every time he got up to speak—more power to the country people. The Bill proposes to give greater power to the people of Brisbane.

The Acting Premier pretended to be surprised when the amendment was moved and argued that we were asking for more zones after having strenuously objected to the four zones contained in the Bill. Our reply is that having lost the fight against the four zones we must now do what we can to improve the position with the four zones. We are trying to improve the Bill so as to give effect to what the Government pretend were their desires—to foster primary industries and encourage people to go to the country. Did not the Government mean that? Or were they simply "putting it over?" Already they have had two opportunities of doing that. They have had the opportunity of removing the suspicion that has been engendered by the stuff they have put over. They could have accepted the last amendment and given the lie direct to the accusations made against them across the floor of this Chamber. Now another opportunity stares them in the face. Let them come in. Here is their chance. Have they meant what they said over the past few days or was it all hooey? Do they want to encourage the people to go to the country? Here is their opportunity to help hon. members on this side to help the people in the country areas.

As most of the other points have already been covered in the debate I will not delay the Committee any longer except to appeal to hon. members opposite to give to the country people the extra vote that they pretended to give them all along and not leave that consideration to the Northern and Western Zones alone. They would then encourage primary production and make this Bill a much better one than it is.

Question—That the provisos to be added to Clause 10 (Mr. Nicklin's amendment) be so added—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 14.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. Müller
" Decker	" Nicklin
" Heading	" Plunkett
" Hiley	" Taylor, H. B.
" Low	
" Luckins	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Maher	Mr. McIntyre
" Morris	" Pie

NOES, 27.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Keyatta
" Bruce	" Larcombe
" Burrows	" Moore
" Copley	" O'Shea
" Crowley	" Power
" Davis	" Roberts
" Devries	" Smith
" Donald	" Taylor, J. R.
" Foley	" Theodore
" Gair	" Turner
" Gledson	
" Gunn	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Ingram	Mr. Clark
" Jesson	" Graham
" Jones	

PAIRS.

A YES..	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Dugan
" Chalk	" Dunstan
" Macdonald	" Collins
" Madsen	" Mann
" Sparkes	" Hanlon
" Wanstall	" Farreil

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—Matters to be considered in distributing zones—

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.16 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 5, after line 10, insert the following new subparagraph—

'(e) The area of proposed districts which do not comprise any part of a city.'

This clause deals with the matters to be considered in distributing zones, and states them as follows:—

"(a) Community or diversity of interest;

"(b) Means of communication;

"(c) Physical features;

"(d) The boundaries of petty sessions districts and of areas of local authorities."

The matter dealt with in the amendment is contained in the present Act, but it has been omitted from the Bill. Without this direction to the commissioners they could give the cities of Townsville and Rockhampton and others the benefit of the allowable margin of one-fifth below the quota and apply the margin of one-fifth above the quota to sparsely populated areas.

Let me give an example of how it will work out. Take Zones 2, 3 and perhaps 4. Look at Zone 2 as an illustration. The quota is 9,573; the minimum is 7,629 and the maximum is 11,443. Supposing no direction was given to the commissioners to have some regard for area, the commissioners would be entitled to set up a city zone of 7,629 and apply the maximum of 11,443 to the country. Perhaps that might be an extreme illustration, nevertheless it is possible for the clause to work out that way.

I find it rather difficult to understand why this part of the clause was omitted seeing that the Premier previously, and the Acting Premier today, devoted much time to the need to give the country districts greater representation. One cannot help feeling that the omission must be deliberate; and if it is deliberate one can only conclude that it was done for the purpose of giving the commission authority to provide greater representation in the towns than in the country.

This applies chiefly to towns situated in country districts and it could have rather a serious effect on the whole scheme if the commission saw fit, as a result of any influence, to bring about what I suggest is possible. It is the duty of this Committee to prevent that if possible.

In the Act the commission had a particular direction given to it and I can only assume the reason was that Parliament saw the danger of what could happen if it was not given. This is one amendment that I know the Acting Premier will accept because I know he does not wish to see a city like Ipswich, with electorates with a little more than half the electors in the country electorate of West Moreton adjoining it. If the clause goes through as it is there is the possibility that a district such as Ipswich will have three seats and perhaps four. It is all out of focus.

The Premier went to much trouble to tell us how necessary it was to give the country people greater representation in order that they might cease drifting to the city. He said also that with the growth of secondary industry within a few years the population of a city might become greater. This amendment is so fair and democratic that the Acting Premier cannot fail to accept it. If he does, we can assume that the speeches of hon. members opposite in the last few days have been just a lot of hot air. If Parliament agreed to the principle that the commission could set up a city area with the minimum number of votes and a contiguous country areas with the maximum it could manufacture and destroy cities as it wished and I am sure that is not the desire of hon. members.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (3.23 p.m.): I would gladly accept the amendment if it meant anything, but the inclusion of the word "area" makes it meaningless. It is a very wide term and very difficult to apply. It is our intention to avoid the creation of unduly large electorates and the

best way of fulfilling that intention is by specifying a quota irrespective of area. That is the principle in this Bill. In the last analysis it is the quotas that count; "area" is meaningless. The factors provided for in Clause 11 to which the commission must give consideration are comprehensive and complete. If the commissioners are asked to have regard to area as provided for in this amendment I am afraid there will be what we are trying to avoid, unduly large electorates with fewer people than are required by the prescribed quotas.

Mr. Muller: Not necessarily.

Mr. GAIR: Yes. It was on the advice of the Principal Electoral Officer and the Parliamentary Draftsman that "area" was omitted. In their opinion, based on their experiences, it was meaningless and had no value. For those reasons, I regret that I am unable to accept the amendment.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (3.26 p.m.): I am unable to accept the Acting Premier's explanation. If he looks at the original Act, from which this amendment was taken, he will see that it is not meaningless. Its purpose was to give an advantage to western districts where there are big areas with small populations. It was tied up with the provision that gave the commissioners power to utilise the quota system for those electorates. The commissioners still have that power under Clause 10. The same position applies with regard to the quotas and the use of the margin under and over the quotas. I repeat that it is not meaningless, that it was inserted in the original Act for the specific purpose of giving those districts with sparse populations and large areas the advantage of the quota system so that in large areas the commissioners could allocate to electorates a smaller number of electors than the quota provided.

In addition, the original Act contained a provision that if there was a city area the city had to have a quota of not less than the quota. Actually, it had a really cogent meaning in the original Act and it would have the same meaning if it was inserted here.

This business of taking things out of the Act is only in keeping with what has happened throughout the whole of the framing of this legislation. When we go back to the debate on the Electoral Districts Act of 1931 we find that the present Premier objected even to legislative direction to the commissioners in connection with the one-fifth departure from the quotas. He said the discretion should rest entirely in the commission and no legislative instruction should be given. Here we have another example of political somersaulting. In 1931 the Premier objected to the inclusion of this provision, yet we find it in Clause 10 of this Bill.

In this Bill not only is this same legislative instruction to which the Premier objected previously given to the commissioners, but the zone boundaries have actually been drawn by the Government. They have denied the

commission the right to have any say whatsoever in their determination. Therefore, in effect, they have under Clause 11 not only bound the commission hand and foot but also gagged it, too. Not only have the Government drawn the boundaries, but in drawing them they have been careful to protect the interests of the Labour Party. There is not a shadow of a doubt about that. It is quite impossible, therefore, for the commissioners to do their job impartially, because the partiality is already written into the Bill.

In drawing up the zone boundaries the Government have not taken into account the provisions of Clause 11. To repeat them briefly, they are community or diversity of interest, means of communication, physical features, and so on. The Government have kept to the existing electoral boundaries to a great extent, but they have departed from them when it has suited their purpose. Let me quote a couple of illustrations, taking the electorates of Dalby and Keppel for that purpose. Both of these are borderline seats; they are electorates where the result is always in doubt. Any alteration in the boundaries will have an effect on the political future of the electorates. In drawing up the zone boundaries the Government have looked at these electorates and said, "We can help the political future or swing the political future of these electorates towards Labour." There was no question of community of interest, means of communication, or physical features. They wiped out those factors and also the boundaries of the petty sessions districts. The areas of local authorities also were forgotten.

In the case of the Dalby electorate the existing western boundary has been shifted about 15 miles to the east to make the new zone boundary. This was done notwithstanding the fact that the area concerned in the zone has exactly the same community of interest, similar lines of communication, and similar physical features as the area outside. The effect of this is to exclude Wallumbilla, which has always favoured the Country Party, from the Dalby electorate in the hope that the Government party will find Dalby easier to win.

In Keppel the same result has been achieved by the inclusion of a Labour stronghold. The northern boundary of Keppel has been shifted 20 miles to the north to make the zone boundary. That means that Keppel will include Ogmoo, a coal-mining centre, and other coal-mining centres round about, which give an almost 100 per cent. vote for Labour. The Secretary for Public Lands feels that he has a small quota and can give some to his friend, the hon. member for Keppel. The coal-mining area strongly favours Labour, and so it will be that that seat is made safe for Labour. Those are glaring instances in the drawing of the zone lines.

Mr. Maher: Before the commission starts at all.

Mr. Nicklin: As the hon. member for West Moreton reminds me, before the commission has had an opportunity of even

studying the matter—in fact, before the commission is appointed. The fact that in the drawing of the zone boundaries these departures from existing boundaries so consistently favour Labour interests indicates to me that the zone boundaries are not the only ones that have been drawn. The only logical inference is that to arrive at the best possible results for Labour, the other boundaries have also been drawn. They have been designed in such a way as to suit the interests of hon. members opposite when the final electoral boundaries are arrived at.

That is why I say that the commission is hog-tied before it begins to do the job of designing the electoral boundaries within the zones, and it will be almost impossible for it to do the work impartially because already the Government have drawn the boundaries in such a scientific way as to suit their own political ends. On this aspect of the matter I am more than ever convinced that the Bill is a deliberately planned scheme to ensure that the Labour Party cannot be beaten at a general election. However, as I said yesterday, the average Australian likes a fair go and when the electors come to realise exactly what has been behind the machinations of hon. members opposite in drafting the Bill they will bring down their wrath on the political heads of hon. members opposite and the Bill will not protect them.

The purpose of the amendment is to give the commission some discretion in arriving at the areas of the electorates instead of hog-tying them as the Bill does in its present form. The commission is hog-tied before it begins its work.

I am surprised at the statement of the Acting Premier that the amendment has no meaning. It has much meaning, very cogent meaning, because it gives the commission a certain amount of direction that hon. members opposite hope to keep away from it.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (3.37 p.m.): It is true that the provision mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition is contained in the present Act but I am informed by the Principal Electoral Officer, who has been associated with past commissions relating to the redistribution of electoral boundaries, that they have had difficulty in interpreting the meaning of the word "area." We, in this Chamber, can place our own interpretation upon the word but when the Act is handed to the commission and it is asked to make the redistribution it is necessary that it should be able to interpret the Act in a clear way. It is difficult to apply the word "area." It is a broad and nebulous word and it is thought that the word "quotas" is more definite and more helpful in determining the various electorates, having regard to the factors already contained in the Bill.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the zones did not take into account the factors prescribed.

Mr. Nicklin: Not altogether, I said.

Mr. GAIR: If the hon. gentleman will look at the schedule he will find that for the most part it refers to mountain ranges, rivers and boundaries of petty sessions districts, which, after all, are the factors that the commission is required to take into account. Of course, I can quite understand the desire of the Leader of the Opposition to have confusion, to set up a smoke screen and set loose the scare and the feeling mentioned by the hon. member for Logan, that there is mistrust and that an unfair and unjust redistribution scheme is being piloted through this Chamber. If one examines the scheme fairly and impartially one will find that what I say is correct.

Just imagine what you would feel if you were a commissioner and you were asked to have regard to area, and you could increase or decrease an area without having regard to the quotas! What a dilemma you would be in! As I said previously, if it is our intention to avoid unduly large electorates, we can have regard only to major factors. The major factors, after those prescribed in the Bill, are quotas. The omission was the result of experience and has no significance. It is very difficult of application in the drawing-up of boundaries of electorates.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.41 p.m.): The Acting Premier has very cleverly evaded the point. The fact remains, despite what he said, that this sub-clause is in the Act.

Mr. Gair: I admit it.

Mr. MULLER: He gave no explanation for its omission. I agree that it does not contain all the powers one would like. Nevertheless, whilst not a complete direction to the commission, it is of some assistance. The commissioners must realise that they must have some but not complete regard to areas. Therefore, if the commission attempted to provide against any inequality they could not do so without departing from the principles of the section.

There must be some reason for the omission. The Acting Premier very cunningly evaded the point. He did not say why, nor did he say it has done any harm. If it has not done much good, then it must have been inserted in the first place for some purpose. We on this side of the Chamber believe that it would be of considerable assistance to the commissioners and should remain in the Bill. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, there is something sinister about this clause. On the surface it may not appear to be a very important one, but it will tie the hands of the commission, and it must carry out the plan of the manipulators.

The Acting Premier said that he knew nothing about the scheme. I know he is not in the habit of lying, and I would not suggest that he did for one moment, but it is very difficult for me to believe that he does not know anything about it. He has been as much like cast iron as he possibly could be in his reply. It may be that those who drew up the scheme believe that if some of the cities could be beaten down to the

minimum and not raised to the maximum quota the Government's object could be attained. Sometimes we find that if we go into reverse we can achieve something, as long as provision is made for some safe seats.

This scheme has been drawn up very cleverly—three schoolboys did not do it. It has been under consideration for a long time. We must take off our hats to the ingenuity and trickery that are at the back of it. The attitude of the Acting Premier convinces all of us that the whole scheme and the motive behind it are rotten to the core. The people should know that. I have never heard of anything so disgusting in my parliamentary life. I cannot imagine anyone saying that this matter is clean and aboveboard, and is done in the interests of the people of Queensland and not in the interests of any party.

If you examine these clauses you see that some of them are covered up, and this is one of them, and when you seek the Minister's help in order that equity may be done you are told that it cannot be done. They even go to the extent of taking something out of the Act that has been in it for a number of years. I know the Minister is not sincere in this regard. I never saw him in such difficulties as when he endeavoured to give a reason why this sub-clause should not be restored. He knows well but he is trying to convince himself and gull the Committee that it would not be of any use to the commission. If that is so, why was it ever put in the Act?

Question—That the new subparagraph proposed to be added in Clause 11 (Mr. Muller's amendment) be so added—put; and the Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Nicklin
„ Heading	„ Fie
„ Hiley	„ Plunkett
„ Luckins	„ Taylor, H. B.
„ Maher	
„ McIntyre	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Morris	Mr. Decker
„ Müller	„ Low

NOES, 27.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Keyatta
„ Bruce	„ Larcombe
„ Clark	„ Moore
„ Copley	„ O'Shea
„ Crowley	„ Power
„ Davis	„ Roberts
„ Devries	„ Smith
„ Donald	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Foley	„ Theodorée
„ Gair	„ Turner
„ Gledson	
„ Graham	
„ Gunn	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Jesson	Mr. Burrows
„ Jones	„ Ingram

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Duggan
„ Chalk	„ Dunstan
„ Macdonald	„ Collins
„ Madsen	„ Mann
„ Sparkes	„ Hanlon
„ Wanstall	„ Farrell

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 19, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—Report by Commission—

Mr. McINTYRE (Cunningham) (3.52 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 9, after line 2, insert the following new subparagraph—

‘(e) A map signed by them, with the names and boundaries of each electoral district delineated thereon.’”

The acceptance of this amendment would improve the Bill immeasurably. It will be very difficult for electors or any person to follow accurately the boundaries of electorates unless a map is supplied. Without a map it would be almost impossible to follow the boundaries and zones as defined in the schedule. A map is essential for any person to have a complete understanding of the exact boundaries of the electorate. I am sure the Acting Premier, in his wisdom, will accept the amendment.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (3.55 p.m.): I appreciate some of the arguments advanced by the hon. member who is responsible for this amendment, but I understand that the reason for the absence of any such provision is the time factor, the delay the provision of a map would cause in the production of the commission's report. Full and detailed description of the proposed electorates will be contained in the report, and if the work of the commission is held up awaiting the preparation of a map it is considered that an unnecessary delay will take place.

We all know that before the commission's report is made the commission must publish its proposals with maps and objections may be lodged, and it is possible that alterations may be required to be made in the proposed electoral boundaries. Experience has shown that alterations have taken place in the past. Should alterations be necessary, it will mean a second set of maps and that is the reason why no provision is made for a map to accompany the report. It is to enable the commission's work to be expedited as far as possible.

Mr. Nicklin: But do not forget that a map is produced in the first place and it is on that objections are made.

Mr. GAIR: But it does not accompany the report.

Mr. Nicklin: If you have one map, surely you can easily get another map?

Mr. GAIR: I am informed that it means a great deal of delay. It will have the effect of delaying the work of the commission. These are the reasons I advance for my inability to accept the amendment.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (3.57 p.m.): The reason advanced by the Acting Premier was just plain nonsense. You cannot tell what the boundaries of your electoral district are unless you have a map. The Premier recognised that principle right at the introduction of this measure. We got the measure and we had the schedules at the back, but it

was impossible to follow the boundaries and the Premier immediately ordered the production of maps for the benefit of hon. members, and that is the sensible thing to do.

First of all, the commissioners get to work. They arrive at the electoral district boundaries and they fix the quotas and give the names of each and every electoral district. They put down the approximate number of electors in each electoral district. They give a description of the boundaries of those electorates and they provide a map. Then everything is examined by everybody, and, if necessary, objections can be lodged. The commission then sets to work and considers those objections. When it has done that, it provides in its report everything but a map. The reason why it does not provide the map is that it will hold up the presentation of its report. What nonsense! Even if it did hold up the commission's report for a week, what does it matter, so long as the thing is done properly? This has been done by every commission that has ever been appointed in the State up to the present time. What is the reason for not doing it now?

We have got the maps that the commission prepared originally. Hon. members know there is very little variation in the boundaries between the original examination of the commission and the final report after the objections are considered. It is only a matter of a few minutes' work to alter the boundary of an odd electorate to present a map with the final report.

Mr. Hilton, this is a vital matter because you cannot—I defy anybody to do it—determine an electoral boundary, in a country area in particular, without a map. It would be hard enough in the city by following streets, but you would have no hope of following a boundary of such-and-such a petty sessions district, shooting up Snake Gully on to Timbuctoo Mountain and following a line from there. It is plain stupid to think that you can, and I cannot for one moment appreciate why the Deputy Premier hesitates for one second to accept the amendment.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (4.1 p.m.): What I have to say is not criticism of the Deputy Premier, because he has been advised in this matter. Not to accept this amendment is the most stupid thing I have heard. A report is going to be made. On what? The electoral boundaries of the State. Very well, what is the first thing you will do before you come to consider your report? Prepare a map of where the electoral boundaries will be. Before you can write your report you have to have the boundaries in your mind and you could not make a report without a map in front of you. The commission will decide this and that and half a dozen maps may be prepared before the final one, the one on which the commission will base its report. Then, the map having been prepared, it is only a matter of having a photostat copy made and within a day you could have all the photostatic copies run off, with one for each member of Parliament. It is the obvious

thing to do. To come into this Chamber and say that it will take time is not a good excuse. We all agree that there has to be a map and it is silly to advance such an argument as that put forward by the Deputy Premier. Mind you, I am not blaming the Deputy Premier, but I say the advice given him is childish and wrong in principle. To say that it would take time is absurd because you cannot make a report until that map is finalised and all matters have been ironed out as to where the areas will be. Once you get the map you have a photostat copy made of it. What's wrong with that? If the commission alters its mind a few days later—and I do not think it will, although there may be a few objections—another map is drawn and from that photostat copies are taken. We shall then have the proper boundaries.

I repeat that you cannot have a report without a map. Under modern conditions it is so easy to have a map made. In the olden days you might take a week in the cutting of a stencil. I cannot see any logical objection to the amendment.

Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (4.4 p.m.): I support the amendment, as I should like to know what part of my electorate will be going into the city of Brisbane and what part will be transferred to Woolloongabba. I should like to know where the commission is going to put me because I understand the Government are going to make it very difficult for me to retain my seat in this Assembly.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Deputy Premier) (4.5 p.m.): I can see no reason for the agitation and heat displayed by a few members of the Opposition. If hon. members opposite look at Clause 18, they will find that it says—

“The commissioners shall cause to be prepared a map or maps showing the names and boundaries of each and every electoral district proposed by them.”

Those maps are circulated throughout the State, and objections may be lodged. After the objections are considered the report is made. Subsequently maps in the quantity required will be circulated. The proposals of the commission are set out in maps that will be circulated throughout the State.

Mr. Pie: Why did you say there could not be maps because of the time?

Mr. GAIR: I merely said that maps would not accompany the report because of the time it would take. Clause 18 provides that the commissioners shall set out the boundaries and objections may be lodged by those qualified to do so. It is evident to me that hon. members opposite scream and howl about things that should be in the Bill when they are already contained in the Bill. It is the duty of hon. members opposite to study the Bill so as to become aware of its contents.

Mr. McINTYRE (Cunningham) (4.7 p.m.): The explanation by the Acting Premier is very unsatisfactory. He admits

that maps will be supplied with the first draft of the report, to which objections may be made, but we are concerned about the final decision. There may be quite a number of objections and the amendment asks that when the final decision is made it should be accompanied by maps. Clause 18 merely provides for maps before objections are lodged, and all we ask is that when the final decision is made it shall be complete in every way so that we shall know the final decision.

Mr. Gair: They will, but they will not accompany the report.

Mr. McINTYRE: The amendment suggests that the maps shall be officially submitted when the report is made by the commission. To postpone it would be just the same as saying that we should get the names of the new electorates and the other particulars later on. The Acting Premier said it was a question of time, but efficiency should be the main consideration in a matter like this, and so far as time is concerned, anyone who knew his job would take up a very small percentage of the time that has been taken in debating the Bill. The most important thing is to set out clearly the activities to be associated with future elections, and it is a very poor excuse to say that time is important in a matter like this and that such a consideration should over-rule the major matter of complete efficiency in the preparation of such an important scheme. The hon. gentleman's reply is most unsatisfactory.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (4.9 p.m.): The Acting Premier is completely wrong in what he said. Let us look at the Bill calmly and dispassionately. Clause 17 says that the commissioners shall designate the name of every electoral district. Then Clause 18 says that the commissioners shall cause maps to be prepared of the proposed electoral districts. That is so, but those maps will be prepared for the first consideration of its report. The commission presents its report with all the necessary information laid down in the Bill, such as the names of the electorates, the number of electors, the description of the boundaries—plus a map. That is not the final report. Objections can be lodged and alterations may be made as a result of those objections. Possibly they will; some electorates may be altered. Then we shall have the report of the commission upon which the whole electoral machinery of this State is based. We shall get in the final report the names of the electoral districts, the approximate number of electors in each, the description of the boundaries—but no map. All hon. members will agree that on the finalisation of the boundaries it is essential for a map to be issued with the report as that will set the whole electoral machinery in motion. How, for example, can we expect police officers to put the electoral machinery into operation and say in which electorates electors are to be placed if they have no map to guide them?

The amendment is absolutely essential and I cannot understand why it is not embodied in the Bill. The question of time is all nonsense, as out of 75 electorates, judging by what happened in the previous redistribution, alterations will have to be made in only 10 or 15. That means only 10 or 15 new maps will have to be prepared. That will not take any great time. What does it matter if it does take a week or so to prepare, for they are essential to the efficiency of the electoral machinery? We cannot have electorates without maps and there is no provision for maps to be furnished by the commission when it issues its final report. For that reason I hope the Acting Premier will accept the amendment.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Acting Premier) (4.13 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition's outline of the procedure is quite correct, but the point is that after the commission considers all objections it will make its final report, which will contain all the particulars relating to the boundaries of the various electorates. The point involved is whether the report will be placed into circulation or be deferred until maps in accordance with the description of the electorates have been drawn up to accompany it. The time factor arises. The commission can issue its report and subsequently the maps can be published without delaying its issue.

Mr. Nicklin: There is no provision for the issuing of maps.

Mr. GAIR: There is a provision for objections to the proposed boundaries. Any alterations made as a result will be contained in the final report of the commission, against which there is no provision for objection. It will be on these altered descriptions that the correct maps will be based.

Mr. Pie: But there is no provision for that.

Mr. GAIR: Maps will be produced in the first instance, and after objections have been lodged they will be either upheld or rejected. Alterations will then be made in the maps accordingly. You print 75 maps. You may get objections in only 25 electorates, which does not mean that you are going to reproduce the whole of the maps. You produce the 25 with the alterations that have been agreed to by the commission. The point is whether you are going to hold up the issue of the report pending the drawing and printing of the maps, or circulate the report and have the amended maps follow later. That is all that is contained in the business.

Mr. Nicklin: There is no provision for maps.

Mr. GAIR: If you are going to argue that you must have the maps, well, let us have with the report the electoral rolls containing the names and addresses of everyone in the electorates. I repeat that if I could see any real cause for complaint I would readily accept the amendment, but I cannot

see any cause for complaint. Seventy-five maps are issued and unless there are objections, the boundaries shown on them will become the final boundaries. If objections are raised and upheld by the commission, altered plans for those electorates will be made, and a detailed outline of the boundaries of the 75 electorates will be contained in the final report of the commission. An objector would be able to see from that report whether his objection was upheld or rejected. I can see no reason why any hon. member should be inconvenienced by the map not accompanying the report.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (4.17 p.m.): It seems to me that this is a question whether there is to be a precise geographical identification of districts, using maps as well as description by words of those districts. These maps would appear as part of the official report of the commission under the hands of the commissioners.

It is a question of identification. Obviously the Bill does ask the commissioners to report under their hands and to accept the responsibility over their signatures for the conclusions they ultimately reach. In every other direction the matter is conclusive, but when it comes to the maps, on the Bill as at present, there is no responsibility upon the commissioners to sign the final maps as finally determined. They have no responsibility at all in relation to that. It is true that they do have a responsibility to submit interim maps but they are not an essential part of the final report. They are not called upon to sign it and consequently you have no positive identification of these maps with the report of the work of the commission.

The objection of the Minister is not that the amendment would involve the cost of preparing maps that would not otherwise be prepared. He says that these maps will be prepared later and there seems to be only a question of some slight delay, which was stated to be a matter of a couple of weeks or a couple of months. An electoral redistribution is a vast job and will not be completed in a matter of weeks or months. I should say that from when the commission is first appointed till it concludes, and sends the initial report and then considers objections, and then prepares a final report, it will be a matter of many months. In order to ensure that the report under the hands of the commissioners is complete in every possible way and that the report that eventually comes to Parliament has attached to it as an essential feature of that report, maps under the hands of the commissioners positively identifying their ultimate conclusions, even if it does involve a wait, let us have it. Let us wait a week or two.

That seems to me to be the only issue to which any merit might attach—the avoidance of some slight delay. Weighing against that the advantages of positive identification over the hands of the commissioners as an essential part of the report, let us run the risk of delay. Let us have the maps.

Question—That the new subparagraph to be added to Clause 20 (Mr. McIntyre's amendment) be so added—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 14.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Müller
„ Bjelke-Petersen	„ Nicklin
„ Decker	„ Pie
„ Heading	„ Taylor, H. B.
„ Hiley	
„ Low	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Maher	Mr. Luckins
„ McIntyre	„ Morris

NOES, 27.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Jesson
„ Bruce	„ Jones
„ Burrows	„ Keyatta
„ Clark	„ Lacombe
„ Copley	„ Moore
„ Crowley	„ O'Shea
„ Davis	„ Power
„ Donald	„ Roberts
„ Foley	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Galr	„ Turner
„ Gledson	
„ Graham	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Gunn	Mr. Smith
„ Hilton	„ Theodore
„ Ingram	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Duggan
„ Chalk	„ Dunstan
„ Macdonald	„ Collins
„ Madsen	„ Mann
„ Sparkes	„ Hanlon
„ Wanstall	„ Farrell

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 20, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 21 and 22, as read, agreed to.

New Clause 23—

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) (4.27 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“On page 10, insert the following new clause to follow Clause 22—

‘23. (1) This Bill shall not be presented to the Governor for his assent, or be in any other way assented to, until the Bill has been approved by the electors in accordance with this section.

‘(2) On a day not sooner than two months after the passage of the Bill through the Legislative Assembly, the question for the approval or otherwise of the Bill shall be submitted to the electors qualified to vote for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly according to the provisions of the Elections Acts, 1915 to 1948. Such day shall be appointed by the Governor in Council.

‘(3) When the Bill is submitted to the electors the vote shall be taken in such manner as the Legislature prescribes.

‘(4) If a majority of the electors voting approve the Bill, it shall be presented to the Governor for his assent thereto.

‘(5) The provisions of this section shall extend to any Bill for the repeal or amendment of this section.’”

The reason for the amendment is to give the people of Queensland an opportunity of voting by means of referendum and expressing their desire as to whether the Bill shall become law.

There has been much debate on this Bill during the last two or three days and I think it must be obvious not only to the Government but to all hon. members and the public that there is much in it to which we as an Opposition object very strongly. I know, from conversations I have had outside this Chamber, that there is a great deal to which many people might object and about which there is very strong feeling. For instance, I believe that the people of Queensland should have an opportunity of saying by referendum whether they believe that the number of members of the Legislative Assembly should be increased from 62 to 75. That is the first thing on which I believe the people should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion.

I raised this issue earlier in the day but was told by the Acting Premier that the people would have an opportunity of expressing their opinion when the election comes round and an election is conducted under this measure. That is not giving the people of Queensland an opportunity of really expressing their opinion; it is only giving the people of Queensland an opportunity of selecting one or other of the representatives in their own particular electorates. I believe that if the whole Bill was submitted to them by referendum we should get an entirely different expression of the people's opinion from what we shall get if the Premier's suggestion of conducting an election is adopted.

I believe too, that there will be much objection amongst the people as to Clause 6. Clause 7 also is quite a contentious one, and I believe that the people should have the right of expressing their opinion by means of referendum as to whether they want it and the rest of this Bill to become law.

Much has been said about quotas, and I do not want to recapitulate the arguments, but they have been so strong, so sound and so wise that there is good reason for asking that the matter should be submitted to the people at a referendum. Even as to the last clause that came up for discussion this afternoon, I am quite satisfied that the people of Queensland will take very strong exception to the redistribution of electorates and the presentation of the redistribution to Parliament without maps to show where the divisions are.

I say that for those reasons the people of Queensland have a right to ask that they shall be able to express their opinion on this Bill and say whether or not they want it to become law. The opinion of the majority of the people of Queensland will be accepted by the Opposition, and I believe by the Government, and I appeal to the Acting Premier to allow this new clause to be included in the Bill and so enable the people to be consulted on this very vital and important piece of legislation.

I say again that if this Bill becomes law, it will be the biggest step ever made in the Queensland Parliament towards putting into operation a plan of Socialism and even Communism. I say again that it is a vital danger to Queensland. I have said before, and I

say again, that the Labour Party—this party opposite that calls itself a Labour Party—should be called a Socialist Party. We know that it is under the domination of Communism, and there is no practical difference between Communism today and the Socialists who sit on the Government benches. That is the tragic truth. I think, as a matter of fact, that some members on the Government side are Communists but do not realise it. Every one of them is certainly a Socialist and, by means of this Bill and the other legislation that is going through the House this session, is bringing Socialism not only a little closer, but dangerously close to us in Queensland. In fact, it is not only the dream of the Communists but actually an established fact, with the Socialist Government we have in Queensland today. I know that the people of this State hate Socialism and the prospect of its being introduced here, and they expressed that hatred at the ballot box at the last election, because only 43 per cent of the people voted for the Socialist Party; but the electorates were so constituted that, with fewer than 50 per cent. of the votes it retained power in this State. It is an acknowledged fact that after the Bill goes through the Socialists of this country and the Socialists who at present occupy the front benches can be returned to power with fewer than 40 per cent. of the votes. If that is not killing democracy and if it is not a tragic thing for Queensland, nothing is.

I know that the people will turn this legislation down if they get the opportunity, and I appeal to those members of the Government who are not as keen Socialists as front-bench members are, to hold this Bill back until the people can express their opinion, and say that they do not want Socialism in Queensland but want something decent and right and do not want to follow in the track of Russia, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and all those countries that have sold their birthright of freedom to the cancer of Socialism.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Devries): The proposed new clause will impose a charge on the Crown not covered by the message from the Governor and therefore I rule it out of order.

Mr. MORRIS (Enoggera) (4.35 p.m.): In that case, Mr. Devries, I have no alternative but to move—

“That your ruling be disagreed with.”

I moved the motion with a great deal of hesitation because while the feeling during the debate today has been high it was ever so much better than it was during the debate on the Bill in its earlier stages. My colleague the hon. member for Toowong made reference to the fact that in the earlier stages the debate sunk to a low level and I agree with him. Today the Bill has been in the hands of the Acting Premier, who has handled it in a way entirely different from the way in which it was handled on Tuesday.

I understand that you have ruled a new clause out on the ground that it imposes an extra charge on the Crown but your ruling is quite without foundation. I realise that a referendum would cost the State anything between £40,000 and £80,000.

Mr. Moore: Chicken-feed to the Kewpies.

Mr. MORRIS: The Minister is not very careful in coming into this debate. He made the statement that it was chicken-feed.

Mr. Moore: To the Kewpies.

Mr. MORRIS: The Government have introduced a Bill to increase the number of members of Parliament from 62 to 75, which will impose an extra charge on the Crown of at least £20,000 a year and that is to go on year after year. Even if the referendum cost £100,000; the cost would be wiped out in five years if the extra members were not allowed. Therefore, over a period of six or more years there would not be an extra charge on the Crown but rather a saving to the Crown. Although you have given your ruling in good faith, Mr. Devries, I believe that it is incorrect. It should not be ruled out of order on the ground submitted by you and so I move my motion to dissent from your ruling.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (4.38 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the hon. member for Enoggera and I have three observations to make.

Mr. Power: Only three?

Mr. HILEY: Any one would be sufficient to destroy the merits of the ruling.

First of all, I desire to reinforce my colleague's argument against the ruling that if the new clause is accepted it will impose an additional charge upon the Crown, which is something that I dispute. It is perfectly clear to all thinking people that the very reluctance of the Government to accept it demonstrates clearly above everything else that if a referendum was taken on the measure this State, far from being saddled with extra expense, would be saved the cost of the additional members. This redistribution will be exceedingly costly, and the amendment provides the only method by which that cost may be reduced by the cost of an additional 13 members every year.

Mr. Moore: Provided the people vote against it.

Mr. HILEY: That makes it perfectly clear that hon. members opposite recognise that the people would have none of it. They are not game to submit it to the people. (Government interjections.)

The second point is this: the definition of a charge on the Crown must call for something more specific than a direction that a referendum be held. This amendment constitutes no office, fixes no salary, and imposes no direct charge. It does give a statutory direction that a referendum shall be held before a certain Bill shall be effective. There is no obligation to hold a referendum. If the Government are not game to proceed

with it, there is no charge whatever. In that event not one penny is involved. If the Government have the courage to proceed with a referendum and take the licking that awaits them, then the argument advanced by the hon. member for Enoggera is germane to it. If they do not, no charge is involved by the referendum; any extra cost is more than offset by the charges saved by the refusal to hold a referendum.

The third argument I advance in support of the amendment is that it is high time that in a community allegedly democratic, which retains the machinery of democracy there should be no artificial ruling such as this to come between the Government and a direct expression of opinion of the people. What is this amendment? It suggests that before a certain measure shall become a valid law a referendum shall be taken. Can you conceive of anything more highly idealistic in its democratic approach than that? In effect, it says, "Let us ascertain the will of the majority of the people before a certain law shall prevail." To suggest that such a ruling as this should come between the Government and the determination of the will of the people is in itself sufficient to say that your ruling, Mr. Devries, in a country that calls itself democratic could never be right. Such a ruling could be understood in a community that has ceased to be democratic and acknowledges a dictatorship, where the will of the people counts for nothing and the will of the authority becomes the test of what shall be done. I hope that we shall still retain the pretence of being a democracy. If we do, then it is improper for a ruling such as this to come between this Parliament and an expression of the will of the people in a referendum, which the amendment suggests.

Mr. BARNES (Bundaberg) (4.44 p.m.): I agree with the principle of the motion, but I disagree with it in law. This Bill is mandatory on the Government, who must put it into operation. Therefore, if the Bill and the amendment become law it would be mandatory on the Government to pay out that extra money to finance a referendum. There is no authority from His Majesty's servant, the Governor, to warrant that. Therefore, I am forced to vote against the motion, but in principle I am 100 per cent. on its side.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (4.45 p.m.): I must support the motion moved by the hon. member for Enoggera, because on quite a number of occasions now we have had various amendments ruled out of order on the ground that they had not been covered by the message of the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

Your ruling is made on the ground that it will impose an extra charge on the Crown. If your ruling and similar rulings are upheld it will mean that after a Bill comes into this Chamber, if it does not suit the Government to have it amended, we shall be unable to amend it because of the contention that it is

not covered by the message recommending the appropriation. On this occasion the motion would give the people of this State the opportunity to express their will on this legislation. The Government have refused the challenge I offered to them to resign and fight the election on this issue. The only way by which the people's opinion can be obtained is by using the legislation we have on our statute books, which provides for a referendum to be taken.

Mr. Power: It would be wasting money.

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. member thinks it would be a waste of money, but if the people got an opportunity of giving a decision on this Bill it would never become law. (Government interjections.) There would be a bigger majority against it than there was at the recent referendum when the Federal Government sought extra powers.

The points against the ruling were well covered by the hon. member for Logan and I do not propose to repeat what he said. No extra cost would be imposed on the Crown by putting this question to the people; on the contrary, there would be a saving of money because the referendum would cost less than the cost that would be involved in arranging these electoral districts. Instead of the Crown's being involved in extra cost, there would be a saving of money.

For these reasons I disagree with your ruling, Mr. Devries.

Question—That the Temporary Chairman's ruling be disagreed to (Mr. Morris's motion)—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 11.

Mr. Decker	Mr. Pie
" Heading	" Taylor, H. E.
" Hiley	
" Maher	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Morris	Mr. Bjelke-Petersen
" Müller	" Low
" Nicklin	

NOES, 27.

Mr. Barnes	Mr. Jesson
" Brown	" Jones
" Bruce	" Keyatta
" Burrows	" Larcombe
" Copley	" Moore
" Crowley	" O'Shea
" Davis	" Power
" Donald	" Smith
" Foley	" Taylor, J. E.
" Gair	" Theodore
" Gledson	
" Graham	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Gunn	Mr. Clark
" Hilton	" Turner
" Ingram	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Collins
" Chalk	" Roberts
" Macdonald	" Duggan
" Plunkett	" Farrell
" Russell	" Mann
" Sparkes	" Hanlon
" Wanstall	" Dunstan

Resolved in the negative.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

THIRD READING.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—
Deputy Premier): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a third
time.”

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 26.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Jesson
„ Bruce	„ Jones
„ Burrows	„ Larcombe
„ Copley	„ Moore
„ Crowley	„ O'Shea
„ Davis	„ Power
„ Devries	„ Smith
„ Donald	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Foley	„ Theodore
„ Gair	„ Turner
„ Gledson	
„ Gunn	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Hilton	Mr. Clark
„ Ingram	„ Graham

NOES, 13.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. Müller
„ Decker	„ Nicklin
„ Heading	„ Ple
„ Hiley	
„ Low	
„ Maher	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Marriott	Mr. Barnes
„ Morris	„ Taylor, H. B.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brand	Mr. Collins
„ Chalk	„ Roberts
„ Macdonald	„ Duggan
„ Plunkett	„ Farrell
„ Russell	„ Mann
„ Sparkes	„ Hanlon
„ Wanstall	„ Dunstan

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at 5.2 p.m.