

sideration, this House should realise that the Government have done all in their power to have this Bill referred to the people; and I believe that in the judgment of every independent person, and of everyone who is not prejudiced by party or some other influence, they will be acquitted of having dealt in such a manner with the Bill as to prevent its being referred. It has been my earnest desire that the Bill should go to the people or to the electors, whichever may be decided; and if the people of the colony are determined to federate, I am not one to place any obstacle in the way, beyond that I shall vote against federation when the time comes. I say, advisedly and seriously, that it is not my intention to vote for federation, although I think it is only right and just that the people should give a vote on the question. I do not think I need say any more. If I were to attempt to follow Mr. Matheson it would take me much too long, and, besides, there is not the slightest necessity to do so on this occasion. The Enabling Bill will no doubt reach us from another place in a short time, and hon. members will have full opportunity for discussing the various clauses, and deciding what is best in the interests of the country. I only hope we shall take into consideration this serious and most important step—a step which cannot be retraced—with a deep sense of the consequences which are likely to ensue to this country. Possibly some of us are mistaken in thinking federation will be disastrous, while others on the other hand may be mistaken in thinking it will be of great benefit to the country and start us afresh on the high road to prosperity and wealth. Both sides may be mistaken, and possibly we may arrive at a middle course which will be acceptable to the inhabitants of this colony. I would like to say one word in reference to the enlargement of the franchise. I do not think for a moment that any member of the community who calmly and quietly reflects can think of pitting the man or woman who has been in the colony for six months, against a person who has his all here, has his property here, has been here for years and understands the interests of the colony, and can possibly form a very good judgment as to what is likely to affect its prosperity. That is the reason we cannot have voting on

a population basis pure and simple, because we must recognise every interest in this great country, and must have no preponderating influence by the gold-mining or any one industry; but we must have a representation of all the wealth, intelligence, and interests throughout the colony. That is almost a truism which every hon. member will indorse; and for a moment to think that this country should be governed by a number of members who come from one industry—say the gold-mining industry, which I think has been hinted at to-night by Mr. Matheson—would, in my opinion, be destructive of the best interests of the colony, would retard its progress, and probably end in its ruin.

Question—that the Address-in-reply be adopted—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8-22 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 23rd May, 1900.

Address-in-reply: Presentation—Paper presented—Question: Public Holidays, to restrict (altering a Notice)—Privilege: Aspersions on Legislative Assembly by a Member (Geraldton)—Federation Enabling Bill, second reading (moved)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION.

By arrangement, Mr. Speaker and hon. members proceeded to Government House, to present the Address-in-reply to His Excellency the Administrator; and, having returned,

THE SPEAKER reported that His Excellency had been pleased to reply as follows:—

I thank you for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament, and am glad to be assured of your continued loyalty and devotion to the person and throne of our Most Gracious Sovereign.

I receive with satisfaction your assurance that your most careful consideration will be given to the special matter, as well as to all others that may be submitted to you, so that your labours may result in the permanent advancement and prosperity of the colony.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Report of Education Department for 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, TO RESTRICT.

ALTERING A NOTICE.

MR. HALL rose to ask the Premier a question, of which he had given notice in the following form:—Whether he would in the future be more sparing of granting public holidays, in consequence of the loss sustained by the shopkeepers of Perth, and general disorganisation of trade caused thereby.

MR. HALL said: Before asking the question, I would like, as a matter of privilege, to ask the reason of the addition of the word "alleged" before "loss" in the question as it now appears on the Notice Paper. You see, sir, it makes my question now a matter of opinion, whereas it was before made to be a matter of fact.

THE SPEAKER: The Clerk of the House has informed me that the reason why he made the alteration in the form of notice given by the hon. member, was that the question might comply with the rules of the House. The assertion that there had been a loss, as stated in the original question, was a mere matter of opinion, whereas in the form in which the question now appears upon the Notice Paper, it is not so.

MR. HALL: I now beg to ask the Premier the question as it appears on the Notice Paper.

THE PREMIER replied: I am not aware to which holidays the hon. member refers. No complaint has reached me as to public holidays being granted too often.

PRIVILEGE—ASPERSIONS ON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BY A MEMBER (GERALDTON).

MR. MOORHEAD (North Murchison): As a question of privilege, I desire to bring under the attention of the House a matter of rather grave import. It would appear that in the issue of a newspaper known as the *Geraldton Advertiser*, dated the 26th February of this year, there appeared a report of some remarks made by an hon. member of this House, which reflect seriously on the character of the House and on some of its members. I do not wish to comment upon those observations at present, but I wish formally to bring the matter under the notice of the House, and I therefore move:

That the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) be ordered to attend in this House on the next Tuesday, the 29th instant.

THE SPEAKER: The proper course would be for the hon. member to lay on the table the report to which he refers, and to move that the report be read by the Clerk, after which the hon. member might make his motion.

MR. MOORHEAD: I move accordingly:

That the report to which I have referred, containing these allegations, be read by the Clerk.

THE SPEAKER: It will be sufficient at present to read the *précis*, and not the whole speech as reported.

THE CLERK accordingly read a *précis* of the speech, as follows:—

1. That the Government was corrupt and rotten to the core.
2. That he would expose the political corruption and rottenness he encountered last session.
3. That the Government had withdrawn the Rural Lands Improvement Bill in the Upper House, practically to buy the support of the farming element in that House.
4. That many of the members of the Legislative Assembly appeared to be without visible means of support.
5. That he had discovered there was a group of old financiers interested in keeping the Government in office, and that they paid members.
6. That in further substantiation of the charge he had made of political rottenness, he had an assurance from one of the powers behind the throne that if he would sit on the Government cross-benches he would have financial assistance; that he had declined, and that they could not buy him.

7. That an attempt had been made to bribe him in connection with the Sluicing and Dredging Bill.

8. That the foregoing statements justified his accusations of political corruption and rottenness.

MR. MOORHEAD: I formally move, further :

That the hon. member for Geraldton be ordered to attend in his place in this House on Tuesday, the 29th instant, to explain the assertions he is reported to have made respecting the honourable character of this House.

MR. HARPER: I second that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Mur-chison) : Before a motion of this character was made, it would be more courteous to the House if the mover had waited until the member whose conduct is referred to was in his place. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) is detained by necessary business, and is not in Perth at present ; and I think it would be more courteous if the hon. member (Mr. Moorhead) had waited until the member for Geraldton was present. At any rate, the member for Geraldton should have some notice given.

MR. A. FORREST: He knew it was coming on.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think the motion which the hon. member asks this House to pass, a motion practically calling upon the member for Geraldton to answer questions in his place in this House, at the will of the House, might at least have given to the House some reasons for the course he proposes to take. Seeing there is practically a pledge between the leader of the House (the Premier) and myself that the business of this special session, as far as we are responsible for it, shall be confined to the one subject for which this session has been convened, I think it would be much better if the question now raised were deferred until the ordinary sitting of the House in the next session. A question of this kind is calculated to take up a great amount of time, and to bring a vast amount of acrimony into our debates. At present we have a subject on which there is scarcely any difference of opinion, and we have been called together for the express purpose of carrying out the wishes of the Government in regard to that question. I have already intimated, in my observations from this side of the House, that it is the desire of myself and

members on this side to confine the business of this special session to the specific subject which has brought us here. I think that to bring a subject of this contentious character on the floor of the House at the present time would be very inconvenient, and that it might be brought forward much more conveniently at a sitting of the House in the ordinary session, which is not far off. That course would be more in harmony with the feelings of hon. members, and more calculated to produce the result which the mover of this motion no doubt desires. I take it that he desires we should have this question properly discussed and fully ventilated, and, if any wrong has been done, that the wrong should be righted. I think it is almost impossible, if some wrong has been done, that it could be righted this session in the way proposed in the motion. Such a course would only lead to waste of time, and to acrimony of spirit altogether foreign to this House. This being my view of the matter, I move, as an amendment on the motion, that the words "next Tuesday" be struck out, and the words "the second Tuesday after the meeting of the House in the ordinary session" be inserted in lieu.

MR. GREGORY: I second the amendment.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : While I heartily appreciate and am grateful to the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) for his desire to assist the Government to bring this special session to a close as early as possible, and while I would willingly have nothing whatever to do with this very painful matter at the present time, yet I feel that if this House took no notice whatever now of this painful episode, our action might be altogether misunderstood and misconstrued.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not if you take this action.

THE PREMIER: I even question whether it is quite parliamentary to deal with a question that has come up in a previous session, if a session has come in between. Still, those who have anything to say ought to say it at the very earliest moment, and not defer it to another time. I am surprised, I must say, at the action taken by the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth), because he is just as much interested as I am in this matter. If

this newspaper report is accurate and can be substantiated, it reflects on the honour and integrity of this House; and I think every one of us desires that the honour and integrity of this House shall be without reproach. It seems to me, at any rate, whatever other action might be taken, that it is due to the member for Geraldton himself that he should have an opportunity of saying what he has to say in this House. Probably the explanation he can give in regard to this matter may be altogether satisfactory to hon. members. We have only a newspaper report before us, and we know that mistakes are made in reports, and that the hon. member may have been misunderstood, or misrepresented, or may have been misreported; and it is due to him that the very earliest opportunity should be given for explaining what he is reported to have said. Reference has been made to the fact that the hon. member is not present; but I take it there is nothing in that, because I do not suppose any one of us would be prepared to agree in passing a motion on his conduct in his absence, or do it off-hand. Time would be necessary, and the mover of this motion has mentioned Tuesday next as the time for the member for Geraldton to be in his place here; and if that hon. member is not in his place on Tuesday next, I have no doubt the matter will be postponed even to a later day. I cannot think for a moment that we would be doing right, as members of this House, in sitting here and going on with the business of the country while charges of this kind were hanging over us; and it might be said of us that we were indifferent to the allegations made by the member for Geraldton, and were quite content to defer inquiry into them till some more convenient season. I think it might be said we were afraid of these things; that we were trying to put them off, in order that time might come in between, and might allay the feelings of indignation of hon. members. I think the least we can do, viewing the situation not only from the position of hon. members themselves, but from the point of view of the hon. member for Geraldton, is to let that hon. member have the earliest opportunity given him to state what he did say, and to substantiate, if he can, what he has stated.

This procedure which the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) has taken is absolutely in accordance with Parliamentary usage; and it is not likely that the hon. member would bring forward a motion that was not in accord with Parliamentary practice. It is absolutely in accord with the procedure adopted in other places, in similar circumstances.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In a special session?

THE PREMIER: Even in a special session. I agree with the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) in regard to every other matter. But a special session cannot override the consideration of the honour of members of this House. That is another matter altogether. Our honour and our integrity are above all other considerations. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] If we postpone a question involving our integrity and our honour as men, as members of the Legislature, and as trusted officers of the public, if we defer that question in order that some weeks may elapse, we shall be guilty of a great error. I say there is no other consideration so great: neither federation nor any other action is so great or so important to the people of this colony, as the good faith and honour of their representatives in Parliament. What are these insinuations, innuendoes, or charges? They mean, if they mean anything, the personal dishonour of members of this House, and the personal dishonour of myself and all the members of the Government. Then, am I to sit still in this House because of the Federation Bill or any other Bill being before us, or because this is a special session? Am I to stand or sit here and say, "Defer this matter?" If these things are true, I no longer have a right to sit in this House: I deserve to be hounded and hurled out of public life; and other members of the House are in the same position. Are we to delay such a matter? Does the hon. member advise me to do that—to defer this matter because we are dealing with an important subject in a special session?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why did you not call a special session to attend to the subject of this motion?

THE PREMIER: This is the first opportunity we have had of dealing with the matter. The hon. member (Mr.

Illingworth) has a high position in this House, in which he has been placed by his fellows on that (Opposition) side. I warn him, I adjure him to be careful of the position in which he is placed; and above all things, above every other consideration he can think of, let him see that the honour and integrity of members of this House are maintained.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Thanks for the advice.

THE PREMIER: Yes; I say it is good. I shall go out of this House, and shall never enter it again, if these charges be true; and I say the least we can do, the least every man in this country expects us to do, is to see that the hon. member (Mr. Robson) substantiates his charges, or that he withdraws them, or that at any rate he explains to this House the reasons that actuated him in making them. I speak warmly, because I am warm, and because my honour and the honour of my friends around me has been attacked. [MR. GEORGE: I am here too.] And what is the use of our sitting here with these charges unanswered? Are we here to pass Bills, or to legislate in any way, when we are charged with corruption? I say, the least we can do is to pass this motion, brought forward so courteously by the member for North Murchison, a motion which ought to have been passed on the voices, and then I should not have had to make the speech I have made to-day.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): The right hon. gentleman has been somewhat over warm—[SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no!—] but he will pardon me for saying that, because I believe he is sincere in what he has said. I think he will agree with me that it is hardly fair to hit a man behind his back; and although it would appear, from what has been published, that the member for Geraldton has hit the other 43 members of this House behind their backs, still we will not, as far as I am concerned, follow a course that would practically amount to hitting him in his absence. I quite agree with the Premier that it is a right thing—and this will not be denied by the leader of the Opposition—for this House to take cognisance of the accusations which are said to have been made; but personally I do not believe the honour of this House will suffer in the slightest degree by deferring

this inquiry until the next session of Parliament. I may be wrong, but I think I am right.

MR. A. FORREST: How can we sit with the man?

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member has asked a question to which I will not reply, because I do not think it right that such a question should be asked. Until the member for Geraldton has had an opportunity of stating his case, we have no right, either as politicians or as men, to condemn him unheard.

MR. HIGHAM: Then give him the first opportunity of proving his charges.

MR. A. FORREST: Next Tuesday.

MR. GEORGE: This session, as has been said by the leader of the Opposition, has been called for the special purpose of federation; and the Premier has practically asked this House not to bring forward any other business. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] He has called upon us to come here, at what is to many an inconvenient time, to discuss the burning question of the day; and for that purpose I have attended this session. If this motion be passed, and the member for Geraldton be called on to answer for what he is alleged to have said, I shall certainly take every opportunity and every chance I can get to see that every other member of this House shall give him a fair hearing; but I do ask hon. members not to be precipitate, not to hasten to strike at a man who is not present to answer for himself.

MR. A. FORREST: We are not striking him.

MR. HIGHAM: He can be here on Tuesday.

MR. GEORGE: Though I do not believe the statements made can be substantiated, yet I think we shall find the hon. member can give some explanation very different from those contained in newspaper reports. I also am thoroughly convinced it is quite right there should be a full inquiry, because it is not from the member for Geraldton alone, but from the Press in different parts of this country, that allegations have been made against all and sundry members of this House. In the gold-fields Press it has undoubtedly been said that members of this House have soiled their reputations and damaged the

honour of Parliament by accepting blocks of land for services they should never have rendered; and that is the reason why I shall move for that return tomorrow of which I have given notice, because the next time I go to the gold-fields, and when I am accused of belonging to a House which has so degraded itself, I shall be able to say, either that those allegations are false, or, if they are true, that I am ashamed to belong to the Legislature of Western Australia. I shall vote with the leader of the Opposition, and I think the Premier, on consideration, will find he will lose nothing of the strength of his case by acting with generosity to an absent opponent.

THE PREMIER: He will be here on Tuesday.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I am not quite sure that we shall ever have another session of this Parliament. I doubt if we ever shall. Who can guarantee it? The Government, which has lived so long, may not live through this session or through the next. It is possible this House may dissolve before this federation question is settled; and then we dissolve never more to meet. The members who are here now—at all events, a good many of them—may never come back to this House. No man wants to retire from Parliament, to find himself, in the near future, in a position where he cannot effectively defend his character; so “now is the accepted time.” I may say that on talking the matter over with others, and with some in authority, I advised that we should not deal with the matter this session. That was my opinion till the gravity of the position was placed before me; and nobody who has heard the Premier this afternoon can doubt how he feels about the matter. I do not think I ever saw the right hon. gentleman so deeply moved before as he was this afternoon. I, therefore, confess it would be absolutely unjust to the Premier in particular, as leader of this (Government) side of the House, and it would not be fair to the member for Geraldton, to let this matter stand over; for supposing Parliament dissolve this session—a thing which can and may happen—the member for Geraldton may not come back to Parliament. Then he must go out of Parliament without having any

opportunity of substantiating his charges. If anything happened to prevent that hon. member being heard on Tuesday, I for one should absolutely oppose anything being done in this matter till he was in his seat; but let us bear in mind that no attack has been made this evening upon the member for Geraldton—none whatever. He is in one of two, or rather one of three, positions. He was misrepresented by the Press, in which case it is due to us and himself to hear him; or he has made accusations which prove him to be either a social purifier and a political and Parliamentary purifier; or, thirdly, he is something else which rhymes accurately with purifier. He is in one of these three positions. The man has made base and groundless charges, or he has made charges which will stamp him as being at once a clever man, a courageous man, and one who is not afraid to attempt the task of cleansing the “Augean stable” into which he has lately been taken as an assistant. I say under these conditions we must go on with this matter now; but that “must” need not involve any undue haste. Next Tuesday the hon. member will probably be here. If not, we shall adjourn the inquiry. He should be given, and must be given, a fair trial. [**MR. GREGORY:** By whom?] The whip of the Opposition (Mr. Gregory) need not bridle up in that way. We are not going to make a party question of this, as he is so fond of doing of everything. Who can try Parliament? I have seen it advocated by members of Parliament, and by the Press, that some outside committee should be chosen to try this House. Why, Parliament is the supreme tribunal in this land, and if there be not found inside the walls of this Assembly men who are able to try this issue, there are men in the Upper House who can do it. But we will give the hon. member (Mr. Robson) a “fair deal.” We will have no party committee, if I have any power to prevent it. Every side of the House shall be represented on the committee, and it is only fair the hon. member should be here, for the reason that we cannot proceed to do anything until we know the grounds of his charges; because it might happen that I, for instance, or any other member, might find myself appointed on that committee,

and might afterwards find that I was one of the accused.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The whole House is accused.

MR. MORAN: If the hon. member (Mr. Robson) wants a "fair deal," he must intimate that he intends to make charges, and must give the names of those whom he accuses; and those members accused must have nothing to do with the trial, except as witnesses. That is the position. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] He will get a fair British "deal," and we will all hope that he will come out as a man—that he has been misled. I cannot for one moment imagine that the hon. member could be guilty of saying what he is represented to have said, unless he has been imposed on. Let us have the truth right out. No one wants to live under these imputations, and I am sure the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) does not want to live under them. I do not know any man who can afford to give away an honourable name, which for some of us represents all the capital we have to live on; at all events, we all started with that, and let us wind up with it if we possibly can; and if we are to go out of Parliament this session, let us go after having had these charges inquired into. I speak bitterly upon this, because a paper in my own constituency never issues a number that does not refer particularly to these charges as proven, and as charges that the Government are afraid to take up. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* repeats, in every issue, that the Government dare not hold an inquiry into this question. That is a paper which represents a great party in this country, the party which wants separation. We cannot afford to sit still under these charges. Yet while we are jealous of our own honour, let us give the gentleman who has made these charges due notice. He shall be given a fair trial; and I believe the fairest method of doing that will be to let him make his charges in the open House, where the public can hear them, and let every man accused stand up publicly and defend himself. These attacks have been made known in other parts of the world, and there is only one way to deal with them, that being in open court. So we must have a thoroughly unbiassed select committee in

this House, consisting of members who are not implicated in any of the charges. Then we shall see whether there are any members in this House who believe these charges are true. Sneerers say, at times, that we want to make a party question of this matter; but I assert such is not the case. We want a "fair deal," and we will not allow any man who is a member of the Assembly to make accusations of this kind, unless we can bring him to book and give him an opportunity to explain. We know what would happen if such accusations were made in the street, individually. I support the motion entirely in the interests of Mr. Robson, whom I have had the honour and pleasure of calling "friend" in the past. He is a gentleman who made a good impression in the House in the early part of the session, and who, strange to say, all the time he was here voted for the Government which he has described as corrupt. I await Mr. Robson's explanation, and hope it will eventuate in the fair fame of this House being reinstated, and in Mr. Robson being able to resume his seat once more among us, as one whom we can trust and who will trust us also.

MR. EWING (Swan): There is no doubt the charges by the member for Geraldton are serious; nor can there be any doubt that they must be investigated, and investigated coolly and deliberately, absolutely independently of any party or political feeling. I was unfortunate enough to be absent from the House when the motion was moved, but I understand it to be that Mr. Robson shall be called upon to substantiate or withdraw his statement.

MR. MORAN: To explain.

MR. EWING: To explain the statement he is reported to have made.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: On Tuesday next.

MR. EWING: I think there are two sets of parties interested in this matter. The first is an individual, Mr. Robson, the second being composed of the members of this House; and when a charge of this kind is made, it cannot be dealt with too early and too readily. If these charges are true, the public have a right to know who are the individuals referred to, and to deal out to them the political punishment they so richly deserve. On the other hand, if there is no substance or truth in the remarks of

Mr. Robson, the earlier an opportunity is given to that gentleman of showing to the public that he has made statements which are without foundation, the better for the community and this Parliament. It cannot be a pleasant thing for Mr. Robson to sit amongst a number of men against whom he has made a charge, any of whom may be regarded as tainted with the fraud that is charged against this House. I think if he were here, he would say, "Give me the earliest opportunity of vindicating my position, or of withdrawing my remarks." The community demands an inquiry in the matter, and is entitled to it. I say this without uttering a word about the merits of the question. Whatever may be the faults of the Forrest Government, I would be the last to charge them with corruption; and, altogether leaving out of consideration the merits of the case, I feel justified in saying that if Mr. Robson were in this House to-day, he would be the readiest member to say, "Give me that inquiry: let me either prove the charges I have made, or give me the opportunity of acting the part of a man by saying I am wrong, and withdrawing the statement without qualification." It is right that Mr. Robson should be asked to explain the statement he has made at the earliest reasonable opportunity; and that is very reasonably met by the motion that has been moved. I therefore support the motion on the understanding and assurance that, if Mr. Robson has not had sufficient time to deal with the matter so as to place it fully before the members of this House, and to do justice to his case, if he has a case, further time shall be allowed. The House is in duty bound to extend to him every possible means that lies in its power. When a charge is made against either the whole House, the whole Ministry, or any individual member, the utmost publicity should be given in dealing with the matter at the earliest possible moment. By adopting this course the House will be doing that which the country not only desires but has a right to demand.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): For some reasons given by the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), I support the amendment. The hon. member suggests that if this matter had been brought to the attention of the member for Geraldton,

that hon. member might possibly have withdrawn the expressions, and no more would have been said. If notice of this motion had been given, an opportunity would have been afforded the member for Geraldton to offer some reason or another; but the motion is sprung on the House without notice.

THE PREMIER: On the very first opportunity.

MR. LEAKE: No; the first opportunity was a day or two ago, when the House met.

THE SPEAKER: It is not necessary to give notice on a question of privilege.

MR. LEAKE: I know it is not; but as a matter of fact, notice might have been given on the Notice Paper, and we are all unprepared to discuss the question which, at any rate, might occasion a good deal of heat. I have no doubt the member for North Murchison does not desire to discuss the question, because, no doubt, he has had an opportunity of discussing it with the Government. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that this is a Government matter more than a Parliamentary one.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Why?

MR. LEAKE: Certain charges are alleged to have been levelled against the Government in an after-dinner speech.

THE PREMIER: No. This was at a public meeting. We refer to the public meeting at which the member for Geraldton addressed his constituents.

MR. LEAKE: That shows the necessity for this House having an opportunity of looking calmly and dispassionately at these papers, because if the Government were so anxious in this matter, we would have expected them to put up the Attorney-General to move the motion rather than a private member in the person of the member for North Murchison. But they have thought fit to adopt the course which has been taken, and undoubtedly they are strictly within their rights and privileges.

A MEMBER: Have they done what you assert?

MR. LEAKE: Undoubtedly; because I happened to notice on the papers laid before the House a memorandum in the handwriting of the Premier.

THE PREMIER: The papers were sent to the Speaker with that note on the top of them.

MR. LEAKE: That clearly shows, does it not, that these papers passed through the hands of the Premier?

THE PREMIER: If they did, what does it matter?

MR. LEAKE: Nothing. I am trying to throw oil on the troubled waters, and I ask hon. members to pause before they enter into a discussion of this kind without due consideration.

MR. EWING: The discussion will take place when Mr. Robson comes.

MR. LEAKE: But I understood the hon. member to say perhaps we might avoid this discussion by a possible withdrawal by the member for Geraldton in the House. If notice had been given of this motion, that opportunity would have been afforded the member for Geraldton.

MR. A. FORREST: He can have it still.

MR. LEAKE: Am I to understand hon. members in this House will not be satisfied with the withdrawal of the statement, but will insist on the prosecution of the inquiry? Is that so?

THE PREMIER: It is merely an assumption of yours. No one said it.

MR. EWING: There should be no withdrawal. Either there should be a statement that the assertions are not true, or the member for Geraldton should proceed with them.

MR. LEAKE: That is quite right. I suppose what the hon. member said just now was not quite what he meant. However, that is by the way. What I complain of is that the motion, that the member for Geraldton should be ordered to attend in his place and explain, has been made without any notice at all. I do not think this House should make any order, particularly an order of this kind, without having had time to consider it. The motion was very nearly carried on the voices a moment ago, without a word of explanation. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) points out that the member for Geraldton would be guilty of contempt if he did not attend. We want to give the member for Geraldton ample opportunity. I am not desirous in any degree to burk inquiry in this matter. There is no doubt the member who made the alleged statements is himself prepared to submit himself to all proper authority, and to offer necessary explanation.

MR. HIGHAM: Are you sure?

MR. LEAKE: That interjection shows there is an element of bitterness on the Government side of the House, which I not only deprecate but regret; and I hope the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) will avoid anything of that kind.

THE PREMIER: I suppose it is nothing to be charged with dishonourable conduct!

MR. LEAKE: What has occurred only shows the necessity of acting with a certain amount of caution and consideration. I do not like members on the Government side of the House to prejudge this matter, but I wish the House to give everybody an opportunity of offering a full explanation; and if an explanation is not forthcoming, let the person be dealt with according to his deserts. No authority has been quoted for the course taken. This is the first time such a thing has happened in this Parliament, and I think since Parliamentary Government has been known in Western Australia. This is an unusual motion without notice, and one would have expected it to be supported with some authority. I have no doubt that authority is handy, either in the *Parliamentary Practice* or in the *Standing Orders*; but at any rate we were entitled to know something about it. I say again I am supporting the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and there is force in what he says. I trust that even if the amendment be not carried, the debate on this question will be adjourned until to-morrow or the next day, because this has come upon us as a sudden shock. Doubtless there has been a rumour outside and in the Press. I notice that the Government Press has been agitating in this matter for a considerable time, and urging that the subject be inquired into. Still, that is no reason why we should not approach this matter with a certain degree of calmness. No doubt we desire to maintain the honour and integrity of the House, but I cannot help saying that in the course of time in this Chamber many expressions have flown from both sides of the House which, if you analyse them and take their grammatical meaning, or historical meaning for the matter of that, impute very improper conduct, and you will find that even from the Government benches very severe remarks have been made. I myself have been called a "traitor" before now, and it is not

so many years ago—and I believe it is still the law—that a traitor suffered capital punishment; but nobody ever thought that those words were used in what we might call a personal sense, because there was a certain political sentiment. So I dare say when we come to inquire into the merits of this particular case we shall find there was a political element existing. There is not sufficient before the House to justify the motion being forced through—I say forced through—this evening, without due consideration and deliberation. I therefore support the amendment moved by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth); not with the idea of burking discussion, but with the intention that the matter may be more calmly and dispassionately considered. Nobody can deny there was a certain amount of heat introduced by the right hon. gentleman (the Premier); and although I was not astonished at it, yet that exhibition of feeling should be alone sufficient to induce us not to hurry this matter. We are supposed to act in some way in a judicial capacity, in dealing with this question; and we ought not to approach the consideration of so important a matter when our minds are either heated or biassed. I implore hon. members to consider the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, and, at any rate, to consent to an adjournment of this debate to another day.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): For my part, I am one of the last members who would desire to burk inquiry into charges of so grave and serious a character. I am entirely at one with the Premier in his desire to have that inquiry as early as possible. Nevertheless, I cannot avoid taking consideration of arguments introduced on this side of the House, and particularly one powerful argument just used by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake). Any question involving the privilege of Parliament is in its nature very serious, and should be approached with all due caution and deliberation. I know that if a similar episode had occurred in the Imperial Parliament, every opportunity would have been given for ventilating every side of the question; and not only would notice have to be given, but a lengthy notice to the member most con-

cerned, in order that, if he desired to do so, he could work up a case against the Government. If the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) were able to muster a majority in this House, he could proceed by means of impeachment, and that form of procedure would involve considerable delay.

THE PREMIER: This is not a matter of impeachment, but of personal honour.

MR. VOSPER: I am not speaking of impeachment on any question of policy. Ministers in the House of Commons have been impeached on charges of personal corruption, and that is the charge, substantially, made by the member for Geraldton against the Government of this colony.

MR. HIGHAM: Against Parliament generally; not against the Government.

MR. VOSPER: I read the charges as being levelled, for the most part, against the Government of the day and against their supporters. The charges are not levelled against this (Opposition) side of the House.

THE PREMIER: We want inquiry, then, and you won't give it us.

MR. VOSPER: In any Parliament in the world, matters of this sort would be approached with considerable deliberation and caution, and particularly where serious charges are made. I think every opportunity should be given to the accuser to formulate his charges in a proper manner. As it is now, a very brief notice has been given under the terms of the motion, and the House is asked to pass the motion at a moment's notice. Members on this side were totally unaware that this matter was coming on.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Nonsense! You knew it was.

MR. VOSPER: For myself, it is not more than half an hour ago that I suggested to the leader of the Opposition the desirability of having this matter brought before the House, for discussion.

THE PREMIER: You wanted to urge us on, did you?

MR. VOSPER: I suggested to my leader on this side the desirableness of having this matter discussed, not necessarily now, but at some time.

MR. MOORHEAD: The hon. member who made the charges knew the grounds of his charges on the 20th February when he made them, if he had any grounds

MR. VOSPER: It is one thing to be sure of your facts, and quite another thing to be able to obtain the evidence necessary to support them. The hon. member (Mr. Moorhead), as a lawyer, must be aware that it is a practice in law to apply for repeated adjournments in order to obtain evidence. In this case, the accuser will not be allowed sufficient time, under this motion. This matter has been sprung on the House, and it is not the kind of business that should be sprung on members; but this is a question that should be approached with every caution, and the fullest opportunity should be given to every member to examine the charges contained in the particular newspaper. We are asked to suddenly decide on a matter of the gravest moment, a matter that has no parallel in this Parliament, and very few parallels in the records of the British Empire. I was somewhat amused at the sudden spasm of virtuous indignation which has come over the Premier to-night. No doubt the right hon. gentleman was thoroughly sincere in the indignant manner in which he repelled those charges. Nevertheless, I cannot but be aware that for years past, for four or five years at least, allegations equivalent to these charges have been made by newspapers in various parts of the colony.

THE PREMIER: Not in regard to Parliament.

MR. VOSPER: The public Press is quite as important an institution as Parliament itself; and I recollect, in particular, that one journal, the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, has made charges of this character.

THE PREMIER: Never of personal dishonour, that I have seen.

MR. VOSPER: Oh, yes.

THE PREMIER: If it were so, I would make them prove it.

MR. VOSPER: That journal said the Premier was the most politically crooked man in all Australia.

THE PREMIER: What is there in that? We are all crooked, politically, in the opinion of some people.

MR. VOSPER: The distinction made by the right hon. gentleman is certainly a subtle one, and would do credit to a greater casuist even than himself. I remember, also, that a charge of deliber-

ate fraud was published in the *Kalgoorlie* newspaper, only a week or so ago, against a company in which a member of this House is known to be interested, and it charged that company with conspiring to swindle the Railway Department. It impugned the personal honour of members of the company—that personal honour of which we hear so much this afternoon.

MR. A. FORREST: That matter could be easily explained.

MR. VOSPER: I say again that for the last five or six years charges of this kind have been made frequently in the Press of the colony, and no action has been taken by the Government to meet the charges, except in one solitary unimportant case, wherein a member of this House was said to have assaulted another member at the back of this Chamber. Among all the charges of this kind that have been made in the Press during the last few years, we have seen only one charge investigated by the action of the Government in placing the case before the Supreme Court; and that case was of so trivial a character that it was laughed out of court. Look at the position in which the Opposition in this House are placed over the action of the Government. The Premier has arranged with the leader of the Opposition that practically no business is to be dealt with during the present session, except only the Federation Enabling Bill. In connection with the motion I brought before the House yesterday, the leader of the Opposition was written to, and when he met me in this Chamber afterwards he requested me to drop that motion for the special purpose of giving facility for the discussion of the federation question. This arrangement means that Opposition members are to keep back all their business, to keep back everything except this one question of the Federation Bill, no matter how important may be the business of members on this side of the House. Matters quite as important even as their "personal honour" may have to be brought forward by members on this or the other side of the House, and yet we are asked to keep all this back, while the Government, or a member on their side, bring forward the most disturbing question they can think of. This is done at a time when we find members on both

sides of the House agreed on the subject which we have been called together particularly to deal with; yet, while this is the state of feeling, the Government introduce this most disturbing question. When members on this (Opposition) side of the House are willing to drop their business, in order that the House as a whole may agree in passing the Federation Enabling Bill, this is the very time that the Government, instead of the usual "red herring," throw a whole whale on the floor of the House. To bring a motion of this kind forward at such a time is not treating the House fairly, nor is it treating the Opposition fairly, nor treating the member for Geraldton fairly; nor is it treating themselves fairly.

THE PREMIER: We want the member for Geraldton to prove his words—his charges of personal dishonour. That is all we want him to do.

MR. VOSPER: You should not rush through a matter of this kind.

THE PREMIER: He can have as much time as he likes.

MR. VOSPER: Let us have that amount of delay which the rules of discussion provide for.

THE PREMIER: You do not want inquiry.

MR. VOSPER: I repel with scorn the imputation of the right hon. gentleman. He is committing a gross breach of courtesy in making that assertion.

THE PREMIER: I say they do not want investigation. We want it, and will have it, too.

MR. VOSPER: Very well, the right hon. gentleman can have it, but at the same time he will not prevent me from opening my mouth in protest. I am here to protest against the procedure that has been adopted, not against the investigation itself; and I will neither be misrepresented nor abused by the right hon. gentleman. I have protested against the form in which the Government wish to force on this investigation; and the best proof of their desire to burk a real investigation is their attempt to force on one which from its very precipitancy must be a sham.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I move the adjournment of the debate till Tuesday next.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. MORAN: We are "running the show," just now.

MR. GREGORY: This matter has been sprung upon us.

THE PREMIER: Oh! sprung on you. You knew very well of its coming forward. You want to keep the question before the country—to keep it hanging about.

MR. MORAN: To make an election cry of it.

THE PREMIER: As you have done already on the goldfields.

MR. GREGORY: I do not know whether the Premier or I am addressing the House.

MR. MORAN: I ask you, Mr. Speaker, can a motion for adjournment of the debate be discussed or spoken to. The hon. member moved the adjournment.

MR. SPEAKER: He must move it without speaking to it.

Motion for adjournment put, and a division being called for by Mr. Gregory it was taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	23

Majority against ... 12

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. George	Mr. Doherty
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Holmes	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Dillingworth	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Lenke	Mr. Hall
Mr. Oats	Mr. Harper
Mr. Solomou	Mr. Higham
Mr. Vosper	Mr. Hubble
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Gregory (Teller).	Mr. Locke
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Moorhead
	Mr. Fennefather
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Sholl
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Rason (Teller).

Motion thus negatived, and the debate continued.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I do not think this is a matter about which we should waste more words. We can see the trend of events. I beg to move that the question be now put.

MR. VOSPER: Oh, the gag!

MR. A. FORREST: I second that.

Motion put, and a division being called for by Mr. Gregory, it was taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	18

Majority against ... 2

AYES.

Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Hubblo
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. Moran
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Sholl
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Wood
Mr. Rason (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Doherty
Mr. Ewing
Mr. George
Mr. Hall
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Higham
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Kingmill
Mr. Leake
Mr. Moorhead
Mr. Oats
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Gregory (Teller).

Motion thus negatived, and the debate continued.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): After the discussion that has taken place on this question, in which, unfortunately, much warmth of expression has been made use of, though I think pardonably, the time has now arrived when any further discussion of this matter ought to be deprecated, having regard to the interests of the hon. member who is absent. With that object in view, I think the proper course is to pass the motion. If the hon. member is unable to be present in the House on the day fixed, he can advise the leader of the Opposition or some other member to that effect, and I feel certain that no hon. member will in any way hamper the member for Geraldton by giving him unduly short notice, or by compelling him to prove his charges unless he is fully prepared to do so. Any ample and reasonable time that the hon. member may require will, I am sure, be conceded by this House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This is an order of the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Exactly; and being an order of the House, it can be revoked or modified by a further order; but the question now is, can any real good be done by continuing this discussion in present circumstances? We are all agreed that it is unfair to discuss the merits of this case either one way or other, and any further discussion may possibly tend to do that which we do

not wish done; and I therefore think we should decide this question of notice, for the only point we are debating is whether or not the hon. member (Mr. Robson) shall attend in his place next Tuesday, or whether the interval shall be prolonged till the next ordinary session. Members on this side, and I believe even on the other side of the House, are agreed on the fact that undue delay would be wrong for various reasons; but that any reasonable time should be granted to the hon. member is, I am sure, the wish of every member of the House.

MR. HALL (Perth): No one has attempted to discuss the merits of the case, and I am sure the mover of the motion had no thought in his mind that the merits should be discussed this evening. There was no course open to the Government but to bring this matter forward at the very earliest opportunity, and that they have done. With regard to Mr. Robson not having received notice, I think this is a notice. It is a notice to get ready to prove his charges on Tuesday next, and I feel sure that if he tells the House that he is not quite ready, the members of the House will be quite ready to allow him further time. But it is now some time since he made these charges. They have been ventilated in the Press, and Mr. Robson knew perfectly well from the Press and a number of members that he would be called upon to prove these charges in the House. Therefore, if the hon. member is not ready, he most certainly ought to be. I can only say if Mr. Robson is not able to prove the charges he has levelled against the members of the House, he ought at once to withdraw, and I think he will do so.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I simply rise to take exception to a very strong assertion by the Premier, that members on the Opposition side of the House desire to burk this inquiry. I think that is a statement for which there is no warranty.

THE PREMIER: What are you doing, then?

MR. WILSON: I maintain that members on this side of the House are entitled to be considered honourable, just as much as members on the Ministerial side.

THE PREMIER: We are more implicated than you are.

MR. WILSON: I think that is all the more reason why time should be allowed to allay the warmth of feeling the right hon. gentleman has now exhibited.

THE PREMIER: It is nothing to be told you are dishonourable, I suppose?

MR. WILSON: I should be sorry indeed to have this case inquired into by the right hon. gentleman, in his present frame of mind.

THE PREMIER: I am not going to inquire into it.

MR. WILSON: I should be sorry to submit myself to an examination, in a case of this sort or any other, when the right hon. gentleman was so heated. To assert that the members of the Opposition wish to burk inquiry, and to occasion delay in order that the matter should not be inquired into, is unfair.

THE PREMIER: You ought to assist us, then.

MR. WILSON: We do assist you. I say that if delay in this matter will to some extent allay the feeling of the right hon. gentleman, that delay will be warranted.

THE PREMIER: It is a month since the member for Geraldton made these statements.

MR. WILSON: I do not care whether it is a month ago or not. This is the first time the subject has been brought before the House, the first time we heard that action was to be taken upon it: we heard rumours, but nothing of this motion. I knew nothing about it before; neither did the members on this (Opposition) side of the House. We object to the motion, and are justified in objecting to it. Why should we not have our opinions on this question? If we think the interests of the country will be best served by deferring this matter to the beginning of next session, why should we not speak in support of such postponement?

THE PREMIER: We are to rest under these charges all this time, are we?

MR. WILSON: You have rested under the charges for the last three or four months apparently, and it will not hurt you to rest under them for the next two or three weeks.

THE PREMIER: We will not do it, at any rate.

MR. WILSON: If you have a just case, which I suppose you have----

THE PREMIER: You do not know any thing about it.

MR. WILSON: It will do no harm whatever to allow the member for Geraldton until the beginning of next session. Let us get through with the question of federation, and then at the beginning of the next session you can inquire into this matter as fully as you like.

THE PREMIER: We shall have finished federation by Tuesday next.

MR. WILSON: I have not said what tribunal I would propose. There are outside tribunals that could inquire into this matter, but the subject is one for subsequent inquiry. The question is whether the member for Geraldton shall be ordered to be in his place on Tuesday next to answer a charge.

MR. MORAN: Not at all.

MR. WILSON: That is as I understand the motion.

THE PREMIER: That is the motion.

MR. WILSON: It is an order of the House that the hon. member for Geraldton shall be in his place on Tuesday next to explain the remarks he is alleged to have made about the Government. The member for Geraldton is not here to-night to hear the motion. He is away. He is at Geraldton, and possibly cannot be here on Tuesday; but, according to the motion, he must be in his place on that day, if the motion be passed. He will be contempt of the House if he is not in his place.

MR. MORAN: Not if he gives a reasonable excuse. If he cannot come, he cannot.

MR. WILSON: I am sorry to say I cannot agree with the hon. member. I assert that if the motion be carried, the hon. member for Geraldton must be in his place on Tuesday next, otherwise he will be guilty of contempt of the House; there is no doubt about that. I hope the Premier will not give a public exhibition of his temper. I think it is about time now he controlled his temper.

THE PREMIER: I am not accustomed to this sort of thing.

MR. WILSON: It is only the members of the Opposition who are accustomed to be abused. I do not wish to detract from the seriousness of the matter which is, of course, under consideration. Doubtless it is one of the most serious matters the House can be called upon to discuss.

consider, and I hope the House will give reasonable time and opportunity to the member for Geraldton, so that he may prepare either his defence, whatever it may be, or his explanation.

THE PREMIER: We will give him time, as far as I am concerned.

MR. WILSON: I do not think that bringing forward a motion like this at a moment's notice, that the hon. member shall be in his place on Tuesday next, is giving reasonable time. I know nothing about the merits of the case. I have only seen the charges which have been read out here, and I am not prepared to say whether the hon. member has any evidence or not, or whether he can meet the allegation.

THE PREMIER: Nor I either.

MR. WILSON: Then why have so much temper about it?

THE PREMIER: No temper at all. If you had been placarded all over this colony and all over the British dominions, perhaps you would have experienced a little feeling too.

MR. WILSON: The whole thing is newspaper report.

THE PREMIER: By a member of Parliament.

MR. WILSON: There is no reason for the right hon. gentleman to get into such a temper and forget himself, and make a serious charge against the members of the Opposition that they wish to burk inquiry on this important matter. I deprecate such a statement, and I think the best thing the House can do is to grant extra time and pass the amendment of the leader of the Opposition.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): Members are all aware, I believe, that Mr. Robson is reported to have said, a few days ago, that he had all these little things in his pigeon-holes. If so, I suppose he is prepared to bring them before the House, to substantiate the charges made.

THE PREMIER: I expect the member for Central Murchison heard the member for Geraldton.

MR. DOHERTY: There is a feeling on this side of the House that members on the Opposition side arranged that the member for Geraldton should not be in his place to-day. The tone of the remarks made indicates that such was the case.

MR. EWING: That sort of statement does no good.

MR. LEAKE: That is another instance of fairness.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): As far as the Opposition are concerned, I desire to say I had not the slightest knowledge that this matter was coming on to-night. That is the reason we are opposing the motion. We are opposing it because it has been sprung on us.

THE PREMIER: You have information about the member for Geraldton speaking of corrupt government. You used it all through your district.

MR. GREGORY: I have said things nearly as bad.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I desire to know whether accusations that members on this (Opposition) side of the House are deliberately planning to keep a member away, for purposes of their own, are in order?

THE SPEAKER: No. I do not think they are in order. I think the observation is one that should not be made.

MR. DOHERTY: I said the idea existed on this side of the House. I did not make any direct accusation against hon. members. I hope I shall never do that in this House. I can only say any members who will be prepared to wait for months to vindicate their honour will be doing an injustice to themselves and to the people they represent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The inquiry now will save two weeks. That is all.

MR. DOHERTY: The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) says it is possible the Government may not live a fortnight. It is quite possible.

MR. WILSON: You have something up your sleeve, then.

MR. DOHERTY: We do not keep anything up our sleeves. I repeat that the Government may not be in power for another fortnight, and may not have an opportunity of vindicating themselves, and why should the leader of the Opposition and his followers be permitted to go to the country with the question in an undecided state? They would not say their honour was touched. No; they would say that it was the honour of the Government, and of the followers of the Government, that was attacked. That would be spoken to the detriment of the Government and to the glory of the

Opposition. If the member for Geraldton is right, every member on this side of the House must resign his seat in Parliament, no other course being open to him. In such case we must go to the country, and the sooner we do it the better.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle) : As a member sitting on the Opposition side, I may say I knew nothing whatever about this motion until the discussion was opened. At the same time, I think the charges made against members in this House are of such a serious nature that the sooner they are substantiated or it is proved the allegations are wrong, the better. It appears to me that the hon. member who is absent is merely asked to appear here on a certain day, to explain these allegations made at a public meeting and reported in the public Press. I repeat that the sooner he does appear and deal with them, the better. From what I know of him, I think that if you ask him, Mr. Robson himself will be only too pleased to state here publicly and before hon. members his opinion of the charges; whether he thinks what he has said bears the light of truth or otherwise. For myself I shall vote for the proposition to give him an opportunity to make his charges at as early a date as possible.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. MOORHEAD (in reply as mover) : I do not propose to deal at length with the arguments adduced either in support of the amendment or the motion. As there appears to be a strange misconception with regard to the object of my motion, I propose to state in a few words my intention in moving it. Briefly, then, it appears that some time about the middle of February last, a member of this House, addressing his constituents, is reported to have made certain charges, primarily against the Government, but indirectly affecting the honour of this House. I have carefully guarded myself against any expression of opinion as to the truth of these charges, or as to whether they were ever made; but taking them as reported, they amount to this, that the member for Geraldton said the Government were corrupt and rotten, that they were kept in office by a group

of financiers who also paid certain members, and that the Government had attempted to bribe him in connection with the Sluicing and Dredging Bill. Therefore, without going at any length into these alleged charges which are put into the mouth of the member for Geraldton through a newspaper report, and without considering their truth or untruthfulness, we find that these charges were publicly reported, and have been spread throughout the country as emanating from a member of this House.

THE PREMIER : Spread throughout the world.

MR. MOORHEAD : Yes, throughout the world, and subsequently been made use of by members of the Opposition side, in alleging that the Government of this country were shown to be corrupt and rotten to the core—how? By reason of their attempts to bribe members of this House. Now, I submit that not alone are the Government of this country directly implicated by charges of this description, but these charges reflect on every member of the House who supports the Government; therefore, when the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) says notice should have been given of the intention to bring forward this matter, and that it is a breach of faith to bring it forward in a special session convened for the purpose of dealing with the Federation Bill, and when he says that he and the Premier have practically arranged that no other business should be brought forward in this special session, my reply is that I do not care a snap of the fingers for any arrangement which may have been made between the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition for limiting the subjects with which members of this House may deal in the present session. I am here to defend my honour, when I consider the honour of this House is impeached, when the honour of the Government, whom I support is impeached by a charge of corruption. I may tell the House that when I proposed this motion I was under the impression that it would be accepted by the Opposition, as well as by members on the Government side, because members of the Opposition are implicated in this general charge, though perhaps not nearly so much as are

supporters of the Government; and I thought that members of the Opposition would desire to vindicate the honour of the House, and that they would scarcely consent to sit in the House for 24 hours, to be brought into contact with members on this side who are supposed to be specially open to be bribed by the Government. Therefore, in regard to the complaint that a breach of faith has been committed in my bringing this motion forward without notice, I submit that there was no intention of committing any breach of faith or taking anyone by surprise. The other argument used by the leader of the Opposition is that the member for Geraldton has had no notice, and will not have time to prepare his defence. The member for Geraldton is not called upon for his defence now. The object of the motion is merely that he shall be ordered to attend in his place in the House on Tuesday next, and explain these allegations. I take it that this House will not constitute itself into a committee of inquiry; but that if the explanation of the member for Geraldton, when made here, is found to be unsatisfactory, if he refuses to withdraw the charges which he is reported in a newspaper to have made against the Government, and against members in this House, then it will be open to the House to take one of two courses—either to appoint a Royal Commission or appoint a select committee of this House, to inquire into these charges. So far as the member for Geraldton is concerned, we do not inquire forthwith into the charges. The objects of the motion are that he shall be here to explain from his place in the House the charges he has made, and to give him an opportunity to make out what may be called a *prima facie* case in support of the charges he has made against the Government, or a withdrawal of the charges and an explanation as to how they were made, or how they came to appear in a newspaper as having been made by him. As to this House being turned into a committee of inquiry and getting evidence in regard to these charges, I do not think that course would be considered for a moment; and therefore, so far as the member for Geraldton is concerned, all he has to do is to attend here by obeying the order of the House, and to make out, if he can, a *prima facie*

case, or to totally withdraw the charges he has made. If he is not able to attend here on the 29th instant, a letter addressed to the Speaker to that effect would no doubt bring forth a resolution in this House for extending the time for the hon. member's attendance; but I, for one, object to the present session being allowed to pass over without some inquiry or some special action being taken for dealing with these charges. This is the more necessary when we know that some hon. members on the Opposition side have actually taken up these charges, and have boldly thrown them at us, saying "Here is the Government that is ruling the country, and this is the way they do it!" I say if there are members of this House who are capable of receiving bribes, and if the Government are such as to offer bribes to secure their support, then the sooner we get rid of this Government the better, and the sooner we get a dissolution of the House the better. Therefore, in moving this motion I am very far from endeavouring to take the member for Geraldton by surprise. It has been pointed out by some members of the Opposition that the member for Geraldton should himself be one of the first to assist in having these charges inquired into. It is ridiculous to say that this motion would not give time for the member for Geraldton to prepare his defence; for I say it is not intended to make inquiry forthwith. But I say that any member who would utter such charges as those reported to have been made on the 20th February ought to be sufficiently prepared to substantiate them on the 29th May. Therefore I must oppose, and am prepared to vote against, the amendment, and to support the motion which stands in my name. I may add that a telegram has been handed to me a moment ago, coming from the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson). It is addressed to Sir John Forrest, and reads as follows:—

I understand Moorhead moving to-night concerning myself and Government. Can be in my place by 11 to-morrow night, if necessary, but would prefer Tuesday, when I will meet you all; and am writing Mr. Illingworth to that effect.

Therefore we have an intimation, such as we all anticipated, that the member for Geraldton will be one of the first to

accept the earliest opportunity of offering his explanation to the House.

Amendment (Mr. Illingworth's) put and negatived.

Question put, and passed on the voices.

FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I have much pleasure in rising to propose the second reading of this Bill, which is intituled "An Act to make provision for the acceptance and enactment of a Federal Constitution for Australasia." In this colony, federation has been a much controverted question, which has caused a good deal of political trouble and much difference of opinion; but I am glad to be able to state that we have now come to an understanding—a general understanding—with the people of the colony, and that, whatever differences of opinion may exist as to whether or not we ought to have federation with the other colonies, there seems to be a general opinion, and I think it is the opinion of a very large majority of the people of the colony, that the question is one which should be settled by the votes of the electors. I am glad to say that up to the present time this very important question, so important really that almost all others sink into insignificance in comparison with it, has not in this colony been made a party question. Of course there may be some difference of opinion in regard to that statement, because we cannot but know that the Opposition in this House are all of them in favour of federation, or at any rate have always been in favour of the Federal Bill being referred to the people—[Mr. LEAKE: Hear, hear]—and I do not suppose that could come about merely by chance; and therefore although both sides—both myself and the leader of the Opposition—have on several occasions said that this was not a party question, still, for one reason or other, a great many questions which are not party questions drift into something like party questions. I think, however, that this Commonwealth Bill, which appears as a schedule in the Bill now before us, represents the views of a good many people in this colony. Of course, I do not mean for a moment to say there is

not a very large number opposed to some of its provisions, but if we leave out a few of those provisions, the general provisions of the Bill meet with very considerable support. I think I have always maintained that the general character of the Commonwealth Bill is such that it meets with a considerable amount of support from all sections of the community, and that it is only in regard to a few clauses that all the difference of opinion has arisen. I should like to say once for all that, whatever may be said in regard to members of this House who, up to the present time, have opposed this Commonwealth Bill being sent to the people, the worst that can be said about them is that they are not satisfied that the Bill sufficiently conserves the interests of this country; and that being so, I do not think they need ever feel any regret at the action they have taken. It is very easy to go with the stream, it is very easy to join the crowd, but it requires a good deal of pluck, a good deal of self-control, and also a good deal of stamina, for people to stand up against the stream and to express opinions which are not altogether pleasing, and which may appear in the larger centres of the colony not in accord with popular sentiment. For any action I have ever taken—and I suppose I have been abused more than anyone else throughout this colony, and throughout Australia—I have only to say I am very proud of what I have done; and in after years, when perhaps we are all federated, and when we have almost forgotten the difficulties we have had to deal with in this colony, I feel pretty certain that I shall not look back with any regret upon the action I have taken during the last year; because all my ideas, all my desires, and all my interests, so to speak, have been in the direction of joining in the federation with the other colonies; and the only reason why I have not gone heart and soul into the matter in the terms of the Commonwealth Bill is because I do not believe this Bill safeguards, to the extent I think it ought to safeguard, the interests of this colony. I am prepared to say we shall be able to live under this Bill, that we shall probably be able to flourish under this Bill. We may have a great many advantages under the Bill; but at the same time, I can see clearly that in the

first years of federation there will be a great many disappointments, and a great many heart-burnings; and I have no hesitation in saying that we ought to have better terms than we shall receive in this Bill.

MR. GEORGE: Why did you not get them at the Convention?

THE PREMIER: That is a long story. There are a great many reasons. Those who now are foremost in shouting "The Bill to the people" did nothing at that Convention, or very little. I do not want to boast, but search the pages of the Convention debates, and find out who, out of the ten members from this colony, fought for Western Australia. How many times did some of these members speak on the subject at all? I do not want to make any charges; the day for charges has gone by; but I say, if we had been more true to ourselves, if we had better understood the matter, if we had understood it as well as we do now, success would have crowned our efforts. We did not realise that this colony was going into federation. This was a fact that none of the delegates did realise, for all, or nearly all, the members believed that Western Australia would not enter the federation; and this is some excuse for them, too; they had some delicacy in interfering too much with the details of a measure which they believed the people of Western Australia would never agree to, and they thought that to take too prominent a part in matters of detail in the Commonwealth Bill would be unduly interfering with other people's affairs, when they thought their own people would never enter the federation. Well, some of us, at any rate, were awakened from that idea. I, perhaps, had that particular idea myself, to some extent; certainly the general feeling amongst the delegates was that Western Australia would not join the union under this Bill; and therefore when I say anything that may be considered somewhat harsh in regard to delegates not working hard enough, this point must always be remembered: the reason why members did not take a more prominent and active part in the discussions was because they felt we were not going to enter the federation, and they were somewhat unwilling—very unwilling, in fact—to interfere in the details of the measure, or to interfere

with the decisions arrived at by the Conventions, when it appeared that the chances were altogether against this colony's entering the union. I can only hope that if this Bill does pass, and if we get to a referendum of the people, everyone in the colony will vote.

MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear. Everyone.

THE PREMIER: Everyone who is on the roll.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

THE PREMIER: Do not get excited. I want the Bill to go to the people.

MR. GEORGE: I am quite cool.

THE PREMIER: We all hear of people very anxious to get on the roll, who kick up a terrible noise about not getting on the roll; and when they do get on the roll, they will not take the trouble to vote. That is the case all over the colony. In Perth the other day, at a most bitterly disputed election, one-half the people on the roll did not vote; and so it is everywhere. People will get on the roll, and will not take the trouble to vote; and others, again, will not even take the trouble to get on the roll, however easy the process may be made; and it is even said that we ought to go round and pick up such people and put them on the roll, because the people are too idle or too indifferent to register their names. I think anything that is not worth looking after a little is not valued much.

MR. GEORGE: That cuts both ways.

THE PREMIER: But the hon. member knows, for he is a man of the world, that if a thing is worth having, it is worth some trouble to get; and if a thing is so useless that people will not take the slightest trouble throughout the whole year to obtain it, we may be sure they do not value it much. I think it very likely that this last action of the Government in advising His Excellency to call this Parliament together, and my moving the second reading of this Bill to-night, may have the effect, and I believe it has had the effect, of cooling people down a little. People do not seem to have been in such a terrible state of excitement over federation during the last fortnight or three weeks, either here, on the goldfields, or anywhere else. They seem to think that if the Government are going to take the matter up, there is something wrong about it; that there

cannot be so much in this federation after all, if the Government are taking up the matter; and, as I have said, I think that in consequence of the Government introducing the Bill, the interest will not be half as great, when the elections come off, as it would be if the Government were opposing the measure.

MR. GEORGE: That means that the Government are unpopular.

THE PREMIER: No. It is a general practice in human nature. There is a general sort of feeling that those in authority are not so good as those in opposition. Very often the men who are opposing seem to have more friends than those who are in authority. You need not go far for an example. There are plenty of things which the Opposition of this House will oppose, in regard to which they get cheered when they go into the country. They get cheered for the work itself, although they have opposed it. There are, I assert, plenty of cases. For instance, there is the question of the dual title. The general opinion throughout the goldfields is that the Government did away with the dual title; that the people of the goldfields were robbed of their inalienable right and natural heritage by the abolition of the dual title, and there were groans against the Government whenever people got the opportunity. The fact is that the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) is the man who did away with the dual title. He is more responsible for that measure than the Government, for the Government proposal was a better one by a long way than the one the hon. member introduced; but we wanted to do something, and we could not do it without support, so we took the hon. member's Bill, and the people on the goldfields cheer him as if he were the saviour of the country. The alluvialists will cheer him the same as the alluvialists of North-East Coolgardie will cheer the member for North-East Coolgardie.

MR. VOSPER: Sometimes.

THE PREMIER: They forget that everyone who takes up a lease can hold a third of it through the hon. member's motion, the clause being a most monstrous one.

MR. GREGORY: You supported it.

THE PREMIER: Yes; we did it all in a hurry. The hon. member (Mr.

Vosper) proposed that any man going into the wilds of the colony anywhere and applying at the Warden's Court for a lease of what might be 24 acres of the best alluvial ground, should be able to hold a third of the lease until the warden decided whether the ground was alluvial, all that the lessee was to pay being perhaps £2 to the Treasury.

MR. VOSPER: Seeing you wanted to give the lessees seven-eighths of the lease for machinery, I think the compromise a very good one.

THE PREMIER: I never proposed anything so monstrous as that put forth by the hon. member. The hon. member will not tell his electors the facts of the case. I say the hon. member for Albany is responsible for the dual title. I only mention this to show you how—

MR. LEAKE: How easily you can change your mind.

THE PREMIER: I only say this to show you how people groan at a man as an enemy, although he is really their friend.

MR. KINGSMILL: The new alluvial champion!

THE PREMIER: I know something about any legislation I am responsible for, and I never would have supported the member for Albany but for the fact that something had to be done. The Minister of Mines introduced a Bill with an interim title, and it was a good Bill.

MR. VOSPER: Absolutely unworkable.

THE PREMIER: I suppose the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) has had no experience of mining or mining laws. He has not administered mining laws for 20 years, as I have done. This, however, is only by the way, and now I will come back to this Enabling Bill. What I have said was a little digression, and it is good to digress sometimes to show people in their true colours. We desire to be seen in our true colours, and no one else should desire to be known otherwise than in their true colours. For a young State like Western Australia—we are young in regard to our prosperity and also very vigorous—the step we are about to take is very important, because I will assume all through in what I say to-night that we are going to pass this Bill either in the shape in which I have introduced it, or in some other shape not materially different, and that we are going to enter federation,

because I think there is a tendency of feeling throughout the colony that we should not be isolated—I do not mean isolated by territory, but isolated in sentiment—from the rest of Australia. This is a very important matter, and one which requires great consideration. It is one to which people need to pay attention, because no doubt not one man in a hundred in this colony knows what this federation is; and it is not likely men should know. Not everyone is a student or a lawyer. Not everyone has time to look into this question and discuss it and understand it. It would be unreasonable to suppose that all have been able to do so. Therefore, when we have passed this Bill, and before we take a referendum, it will be the duty of the public men in this colony to place a plain unvarnished tale before the people of Western Australia, if the people will listen to them. That is by telling them what the Bill contains, pointing out the good sides of it, and telling them also the bad sides; because you may depend upon it the Bill is going to work adversely in some ways, and what the electors have to decide is whether the preponderance is on the side of advantage or otherwise. And we must not look only to to-day, we must not have our views circumscribed only by the present, but must also think of to-morrow and the future in dealing with this great question; because even if things will not be so good at the beginning, and if we believe they will be better as time goes along, we shall not be acting wrongly in saying we will undergo the ordeal and take the plunge, falling into line with our fellow colonists in Australia, to try and build up in this Southern Ocean another nation under the Crown similar to the old country. For a country to give up its autonomy, its power of self-government, its control of its own affairs, is just about the same as a man giving up the control of his business. I do not know that it is exactly the same, but I think the question will be brought home to all of us by comparing the Government with a thing which belongs to you absolutely, but which you propose to hand over to some other people for them to join with you in the management; entering into a partnership, in fact.

A MEMBER: An indissoluble partnership.

THE PREMIER: Yes; there is this about it, that you cannot get out when once you have entered. Therefore, you must be very careful before you put your head into the noose. In this country, thanks to a wise beneficent Imperial Parliament, we are at the present time a sovereign State for all practical purposes. We are loyal subjects of the Crown, and some of our laws have to receive the royal assent, but very few, and in fact, as I said before, for all practical purposes Western Australia is a sovereign State, able to manage its own territory and its own business, untrammelled, unrestricted, by any power on earth. We can sell all our lands as we like; we can give them away; we can do anything we like with the territory which that wise, beneficent Imperial Parliament has entrusted to our care for the good of the people of this country for ever. We have the fee simple of a million square miles of territory, a third of the Australian continent, and one would have thought our position one of great responsibility and quite enough to satisfy 175,000 people; but our ideas of nationality seem to want more. We are not satisfied with our present position, while we are divided from the rest of Australia by a thousand miles of practically unoccupied country. You cannot get to the rest of Australia, unless you go across the sea for three days, except by a tedious land journey of over a thousand miles; but notwithstanding this fact, the people of this country seem to desire and yearn for a closer union with their fellow colonists in the rest of Australia. They want to build up to a greater extent than they think they are building up under existing conditions, a commonwealth, a nation in fact, subject to the Crown in England; a nation united for many federal purposes as set forth in this Bill. The Commonwealth is not only for to-day nor to-morrow, but for ever. It is indissoluble. We are going to bind ourselves to join and never separate again, unless of course we are separated by an Act of the Imperial Parliament. That would be the only thing. An Act of the Imperial Parliament could sever us as it unites us.

MR. MORAN: That is not so certain.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes, it is certain: I think that would be all right. The power of the Imperial Parliament at any

rate will remain. The chief reason why we desire this change, the chief reason operating no doubt in our minds, is one that does us very great credit, because I do not believe that anyone in this colony, who has any knowledge of public matters and takes the trouble to look into them, thinks he is going to have any great material benefit at the present time. It is not likely that such benefit will occur now. Of course I know in the other colonies they do expect material benefit. As I have told you before, South Australia expects to have her corn and wine admitted into all the Australian colonies free, whilst Victoria wants her manufactures admitted free, and Tasmania her fruit free. As to New South Wales, I think she has not so much to gain; but Queensland wants sugar to be sent in free all over Australia.

MR. MORAN: And cattle.

THE PREMIER: Cattle and sugar. I think the sugar exported from Queensland last year was of the value of something like a million and a half, the value of her cattle being something similar. Queensland will have these things admitted free, and there is no denying the fact that she will benefit by federation. She has nothing to lose and everything to gain. As far as I can see, South Australia has a good deal to gain, and not very much to lose. We know that Victoria hopes to gain very much. Tasmania also hopes to gain very much, but whether she will or not, I am not so certain. New South Wales is in the position of the mother of the family, and I am of opinion she thinks that with her vast resources and her large population, with her coal and iron, and her position generally as the wealthiest of all the colonies, she will be able, at any rate, to hold her own. In fact, Mr. Reid aptly put it when he said that when you put a terrier in with a lot of kittens, you know which will get fattest first.

MR. GEORGE: He does not know what dogs eat.

THE PREMIER: Western Australia is full of loyalty to the Crown, full of patriotism, and full of a desire to join hands with the people in the Eastern colonies. I think our desire to join without a clear prospect of gain does us great credit. We think our action will strengthen the Empire, and that our

political life will be widened and elevated. We think, too, we will probably be able to hold our own. I do. Notwithstanding all our disadvantages, I believe we will be able to hold our own, thanks to the industry of our people and our great resources. I do not care where I stand, whether in this House or anywhere in Western Australia, I shall try and put this matter before the people of the colony, and I will tell them that I will vote for this Bill; but I am not going to tell them either here or anywhere else that I can see any great benefit to Western Australia for some time to come. In fact, I think there will be a great many difficulties for us to overcome. I shall be charged, as I was when I spoke last year, with making an unfederal speech. I am not making an unfederal speech. I am a federalist. I desire to federate, and I will vote for this Bill and take the risk of it; but at the same time I must not try to deceive the people. I am trying to set the matter before the people of the colony in a fair way, and let them judge, and I hope that when they have heard what I have to say they will come to the conclusion at which I have arrived—that the best thing we can do is to throw in our lot with the rest of Australia for good or for ill. As I said before, our pride in the future, and it will be a very great pride too, will not be so much that we are Western Australians as that we are Australians. Our pride will be in our country, the whole of Australia, the same as is the case with the Canadians and the Americans; and we have this to guide us also, that in Canada and in the United States—and this is a good argument which may be used by anyone—the people have not suffered through federation.

MR. MORAN: We do not know that.

THE PREMIER: We do. I have travelled through Canada, and I have used this argument before. You cannot come across a Canadian, in fact I never came across one, who says he does not think federation was a good thing for Canada.

MR. MORAN: Under the terms they got.

THE PREMIER: They have forgotten all about terms; and so it will be with us. In after years a new generation will rise up in this country who will forget that we were ever divided, and will only think

of the nation as a federated Australia, Australia as a whole. It seems to me the only drawback to us, and one of which we ought to get rid, is isolation. We are so cut off from the rest of Australia, that we shall have to get rid of the isolation; and Fremantle will have to be made the first port of call from Europe, and there will have to be an overland railway to Port Augusta. We have all been very proud recently—I am sure I have been, and no doubt hon. members and people in the colony have been proud—to feel that we were able to render some little assistance, though perhaps not required, to the mother land in dealing with the trouble in South Africa. This colony will never again have an opportunity of that kind, if we enter federation, because we shall not have the power to raise troops in this colony, and our glory and pride will be in the troops that will go from Australia as a whole.

MR. MORAN: That is exactly the case now.

THE PREMIER: In fact, there will be no soldiers here, and no volunteers, because the control of military affairs in Australia will be entirely under the Federal Parliament. We will never be able to raise money by customs duties after we enter the federation; and perhaps some persons will say, "Thank goodness for that!" But if we cannot do it by laws passed in this colony, the Federal Parliament will have the power to regulate customs duties, and it may be done by those who will not be so much in sympathy with people here as are the Government under the present system. You will not be able to cry out so easily against the Government, when it is two or three thousand miles away, as you do now; and if you have a Town Hall meeting, it will not have such effect on the Federal Government, so far away, as perhaps such a meeting would have on a Government in the colony. That perhaps will be a good thing, for I think there is much to be said in favour of the Government not being too close, because the effect is to induce a good deal of agitation which does no good. Whatever may be the benefits of the new system, we should not forget that under the system of government existing in this colony, we have been able to change the face of the country by covering it with railways and

telegraphs and public works of various kinds. Yet, although we are well aware that so much has been done in this way, we also know that some people here are not satisfied with what has been done, and they want something more or something different. They will tell you that the Government who have done all these things have done only what these fault-finders could have done if they had had the money; that they could have borrowed money and spent it as well as the Government here have done. They forgot all the while that it is not the borrowing of money, but it is the way the money is expended, that is the real test of good government; and the fact remains that throughout this country we have made railways and roads and erected public buildings, and extended telegraphs, and supplied many conveniences; and, I say, not a man can show that there has been any expenditure of magnitude that has been ill-spent. In entering the federation, we shall give up our right to legislate on many important questions, many more than most persons in the colony and even more than members here are probably aware of; because in the Commonwealth Bill, many subjects are mentioned on which the Federal Parliament will have power to legislate, and their legislation will over-ride any local legislation in the several States. Looking at this list of subjects on which the Federal Government can legislate, we may be subject to constant annoyances for a long time after entering federation until we get used to the change, for we shall have to give up legislation on many subjects with which we have hitherto dealt in this colony, and the legislation of the Federal Parliament will supersede any legislation by the local Parliament. This transfer of power may cause a good deal of friction, for though the Federal Bill does not prevent us from legislating in regard to various matters mentioned in Clause 51, yet it gives to the Federal Parliament the right to legislate, and our local legislation will be over-ridden wherever it comes in conflict with federal legislation. There is no doubt, and I hope everybody will acknowledge it, that under federation there is going to be a great change in this colony; that we are going to be a subordinate State, as compared with our present condition as a

sovereign State; for we are a sovereign State now, having complete control over those matters which under the federal system will be transferred to the control of the Federal Parliament. We shall still be able to make laws on various subjects, and be able to raise revenue in various ways; but all these will be subject to the superior power of the Federal Parliament, the State Parliament being subordinate. There is something I would like to mention to members to-night, and as all ought to know it there is no reason why I should not mention it, and that is that this House will be subordinate in dealing with those subjects in regard to which power will remain to it to legislate; for the legislation passed in this colony, as a subordinate State, will be subject to the higher authority of the Federal Parliament on the same matters; for as soon as the Federal Government have legislated on any subject which in any way interferes with our local law, the effect will be that our local law will have no force, and the law of the Federal Parliament will supersede it. "Trade and commerce" is one thing which will be governed by the Federal Parliament, and it will take all the lawyers in the High Courts of Australia to define the limits of the power of the Federal Parliament on this wide subject. Then there is "taxation": that is a good big word, and the Federal Government can tax everything in Australia except the lands belonging to each State. I remember the Mayor of Perth (Mr. A. Forrest) saying once that the Municipal Council would have the first show of taxation in this city under federation; but I told him he would come No. 3; that when federation takes place, the order of taxation will be first the Federal Parliament, secondly the Parliament of the State, and thirdly the council of the municipality. It may be that I am looking too much on the dark side of things, but I do not think so. I want to point out what will probably happen under federation. You know that the people in Australia, as a whole, are regarded as being very democratic; and the mass of the people having the power of the votes, the tendency always has been, and will be under federation, to relieve the working people as much as possible from the pressure of taxation.

It is quite right too, because those who can afford to pay taxes are the best persons to tax, and not to tax those who are ill able to afford it. If you put a small tax on an immense number of people, the result is to bring in an immense sum of money; whereas if you put a higher tax on a few people who may be better able to bear taxation individually, if you tax the few who are rich, your tax will bring in very little, because it will touch so few persons. That is one reason why the Salvation Army flourishes so much, for it assists and works with the operative classes who are so many that a small contribution from a large number of people brings in a larger revenue than if the managers of that organisation were working only with a selected class, a small number. If you can only get the mass of the people to contribute their mites towards taxation, you will do far better for revenue purposes than if you get the wealthy classes to contribute larger amounts individually. The tendency of the federal system will be to have free-trade as far as possible. That is the tendency of the democratic politician.

MR. MORAN: No; it is the opposite.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so. The object of the democratic politician is to try and tax land and property, so as to avoid a high customs tariff.

MR. MORAN: No, no.

THE PREMIER: In the first place, you must have a certain revenue for carrying on the work of government, and you may depend upon it that free-trade New South Wales will not be willing to have a high federal tariff; that people who have been accustomed to get goods imported free will not be willing, under federation, to have a high protective tariff; and my opinion is that the tendency of legislation—I do not say at the beginning, for I have no doubt that at the beginning the Federal Parliament will have a high customs tariff—the tendency will be to reduce the customs tariff, and the result will be that property will be taxed probably to a larger extent than it is at present. Then there is the question of "bounties," which will be entirely under federal control. We have not had much experience of bounties in this colony, but it has been the custom in other places to give bounties for encourag-

ing production. We in this colony will have no power, under federation, to offer any such encouragement to local production, because that power will be exercised, if at all, through the Federal Parliament. Postal, telegraph, and telephone services: the control of these will pass from us to the Federal Parliament, and I may here mention the action I took at the Federal Convention in Melbourne, in endeavouring to reserve the control of these services to each State. One does not always get credit for the good he attempts to do, but is often blamed for what he has not done. At the Melbourne Convention, I moved that the control of the telegraph and telephone services within the colonies should be retained by each State, and that only the postal service and the telegraph service beyond Australia, dealing with the outside world, should be under the control of the Federal Parliament. In that endeavour I was defeated. I would like to know how it is possible that the Federal Government, with its executive two or three thousand miles away, can be expected to manage the postal service in this State, together with the telegraph and telephone services—I want to know how this can be managed at so great a distance from us, and give so much satisfaction as does the management by a Government in this colony. The thing cannot be done. If a person wants a telephone erected, or extended some distance, he will have to see the local postmaster, who will be under federal direction, and that postmaster will have the power to say, if he chooses, “I cannot do it,” or he may say, “I will not do it.” You may depend upon it that having the power, these federal officers located here, as in each State, will use their power, for we know that autocrats are built that way. If you put an official in a position where the central authority cannot get at him, that official will soon develop into an autocrat, if he was not one before. Take, for example, the telegraphs which we have built all over these goldfields: will anyone tell me that these could have been done as quickly or as well if the work had been under the direction of an Executive Federal Government, located far away from this colony. My opinion is that we can manage our own business, in regard especially to telegraphs and telephones, far better

through a Parliament sitting here than will be the case if these services are under the control of the Federal Parliament. At the Melbourne Convention, we were unable to carry my proposal, and therefore the control of our telegraphs and telephones, and of our postal service, will pass from us under federation, and will be transferred to the Federal Government. Naval and military defence: this must necessarily pass to the Federal Government. We have not done much in a military direction in this colony, but if anything does become necessary it will have to be done for us, and not by us. Lighthouses: we have built a few, and we hope to get more, but the control of these will also pass to the Federal Government, and whatever has to be done in future must be done by them. Quarantine: we have managed this, hitherto, but under federation the management will pass from us. Currency, coining, legal tender, and banking: I think that to transfer the control of these things will be beneficial. Naturalisation, immigration: these also will be controlled by the Federal Government. We have been able to pass laws limiting the introduction of alien labour, but we will not be able to deal with this subject, as the Federal Government will have control. Influx of criminals: we can prevent this, at the present time, but the Federal Government will be able to legislate so as to take that out of our hands. These are a few of the items on which our power to legislate will be over-ridden by, or be made subservient to, the power of the Federal Parliament. It may be said, and I have no doubt some of my friends on this side will say, that if all these things are to be given up by our entering federation, why should we consent to give up all these powers and privileges which we have hitherto exercised as a sovereign State? My answer is that the people seem to wish it. I believe the people of this colony wish to give up these privileges I have referred to, and become part and parcel of one Australian people, to work out our own destiny as a nation. The desire throughout, and I think it deserves commendation, is that we shall be stronger as a nation than we can be as separate States. I cannot do better than give the reason stated by the much-despised Joint Select Committee, whose

report, I think, was a very wise one, and one that will stand the test of time, and is certainly worth repeating. The committee said :

They recognised that, under federation, Australia will occupy a higher plane in the world's opinion, and that it will tend towards the consolidation of the Empire in this part of the world.

These are considerations that should weigh with all of us, that it will tend to the consolidation of the Empire and make it stronger. Besides all that, if we can say, notwithstanding the disadvantages which I have pointed out, that we would be able at the same time to hold our own, if not at the beginning, yet shortly afterwards, then I think these considerations should have great weight with us. In regard to this Bill, I should like to point out that although I have referred to federation and its disadvantages, and also to its advantages, that question does not really arise now. There is no great necessity to deal with that question on the present occasion, unless we come to the conclusion that this Bill is so bad that we feel justified in saying we will not send so bad a Bill to the people of this colony to have a voice in regard to it. I said, when speaking here some time ago, that in my opinion the Bill was not of that character; that I thought it was not such a Bill that I could say to myself, "It is so bad that I will not do anything to let the people have a voice on it." I said at that time that it was a Bill which was not liberal enough in regard to this colony; that it was not a Bill the people should decide to accept. I also said we should refer the two Bills (this Bill and the amended Bill) to the people. I was sorry at the time that the two Bills were not so referred; but I am not sorry now, because I think the people will be in a better position to judge on the matter than they would have been at that time. It will be for the people themselves to say; and although we represent the people in this House, it is no use our thinking we can carry on the management of this country against the wishes of the electors. The majority must rule in a democratic country; and we always say, when we address public meetings, *vox populi is vox dei*, and we believe the decision of the people when expressed in a proper manner is

not very far from the mark. I must say it was some disappointment to me that the debate last evening on the Address-in-reply was so short. I should have liked to hear more said in the debate, and I fully expected the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) would have addressed the House after the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) sat down. I did not come prepared to make a speech on that occasion, but I came prepared to make a reply; and as there was nothing to reply to, I had nothing to say. I did not think it necessary to make a speech, because I intended to make one on the second reading; but I regret there was not something more said on that occasion. We could have very well filled up yesterday evening with some wise observations from gentlemen on the Opposition benches. But although that was a great disappointment to me, I cannot finish what I have to say to-night without referring to the great pleasure afforded me by the speech of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) on the Address-in-reply. I think, whatever opinion hon. members may have in regard to the conclusions the hon. member drew or the statements he made, everyone must have regarded that utterance as a manly and independent one; and another thing which pleased me very much was that throughout his speech his sentiments seemed to me to be those of a man anxious for the permanent welfare of his adopted country, and there was no qualification or reservation about it. The hon. member had not come here to mince words. One could see that out of the fulness of the heart the mouth spoke; and I think I may say to the hon. member, on behalf of every member on this (Treasury) bench at any rate, that his speech, whether we do or do not agree with all of it, did the hon. member great honour, and ought to be a very valuable contribution to the literature of this very important subject.

MR. LEAKE: It was anti-federal.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so. I think he set forth both sides of the question. Some people will tell us this House has no right to deal with this question except by referring it to the electors. Although I intend, before I sit down, to ask hon. members to pass this Bill and refer it to the electors, I am not

going to tell them that they have parted—because they have not parted—with any of their constitutional powers. This House has in no way parted with any power it possessed as the representative of the people of this colony; and therefore we have a perfect right, and always had a perfect right, to deal with this question in the way we think best. As to the referendum, we must not forget that the referendum is now being used in all the colonies of Australia for the first time. Until recently, we knew very little indeed about this referendum. It is a foreign plant, of foreign growth, which has recently been transplanted into Australian soil; and in regard to it I can only say, if we want to maintain the constitution of this country on the basis of the constitution of the mother country, we shall have to be very careful, or else this referendum will sweep away our constitution, which is moulded on the constitution of Great Britain. We soon seem to get used to new things. It is curious that, in the mother country, this splendid plant has never been introduced. There they have had great commotions, great political troubles; they have had all those troubles in connection with Home Rule, and many other agitations; but we never even heard anyone of any importance suggest that a referendum should be taken; and, in fact, it is unknown at the present time in the mother country. But it has been adopted here, and it seems to have had a very great growth.

MR. VOSPER: It is used in England for local government or municipal purposes.

THE PREMIER: All I can say is, we will have to be very careful as to our constitution. We will have to make up our minds very soon whether we are to be governed by the referendum or by a constitution based on the British Constitution. This Commonwealth Bill has been adopted by all the other colonies—by Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania; and as two-thirds, I suppose, of the people of this colony, or somewhere about two-thirds of the people at the present time, hail from one or other of those colonies, those people quite outnumber, I expect, the rest of their fellow colonists; and it is not unreasonable that they, coming

from the Eastern colonies, should be of opinion that they should have the same opportunity afforded them of voting upon this Bill by a referendum, as has been given to their kindred in the other colonies. We may tell them they have never had it before in the history of this colony; we may tell them that for 1,000 years and more no such thing has ever taken place in any British country. They will tell us it is their right, and that we are taking away their right from them—a right which neither they nor their fathers, nor their fathers' fathers ever had; but still they know their kindred in the other colonies have had it, and they say, "We want it too." Well, I believe it would not be more difficult to keep back the waves of the sea than to try to make the people of this colony believe that they should not have a vote in this referendum on the question of federation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And at once.

THE PREMIER: I say those are the facts, whatever people may think about them. Personally, I do not like the referendum, and one of my reasons is that I have never got used to it. I do not know whether it will lead me; therefore I am careful: I do not want to trust myself to a ship that may wreck me.

MR. MORAN: "Lead us not into temptation."

THE PREMIER: And I do not like it. But I am convinced the majority of my fellow colonists here are determined they will have it, and I am not going to block the road; I am not going to stand up and say to them "You shall not have it," when I know they will have it. In fact, I think they have a good deal of reason on their side, because they say: "All the rest of Australia has had it; three millions of people in this continent, the same people, of the same race, having the same religion, the same customs and habits, and the same traditions as ourselves, have had it; and why should not we be in the same position as they?" There is a good deal of reason in that, and therefore I think, seeing that over three millions have had the referendum in the five different colonies of the East, we ought not to say, "Well, you shall not have it." My opinion is, the people should have it, and that is the reason why I shall ask hon. members to support this referendum to the people.

Of course, men are actuated by all sorts of motives. I suppose everyone believes, or at all events hopes, that this change will be for the better. Mind you, we like change, especially if we are not "flush" of money. Then we think a change will not do us any harm, and it may do some good. A man with a good estate and living comfortably does not want change; but the man who is working for his daily bread and at the end of the week has nothing, says to himself, "I am getting only enough to live on; this change will do me no harm, and I think it will do me some good; let me try it." There is no doubt most of us like change. Some people even desire a change of Government. Although this Government is so beneficent, still some people seem to think they could do better with a new one, though I believe they altogether forget what Shakespeare makes one of his characters say:

rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You admit they are ills?

THE PREMIER: I believe there are ills everywhere, every day: I feel them myself. Unless you think the millenium has arrived, I am sure you must admit everything is not plain sailing, whether with Governments or with private individuals. However, these people believe federation will do them some good, and that is why they want it; and they do not think it will do them any harm, or they think, if it does someone else harm, it will not do them any harm; and they believe high wages, cheap food, and good times will all follow the federation. I hope they may. For my own part, I do not think there will be very great changes in those respects. I do not think wages will be higher, or food very much cheaper; but at any rate, I hope the times will be good. I speak for myself as well as for other hon. members, and I say: if anyone in this House looks into this matter—and I have no doubt all we responsible people have looked into it, and it requires looking into, too—if such a one thinks permanent disaster is coming upon this colony by our giving over the management of our affairs, to some extent, to other people, his duty is, no doubt, to oppose federation always, everywhere, at all times, and at

all seasons. But I may say I am not one of those. I think this Bill is not so bad that I should oppose it. I think it ought to be better, but I think it very probable that we shall get on all right. I think it will not be so bad as some picture, or as good as others picture. I think between the two is about where we shall be, the *via media* will be about right, and our position will neither be very much better nor very much worse; because I believe in the genius of the people; we shall be able to work out our own destiny in this country just as well as we did before; we shall be able to hold our own, considering the great resources of the country; and I can only say, if times be bad for us under federation, there certainly will not be good times for all the rest of the people of Australia. Feeling thus, and feeling that we have only 174,000 people, while there are over 3,000,000 on the other side of Australia; feeling as I do—I feel it and believe it, too—that the public opinion and sentiment of this country is certainly in favour of this Bill being referred to the people; feeling too, as I do, that all endeavours on my part to get the amendments required by the Joint Select Committee have been unsuccessful, and that they cannot now be obtained: I think the only course I, as a loyal West Australian, as one who desires to do his best to bind together the various parts of Australia, and to unite as far as possible the people living in the various colonies can take is to give the people of this colony an opportunity of saying whether they will have federation or whether they will not. Of course it has been said that I did not do my best to get the amendments, and that if I had stuck out a little longer I might have got them; but I do not think that is so. Let hon. members read the correspondence that is tabled; and that is not half the correspondence which took place, because nearly all of it is confidential, and there was great difficulty in getting the necessary consent to publish what has been published. I think anyone, after reading that correspondence, must admit that every effort which could possibly be made was made; and I must say, too, that I was under a great disadvantage in dealing with the Premiers of the other colonies, inasmuch as I had no mandate from the Parliament of this country to deal with

this question. If I had had such a mandate from this Parliament, I should have been in a far stronger position ; but I was subjected to the taunt--and it was made unsparingly--that I had no authority whatever either from people or Parliament, and therefore they were only personal requests of mine.

MR. GEORGE: You never asked Parliament for authority.

THE PREMIER: Oh yes ; we did ask for it. The Joint Select Committee's report carried our proposals through this House, but the Upper House threw them out. If we had had the authority of both Houses to communicate with the other colonies, anyone can see that my position would have been very much stronger. But I wish to say that no harm, but good, has resulted from the delay. People have talked and thought about this matter to an extent they never would have if we had sent the Bill straight away to a referendum ; and the advantage thus gained is that, whatever happens in the future, if we enter federation, and it is not as good as we anticipated, it can never be said that the people of this colony did not know what they were voting about. If they do not know now what they are going to vote about, it is their own fault. They have had the subject before them for twelve months ; the Bill has been distributed throughout the length and breadth of the country ; the newspapers have been raving about it ; and therefore I trust those who vote upon the measure will have sufficient knowledge of the subject to vote as they desire. The Joint Select Committee were abused a good deal, were told they were of no use, and that they were wasting time ; but I think their labours were productive of great good. I think they did a great amount of good by publishing the evidence of persons who were against federation, anyway ; and, if federation comes about, people will not be able to say they did not have the other side of it placed before them, because nearly all the witnesses examined by the Joint Committee were opposed to federation, and people had the opportunity of reading what those witnesses said ; and if people had not a like opportunity of reading the evidence of witnesses in favour of federation, that was because we could not get such witnesses to come

forward. There seemed to be a dead set made against this committee. It seemed to be thought altogether unnecessary, that it would do no good, that it was a waste of time, and all sorts of other hard things were said of it ; but I feel quite sure that as time goes on, this report of the Joint Select Committee will not be thought so badly of in the future as some people seem to think of it to-day. Then we had the discussions in both Houses : they perhaps did some good. Then also we had the unfortunate fact that the Upper House did not pass either of the two Bills or anything else : they voted against everything. Sometimes the debate seemed to be a triangular duel, some members voting one way once, and another way at other times ; and those who were most in favour of federation, as I said before, entered into a conspiracy—I will not use that word, but I will say an arrangement was entered into between the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) and two of his friends in the Upper House, by which they shut the door upon any negotiations whatever with the Governments of the other colonies. They were to blame for that, at any rate. I think they will acknowledge they were to blame for shutting the door. I have always designated them as federalists-at-any-price. They would take federation on trust ; whereas I thought it best to look into the matter, and that we should judge for ourselves as well as we could. We cannot all be experts, but I thought we had better look into the problem, and not take it on trust as hon. members opposite have taken it ; because I do not for a moment think many members of this House—there are very few exceptions—really know the Commonwealth Bill thoroughly, even at the present time ; and if that be the case, they certainly did not know it several months ago. I should except, perhaps, the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), with his long legal experience and training ; but I very much question whether any other member has given the Bill as much consideration as he. However, that is a matter of opinion. My point is that all these discussions, and all these difficulties that have been raised, have contributed to educate the public mind ; and we must remember that the requests made

by the Joint Select Committee were not so unreasonable as was thought. Those requests received a great deal of support from the Eastern colonies. Several of the Premiers were personally in favour of them. We know that Mr. Reid, the ex-Premier of New South Wales, was recently in favour of giving us this tariff concession; we all know that the great *Argus* newspaper of Melbourne was in favour of our having it, that the *Daily Telegraph* of Sydney and the Government of Queensland were unanimously in favour of it, and that Tasmania too was in favour of it; so, if it had not been that the Governments of the colonies were afraid to alter the Bill, because they knew, or feared, that other alterations would then be required in other places, there is not the slightest doubt there was a consensus of opinion throughout Australia that our requests were reasonable. The only pity is that we did not know as much when we left the Convention as we do now, because if we had been as wide awake and had possessed information such as we now have, we should have obtained from the Federal Convention itself all that we were fighting for. Then there is another reason why we did not succeed, and this is one which I suppose every one will admit. The colony was not united.

MR. MORAN: That was the principal reason.

THE PREMIER: There was another reason, this being that the Premiers found a difficulty, because they feared other alterations; and the changes that we made were not granted. We were subject to the remark and the taunt that nine-tenths of the people of Western Australia wanted the Bill as it was, and did not desire any alterations. We were told by the Federal League, or something, that Western Australia did not want the alterations, and in fact would not have them. No one wishes to give concessions if he can avoid it. It was thought, Why try to meet the views of the Premier of Western Australia, when his own people do not want the alterations? With all these circumstances against us, and with the fact that I had no mandate from Parliament to ask for anything, and there was no guarantee that I could do anything, I do not think it is wonderful

that we were not able to succeed. But we very nearly succeeded; very nearly indeed. We had even the Secretary of State on our side, who, in so many words, told the people of the Eastern colonies in a telegram published here, that our requests were reasonable and ought to be conceded. Mr. Chamberlain, as we know, is a man accustomed to finance, and only the other day he told us, in the speech in which he introduced the measure, that he would not envy the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Western Australia under the Federation Bill. You can take that for what it is worth. Do not attach too much importance to it or too little; but it shows you that we have not been asking for things that are unreasonable, and that we were trying to do our best for Western Australia. No one can say anything against that, any way. Considering the small difference the granting of our desire would have made to anyone out of this colony, and the advantage to us of complete fiscal freedom for five years, I think we ought to have had the support of everyone throughout the length and breadth of this colony. What did that desire amount to? It only meant that the Parliament of this country which will be elected in a few months under the extended franchise should have the power of passing their own tariff for five years; and, would you believe it, there are people in this country, amongst them being the member for Albany, who will not trust their own fellow colonists to make a tariff for themselves for five years, but think the people of Eastern Australia are more able to pass a tariff for the people of Western Australia for that period, and that they would look after our interests to a greater extent than we ourselves are able to do. Was there ever a case in the world where people were ready to throw away their independence and to make such an admission as this: We will not trust the men and women of Western Australia to make a tariff for five years, but we will rather trust the people of Eastern Australia to make a tariff for us! Goodness gracious! One cannot understand it; and that is what the Federal League of Western Australia, as they call themselves, have been doing. They have been saying to the people of this colony—I will reiterate it—that it is far better for us

not to have an amendment of our tariff for five years than to have it. If that is common sense, if that is patriotism, if that is self-reliance, then I say I differ from the hon. member for Albany and his Federal League.

MR. LEAKE: Where are you quoting from?

THE PREMIER: I am telling the truth.

MR. LEAKE: I thought so.

THE PREMIER: You do not deny it, do you?

MR. LEAKE: Yes.

THE PREMIER: You opposed by every means in your power the concession I asked for, until the last minute. You have said over and over, and over again, that you did not want it. There is only one good, one patriotic thing you have done in this matter, and that is the sending of a telegram advising that my wishes should be complied with. For that telegram I give you credit, and I thank you for it. I repeat that is the one good patriotic thing you have done in this matter, because hitherto throughout the whole campaign you have been unwilling to trust your own countrymen, your own friends, the people you have lived with all your life, the people you meet daily. You were afraid to trust them, and thought all the wisdom and good sense was centred in people you never met and with whom you have nothing in common, and of whom you know as much as they know of you. The hon. member has forgotten the friends of his youth, and thrown himself body and soul into the hands of people who care nothing for him and know nothing about him.

MR. LEAKE: And won in the long run.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member can have that, if he likes, but I do not think it is much to boast about. If he has won by throwing over everyone he has known and honoured, too, in this colony, and has thrown himself body and soul into the hands of people who do not know this country and have no real interest in or love for it, I think he can have his reward.

MR. LEAKE: Oh! Go on and explain the Bill.

THE PREMIER: We heard the cry last year—I was going to say the parrot

cry, but one of the parrots is away this session—"The Bill to the people: the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." Are they getting it now? Have they the Bill, and nothing but the Bill? I say they have not, and I am very glad of it. I only wish the Bill were more in accord with my wishes than it will be when it leaves the Imperial Parliament. The Imperial Parliament are not going to cut Australia adrift and let her go her own way altogether. We are going to be part of the British Empire still, I am very glad to know, and we are going to have a better tribunal for the whole of the British Empire, which is one of the things those politicians, lawyer politicians who framed the Bill, desired we should not have. I am glad to know those politicians are not to have their way, and that the hon. member will not have "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," to send to the people. The Bill is amended. After saying they would have "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," without any amendments, these politicians now accept the alterations which the Imperial Government insist on; but they would not accept alterations to meet the just requirements of Western Australia. Those requirements were just, and were put forward with only one reason and one object, that being to try and safeguard as far as we could the financial interests of this country.

MR. VOSPER: What Bill or part of the Bill does this measure deal with?

THE PREMIER: The Bill as amended.

MR. VOSPER: The amendments are not there.

THE PREMIER: If you look you will see that they are referred to. I would like to say again this is no party question with me. I am glad, however, to say my colleagues who sit on this (the Treasury) bench are going to vote with me to refer the Bill to the people. It is not because they are colleagues of mine, but because they agree that the time has now arrived when the Bill should be so referred. I should be sorry indeed, as I said all along, for Australian federation to come about and for us on this side not to be able to take part in the early struggles to complete the work which is now only beginning; still I think that the words of the Joint Select Committee are as true

to-day as they were when they were adopted. They were these:—

There is little doubt in the minds of your Committee that, taking into consideration the present flourishing condition of Western Australia, its mineral wealth, its infant industries, its large revenue, and its splendid prospects, it would have been better if federation had come at a time when the colony could have entered the Commonwealth on more equal terms; and if your Committee had been solely guided by the evidence of the witnesses examined, they would have been obliged to report that federation was undesirable for this colony at the present time.

The report went on to say that the Committee approached the subject with a desire to report as favourably as possible on the Bill referred to their consideration. That is the feeling which I have in my mind this evening. As I said before, the main question we have to decide now is not whether we shall have federation or not, but whether we shall give the electors of this colony an opportunity of voting on this Bill, and saying whether they will have federation or not. We would be acting wisely, and I think in the interests of Australia, in the interests of the British Empire, and, taking it for all in all, in the interests of Western Australia, by leaving to the people themselves the decision as to whether they shall enter into federation or not at the present time. As I have already told you, no doubt we ought to have had better terms. There is not the slightest doubt that if we could only have the matter over again, if we had another Convention, and if we knew as much about it as we do now, Eastern Australia would be willing to meet our wishes to a larger extent than she has done. We ought to have had fiscal freedom for ten years, as they had in British Columbia, and we certainly ought to have had a transcontinental railway. We have to choose now upon either entering federation or standing out, and I will tell you one of the reasons that actuated me in the decision I have arrived at. Even if we were able to defeat federation at the present time, does any one suppose we will be ultimately able to keep it off, when we remember that there are more than three millions of people living on the Eastern side of Australia with their sentiments represented here; and when we also remember the great combination of Great Britain, whose sentiments are in

favour of federation. With those two great communities, one consisting of 30 or 40 millions of people in Great Britain and the other three to four millions of people in the Eastern colonies of Australia, is it likely a small number of people, most of them coming from the Eastern colonies, will be able to keep back federation for any length of time?

MR. MORAN: That was exactly the case of British Columbia. But they got their concessions.

THE PREMIER: The people there were unanimous, as you told us the other day, but the people here were not unanimous. And, after all, looking at the subject from a farmer's point of view, I wish to say it would be very difficult to retain the duties on food, even if we had no federation, the desire here being to have free-trade in regard to all matters of produce grown in the colony. We may keep up the duties for a little while, but we know very well that if the present Government went out to-morrow, the first thing this House would do would be to remove those duties.

MR. MORAN: There is another House.

THE PREMIER: We have had experience of them. After all, the prices here are governed by the prices in London, whether there are duties or not. We have duties on flour, but we do not get a benefit in regard to price to the extent of the duty. In fact the price is unaffected by the duty altogether. I think we shall have to make the best use we can of the sliding scale. I have often said it is very inconvenient and cumbersome, and not workable, but at the same time we must make the best use of it we can. I hope we shall be able to do something to assist the agriculturists in that direction, so as to promote the settlement of the soil. In regard to the Bill itself I should like to say a few words. It is practically the Bill which was voted upon and approved by the electors of the Eastern colonies; the only difference being that the amendments, if any, made by the Imperial Parliament will be submitted here. There might have been some exception to these words if we had not known what the Imperial Parliament were going to do; but we know that the only amendments made by the Imperial Parliament will be those connected with the right of

appeal to the Privy Council and the royal prerogative. Those amendments are very few indeed, and therefore need not give us much concern, because they have been consented to by all the other colonies: they will be embodied in the Bill, and will be available for us before the referendum itself is taken. We propose to take the referendum on a date to be fixed by the Government. Of course, I do not wish to have the fixing of that date. I shall be very glad if hon. members will think the matter over and fix a date in this House; but I have inserted the provision generally that the referendum is to be taken on a date to be prescribed by proclamation. I have no desire to have the matter left in the hands of the Government, if hon. members can suggest a date. The question arises as to what rolls shall be used for this election, and who are to vote. If we are to have this referendum on parliamentary roll, it will be impossible for any additional persons to get on the roll under the new Constitution Act and the new Electoral Act within six months from the present time; and I expect the referendum will have to be taken very much sooner than that, because it will have to be prior to the proclamation of the Constitution in Australia. I should say the referendum ought to be taken within two or three months from the present time. If that be the case, of course, the only parliamentary rolls available will be those in force at the present time, which are made up to the 15th May, I think.

MR. GEORGE: There are more people than those whose names appear on the rolls. If the Bill is to go to the people, let the people vote.

THE PREMIER: If you were to have the new Parliamentary register, it would be impossible to have any referendum for at least eight months, and I think that is too long. It is provided that every elector shall vote for the Bill once; that the whole of the colony shall be one electorate; that the poll is to be taken on the same day; and that every elector on the roll, wherever he may be, whether he be absent from the district for which he is on the roll or not, can vote. An elector absent from the district for which he is on the roll can send his vote to the assistant returning officer of the district;

and, in fact, the same privilege will be granted to him as is already granted to a voter not living in the district but qualified to vote by proxy. It is proposed in the Bill that the electoral rolls shall be those in force on the 23rd May. The question arises, as suggested by my friend the member for the Murray (Mr. George), as to who are to be the electors in the referendum. That is a matter we can discuss in a friendly manner in Committee, for I do not suppose anyone here has any feeling about it. I have not the slightest feeling about it. The word "electors," as used in our Federation Enabling Act of 1896, means "electors for the Legislative Assembly." These were the electors who were appointed as the people to whom the Federation Bill was to be referred, and this was provided by the Enabling Act under which delegates were to be appointed for attending the Federal Convention; and when a Federation Bill came back from that Convention, it was to be referred to the electors of the Legislative Assembly. In all the colonies the term "elector" means the same, namely the electors of the more numerous House of the Parliament; and in the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne, which has been made so much of by my friends opposite, and in regard to which I am supposed to have broken faith, the word "electors" is used again. This paragraph, which I have so often had thrown in my face, says:—

The Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion that after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of their respective colonies for reference to the electors.

The Premiers are also of opinion that it is desirable that the decision of a majority of the electors voting in each colony should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill.

It is quite clear what was meant by the people in the other colonies; it is quite clear they acted in that way; and the Bill was referred to the electors of the Legislative Assembly in each State. In some colonies they made provision for bringing the electoral rolls up to date, for the purpose of the referendum; but in none of the colonies did they depart from the Parliamentary roll; and in South Australia no provision was made.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They did in Victoria.

THE PREMIER: In Victoria all they did was to appoint a special registration court, to sit up to a certain date preceding the referendum, and this court was to grant electors' rights when applied for; but those receiving electors' rights had to be qualified under the electoral law. In Victoria a person cannot get on the roll in a moment. He has to be so long in a district before he becomes entitled to registration.

MR. VOSPER: You may be registered there up to three days of the poll.

THE PREMIER: But the electors must have been resident a certain time. The question we have to consider is this: Are we to have this referendum under the Parliamentary roll or under a special roll? If under a special roll, there is no reason why we should not legislate in that direction; but the referendum cannot be held under a new Parliamentary roll, because we have not power to legislate without the royal assent for extending the Electoral Act. If it be desired by some people that a roll should be made up specially for the referendum, then the roll so made would have to be thrown into the waste paper basket after the referendum, because such roll would not comply with the Electoral Act, which says that no man who has not been twelve months in the colony, and six months in an electoral district, can be put on the electoral roll.

MR. VOSPER: You promised that it should be so, last session.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so, but if I did, we may throw it over now, because we were talking long before the event occurred. I am not much wedded to this provision in the Bill. I cannot understand why there is so much objection to using the existing Parliamentary roll, for we are told that nine-tenths of the people of this colony are in favour of federation, and if, as is said, there is a block vote on the goldfields in favour of federation, if there are 15,000 people or more on the goldfields in favour of the Bill, and I do not suppose that out of the 40,000 or 45,000 people there are more than 20,000 on the roll, then why should not the existing Parliamentary roll be used for the referendum? If I were arguing against the carrying of federation,

I should say the more names on the roll the better for a referendum; but having regard to the spirit of the constitution we have been acting under all along, that is since the Enabling Act of 1896, I do not think it was intended that any but the Parliamentary roll should be used for taking a popular vote on the federation question.

MR. GEORGE: Why should 40,000 people on the roll vote for 175,000 people in the colony?

MR. HALL: There are in Perth a large number of qualified electors not on the roll.

THE PREMIER: Then why do they not get there? We have heard that cry all along. I say these people do not try to get on the roll. All I wish to say now is that no colony in Australia has departed from the electoral roll of the Legislative Assembly, for taking the referendum on the federation question.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: *Plus* special electoral rights.

THE PREMIER: We have no special electoral rights here. In Victoria there are the ratepayers, and they are the people who have the electoral rights. It was arranged there that up to a certain time the ratepayers should see that their names were on the roll, and that up to a certain date there should be electoral rights issued to those ratepayers who were qualified but were not on the roll. I should say, myself, that if we had a referendum here on the roll as it is now, it would be a quite sufficient expression of opinion on the question as to whether we should go into federation or not. I do not think we should try to sweep up votes all over the place. The people now on the roll are those who sent us to Parliament as representatives, and surely they are the people who ought to decide this question of federation. Of course, if we could wait six months before taking the referendum, we could get the women also on the roll under the new Electoral Act. Those persons who are not satisfied with the plan that is in force want some new plan, but if so, it will have to be a referendum roll, and it will have nothing to do with the Legislative Assembly, and therefore we will have to embark on another career altogether. I have said all I desire to say on this occasion. I advise my friends,

in the words of Mr. Chamberlain in his telegram to the Government here: "We have had a good fight, and have done our best to protect the colony." Believing as I do that we will be able to hold our own under federation, notwithstanding the adverse conditions, and believing as I do that we ought to have had better terms for this colony, and that we would have got better terms if the people here had desired it—but what could we do when some members here were voting against it, who forgot they were West Australians, and showed that their sympathies were with people elsewhere who have never done anything for us—in these circumstances what could we do? If we had said "no," we would have got what we wanted; but we did not get it; and now what is the best thing to do? Even if we are inclined, we cannot prevent this referendum, and in fact I do not desire to prevent it. In my opinion the best course to adopt now is that, having had a good fight and having done our best, we have only one more thing to do: we have to refer this Bill to the people, and do our duty in explaining its provisions to them. That I am prepared to do. I am certainly not going to take the responsibility of telling the people that I think this Bill is so bad that they ought not to adopt it, or that I feel they are so incompetent that they cannot deal with it. I believe that in the mass of the people there is wisdom, and my duty will be to explain the provisions of the Bill to the people, and their duty will be to decide whether it is acceptable to Western Australia or not.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill, because I find that I am in favour entirely of the principles which the measure enunciates. The first principle of the Bill is that the draft of the Commonwealth Bill which has been accepted by the rest of Australia shall be referred to the vote of the electors in this colony. The interpretation I put on the word "electors" is "the people"; and perhaps it will be necessary for me to make a few observations on that expression, later on. It is with peculiar gratification that I read this Bill and the accompanying correspondence, because I find that the views that I have personally advocated in this House and in my

capacity as president of the Federal League, with the support of the Federal League, are embodied in the measure. The Bill also provides that the determination of the country shall be gathered from a majority vote. There is no attempt, I am glad to see, to fix any statutory minority; but, true to principles which have been laid down by the neighbouring colonies, we find a bare majority vote is to prevail with regard to the acceptance or rejection of the measure. Of course I am aware that this is in consonance with the agreement come to at the Premiers' Conference in February of last year. I was for a moment puzzled, in hearing the right hon. gentleman move the second reading of the Bill, as to whether this was May of 1900 or May of 1898; but, however, I am pleased to think that the sentiments which he has this evening expressed, in May of 1900, are more in keeping with those of May 1898 than with those of the intermediate period, when we found that the right hon. gentleman had, for various reasons unknown to the general public, changed his views on this important question several times. There is no need to trace the history of the federal movement; and although we only now have proposed to us what should have been proposed last session, we must accept what we have with a good grace; and I hope, by our united efforts, we shall accomplish the end we all have in view, that is to bring about a federation which will include the colony of Western Australia as well as the other colonies of the group. The only regret, perhaps, which may be properly expressed is that we may now have to do in a hurry that which ought to have been done with greater deliberation. Had this measure, the principles of which were supported by myself and members on this side of the House, been introduced last session, we should have been saved a great deal of anxiety and perhaps a considerable amount of risk. I was pleased to hear the right hon. gentleman aver that it was his intention to vote for the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill, when the referendum is taken; but I remark that there was an absence of any pledge on his part to bind his colleagues in the same direction. It would be far more gratifying, and there

would be greater assurance of success, if not only the right hon. gentleman's personal efforts were to be thrown into the scale, but also that he could command the support of his colleagues. Perhaps I am anticipating what those hon. gentlemen will say; but I do hope, and this we are entitled to expect as an assurance of good faith from the Ministerial side, that the whole weight of the Ministry as a body will be thrown into the federal scale, not only during the debate in this House, but also when the matter goes before the people.

THE PREMIER: I promised that, if we got the terms; but I did not promise it otherwise.

MR. LEAKE: That justifies me in giving utterance to the suspicion which was in my mind, and I fear, therefore, that the right hon. gentleman speaks only for himself as an individual, and not for the Ministry as a body.

THE PREMIER: It is not a party question.

MR. LEAKE: When a Bill like this is brought into Parliament, dealing with a matter which has agitated the public mind for months, perhaps for years, we expect that as the Ministerial stamp is on this Bill it shall have the Ministerial support outside; that Ministerial exertions shall be used to give effect to the object of this Bill which is brought in by Ministers. It is true, as was interjected, that the right hon. gentleman's colleagues would have supported the Bill if he could have secured certain amendments. Those amendments have not been obtained, it is true. Those amendments were declared by most of his colleagues to have been essential, last session. Why are they not essential to-day? They are abandoned, and I think for a good reason, because some of them did not pass Parliament. In fact Parliament, as a body, did not approve of any of those amendments.

THE PREMIER: This House did.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; but when the Parliament, as constituted, did not pass the amendments which were proposed, some greater effort than has been made should have been made to secure a definite and decided opinion upon the efficacy or otherwise of those amendments. They were proposed, it is true, in a complicated form last session; but

in 1897, when the draft Bill which has been passed by the Adelaide Convention was before this House, curiously enough neither any of those so-called essential amendments nor any other really important amendments were proposed to the Chamber, either by the Ministry or by any other member in the House.

THE PREMIER: There was then only about one day's time to look through that.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, more than that, I think. I was reading up the matter to-day, and if I remember rightly I took three or four days to decide the question.

THE PREMIER: We did not know of then.

MR. LEAKE: At any rate, those so-called essential amendments of the last session were not thought of in 1897, nor were they thought of at any moment during the sitting of the Convention, and they do not appear to have been thought of at the Premiers' Conference.

MR. MORAN: The Bill was not the same.

THE PREMIER: They were thought of in Melbourne, surely.

MR. LEAKE: They do not appear to have been considered at the Premier's Conference.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes. You do not know of that. I do. I brought them up there, but I could not get them conceded.

MR. LEAKE: Then it is a very funny thing we did not hear more about them.

THE PREMIER: There was no report to the Conference.

MR. LEAKE: Was the railway brought up?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. VOSPER: To which Premier's Conference are you referring?

MR. LEAKE: To that held in February of last year.

THE PREMIER: The fact that the amendments were brought up has been acknowledged by the other Premiers.

MR. LEAKE: If I may form an opinion from the public utterances of the other Premiers, I will venture to doubt whether these matters were thoroughly discussed, or at any rate discussed in a sincerity, at that conference. At the events, we heard nothing about them to last year, when they were brought up

a somewhat late hour before the Parliamentary Joint Committee; and it will be interesting to note how often so much respect will be paid to the opinions of a select committee as appears to have been paid by the Ministry to the opinions of the committee that sat last year. We have had this select committee hurled at us from every possible direction. It is never the opinion of Parliament, it is not the opinion of the Ministry, but it is always the opinion of the select committee.

THE PREMIER: We had nothing else to go on.

MR. LEAKE: Even in the words of the Speech, we read: "It has not been found possible to obtain the amendments suggested by the Joint Parliamentary Committee"; and the Joint Parliamentary Committee seems in this particular instance to have assumed an importance which has never been accorded to any other joint select committee.

MR. MORAN: Do not forget this House approved the committee's report.

MR. LEAKE: And after all, as far as this Assembly is concerned, there were only five—I think only four, really—of the members sitting on that select committee who were in favour of those amendments. I have never before heard of a Ministry which was bound by the opinions of four members of the Lower House, but this Government seems to have thought it necessary to be so bound on this occasion.

MR. MORAN: This House adopted those amendments afterwards, and they then became Parliament's amendments.

MR. LEAKE: No, they did not; they only became the Assembly's amendments.

MR. MORAN: Well, that is the biggest end of Parliament.

MR. LEAKE: They were adopted by this House, but not until after a protest from members who were in favour of federation under the Bill which has now been accepted; and we, with the other federalists in this colony, were forced to accept those amendments, because if we had not supported them we should have lost the Bill altogether, and it was a case of taking half a loaf instead of no bread. But those amendments, when they went up to the Council, although they had upon them the Ministerial stamp, were

not supported as they should have been, either by the Ministry or by the members of the select committee who had approved them in select committee; because those very amendments were rejected in the Council; and the question which ultimately came before the Council, and which the Premier said was rejected because I with others entered into a conspiracy or arrangement to shut the door and cause them to be lost—the amendment which was lost in the Council was not identical with the amendments which were passed by this Assembly, but was a proposal to submit to a referendum a Bill which included those amendments, and also to suggest another conference of Premiers; and at that moment we were, by approving a Bill with those amendments, proposing something which we knew we could not get, in addition to something which nobody had demanded, and which apparently this House did not want.

MR. MORAN: We know now we could have got them.

MR. LEAKE: We could have got nothing of the kind.

THE PREMIER: We very nearly got them, anyhow.

MR. LEAKE: But there are no records of Parliament to show it, and there are no public papers to show it; and if we may judge of the tone of public opinion as expressed by the public men of the other colonies, we shall find they recognised that, after a certain date—after the Bill had been accepted by New South Wales—it was not only impossible but improper to suggest any amendments, more especially the amendments which had been advocated in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: They are accepting them now.

MR. LEAKE: And those amendments were not the amendments of Parliament, but merely the suggestions of a Ministry, and that Ministry, we know perfectly well, was itself divided upon the subject.

THE PREMIER: The Joint Select Committee's report is here on the records: it is the only thing we have on the records.

MR. LEAKE: Curiously enough—I thought I had pointed it out—the members of the select committee themselves did not support the amendments when these were brought before the Council.

That is abundantly proved by a reference to the records. As the right hon. gentleman himself admits, the efforts which were made without the mandate of Parliament were unsuccessful, and they failed, not only with the Premiers of the other colonies, but also with the home authorities.

MR. MORAN: No.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, pardon me: they have failed with the home authorities.

THE PREMIER: The home authorities favoured them.

MR. LEAKE: I will read the paragraph in a moment. My statement is that the attempts to secure those amendments failed, not only with the Premiers, but with the home authorities; and that was the very thing which we, on this side of the House, predicted would happen, and it has happened. We have never declared that we were not in favour of those amendments as amendments; but we opposed them as being impossible, and said that even to suggest those amendments was to delay the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill, and to keep this colony out of the federation as an original State.

MR. MORAN: You said the people did not want them.

MR. LEAKE: That was what we feared; that was what we realised; and our fears were justified, and the position we took up last year has been vindicated. Had the amendments been asked for by the proper authorities at the proper time and place, I believe they would not only have received the approval of this House, but would, if proposed at the Convention, have been accepted, or would subsequently have been favourably received at the Premiers' Conference. We must remember the Premiers' Conference finally altered the draft Bill in order that a referendum might be taken in each individual colony, and I say it was idle to suppose that, after the Bill had been referred to and accepted by any one colony, it could be altered or amended to suit the convenience of any Ministry or any section of the people.

MR. MORAN: And yet it is now being altered.

THE PREMIER: The attempt might have been made, even if it had not succeeded.

MR. LEAKE: Personally, I do not hesitate to say I think the amendment were useless, were unnecessary.

MR. MORAN: You said so.

MR. LEAKE: I say so still. I have always been in favour of the Bill which has been accepted by the other colonies, and I do not propose to retract a word I have said on that subject.

MR. MORAN: Hear, hear. That is much the easier way.

THE PREMIER: You did not want to conserve the interests of your own country for the five years.

MR. LEAKE: Oh! That, to say the least of it, is stupid. However, I was about to read what Mr. Chamberlain says in a cablegram which he transmitted to His Excellency on the 27th April, 1900, and it is so important that I intend to read it all. I am reading from a paper which includes the instructions to Mr. Parker.

THE PREMIER: You should read that dated the 5th April, too.

MR. LEAKE: And amongst other things in the instructions to Mr. Parker we must not forget he was directed to urge that the views of the Parliament of this colony in regard to the amendment recommended by the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Legislature should be carefully considered. Now, we know perfectly well that Parliament never did express an opinion on those amendments except by rejecting them.

THE PREMIER: Yes; I think that was a mistake. I also perceived that error in the instructions, which must have arisen from hurry.

MR. LEAKE: That being so, I will not labour the point.

THE PREMIER: It ought not to have read "Parliament." Does it occur towards the end of the document?

MR. LEAKE: No; it is near the beginning. The telegram of the 27th April reads thus:—

Referring to my telegram of April 5, the Premiers of the federating colonies have, as you are probably aware, declared that they have no authority to accept any amendment to the Bill, and have abhorrence to give any instructions to delegates with regard to my suggestion.

MR. MORAN: The abhorrence has disappeared now.

MR. LEAKE: The telegram proceeds :

Under these circumstances, I cannot press the matter further, and I would now urge your responsible advisers to consider earnestly whether, in the best interests of the colony as well as of Australia, they should not make a resolute effort to bring the colony into federation at once.

Unless Western Australia joins as an original State, it can only enter on the condition of complete intercolonial free-trade. The temporary protection offered by Clause 95 will, therefore, be lost ; and looking to the present population of the colony, difficulty may also be experienced in securing representation as large as it would receive as an original State, and which would enable the colony to secure adequate protection for all its interests in the Federal Parliament.

THE PREMIER: That is a matter of opinion : I do not agree with the statement.

MR. LEAKE: The telegram proceeds :

Your responsible advisers will also, of course, take into consideration the effect of the agitation by the federal party, especially on the goldfields, if Western Australia does not enter as an original State.

It seems to me, under the circumstances, of the utmost importance to the future of Western Australia to join at once ; and as your responsible advisers have done their best to secure the modifications desired by Parliament, I would urge them to take an early opportunity of summoning Parliament, and laying the position fully before it, with a view to necessary action for ascertaining the wishes of the people as to entering federation.

If they are agreeable to this course, a clause will be inserted in the Bill providing that Western Australia may enter as an original State, if the people have intimated their desire to be included before the issue of Her Majesty's proclamation.

Now that, curiously enough, covers nearly all the grounds for which federalists both inside the House and outside have contended ; and I maintain that by the result of our efforts we are justified, for it shows we were not captious in our opposition to the Ministerial tactics, but that the circumstances fully justified everything we did. However, my province this evening is not to upbraid anybody, nor do I desire to take any unnecessary or exaggerated credit for anything which the Federal League, or the federalists generally, have done in the colony. But we certainly do rejoice at our success, and we intend to help to obtain the referendum in as complete and comprehensive a form as possible. [Mr. Vosper : Hear, hear.] We rejoice to think that this is not a party

question ; and I have always declared it was not a party question, though I know I was not believed. It was believed that I intended to make this a party question ; but I say, if it was made a party question, that was done by members on the other (Government) side of the House.

THE PREMIER: All Opposition members voted with you.

MR. LEAKE: Of course they did. I cannot be blamed if I happen to be supported by all the intelligence in Parliament.

THE PREMIER: What difference would it have made if you had made it a party question ?

MR. LEAKE: I do not suppose it would have made any difference.

THE PREMIER: You would not have had any more votes.

MR. LEAKE: We have it on the authority of the right hon. gentleman himself that it was practically a party question.

THE PREMIER: Yes ; you thought you would gain a few votes by our not making it a party question.

MR. LEAKE: Members on the other side are entitled to their opinions, and it really does not matter much to me whether they think I have made it a party question or not. The question is big enough to engage public thought outside this Chamber, and I am prepared to be guided by what the public think of it. I agree with the Premier that it requires a great deal of self-control and stamina to go against the stream, and it is certainly rather astounding to find that he has not had enough stamina to stem the current of popular opinion upon this occasion. I am rather glad of it. I am glad to find his stamina and his self-control were too weak to resist the pressure brought to bear upon him.

THE PREMIER: Are you sure you are genuine in that opinion ?

MR. LEAKE: I am always genuine.

THE PREMIER: It is rather a disappointment, is it not ?

MR. LEAKE: Although the Premier may be proud of the abuse he has received, yet I am perfectly certain we federalists who sit in Opposition are glad to know that, at the last moment, he has awakened to the exigencies and the necessities of the occasion, and has thought fit to submit this important measure to a referendum,

a medium which, it appears, he does not like, which he avers is unknown to him, but which, curiously enough, he has proposed with regard to the question of payment of members. That was promised, I believe, during last session.

THE PREMIER: That will not be a complex Bill, like this.

MR. LEAKE: It may not be a complex measure, but certainly it will be easier to understand than this one, because I understood the Premier himself to say he did not think one in a hundred understood federation.

THE PREMIER: I am certain of that.

MR. LEAKE: Well, your argument rather falls to the ground there, does it not?

THE PREMIER: The question of payment of members is a very different thing from this complex Bill.

MR. VOSPER: The Premier's objection was to the referendum itself, not to the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: Yes.

THE PREMIER: You said the referendum was an exotic.

MR. LEAKE: I, and one or two others, were taunted with the remark that certain delegates at the Conventions did not fight for certain matters. Well, I dispute that altogether: I say, when matters came up for discussion, we took a fair part in the discussion. It is true, we did not make a great many set speeches on the different phases of the Bill, but we took very good care to discuss matters with other members. It was admitted on all sides that there was too much talk at that Convention, as often happens in other assemblies, and I might almost accuse the right hon. gentleman himself not only of talking, but of talking too much. We did not venture, as members of the Convention, to intrude ostentatiously our opinion as to the effect of federation upon the trade and navigation of the Murray and Upper Darling; we did not care to make speeches on subjects of that kind; but when the occasion arose we expressed our views. I assert, without fear of contradiction, that if blame is to be attached to us, it is also to be attached to the right hon. gentleman himself. He did not think fit to consult his colleagues when at the Convention, and we never knew what the right hon. gentleman was going

to do with regard to any of those important questions. That will be shown by the fact that when the division bell rang, we never voted as a body. The same remark applies, of course, to all the colonies. We went there to express our own individual opinions, and not to vote as a compact band in favour only of matters affecting Western Australia. We were there to attempt to frame a constitution for the whole of the colonies, and a great deal of the work of the Convention was done by select committees. I am the member for East Perth (Mr. James were on the Judicial Committee, and we helped to frame those clauses. The Premier was on the Finance Committee and I ask members to bear in mind that the greatest discussion took place on the financial clauses of the Bill. Is it to be wondered at that the right hon. gentleman was in a better position than other delegates to discuss the financial conditions and to explain the financial position of this colony, owing to his position as Treasurer? I do not think it is generous, to say the least of it, to assert that the delegates at the Convention did not take part in the discussions. I should like to combat one or two arguments that were made use of this evening when it was pointed out that we were now a sovereign State. Of course, when we enter federation we shall not be a sovereign State to the full extent that we are now, but we can deal with many matters with which we now deal, and I understood the Premier to lay great stress on the fact that as a sovereign State we can now deal with our land, the million square miles of territory which this colony possesses. I need hardly remind hon. members that we can deal with our land under the Federal Bill.

MR. MORAN: Not exclusively: it is absolutely taxable.

MR. LEAKE: We can deal with our lands, our mines, and our railways.

MR. MORAN: They can tax them all.

MR. LEAKE: We may now say we are a sovereign State with sovereign power except to defend ourselves, and that is one point, at any rate, which we should never cease to regard in considering this question of federation. I am delighted to think that, in the opinion of the Premier, we can hold our own whether we enter federation or stand out of it.

That has always been my contention, and I should be sorry to think we could not hold our own. It is true, as has been pointed out, that we cannot raise money by the customs, but we may participate in the customs revenue. Although the Commonwealth collect the customs, they are not entitled to spend it all, but we are entitled to get some of it back. Although the Premier has declared that he is in favour of the Commonwealth Bill and will vote for it, he throws out a fairly strong hint to his supporters and admirers in this House that they are at liberty to oppose it, and he would not be sorry if they did so.

THE PREMIER: Who said that?

MR. LEAKE: Although it is true we shall in one sense be a subordinate State, yet we should never forget that we shall be in no worse a position than our neighbours. The Federal Bill does not impose any obligations upon Western Australia which are not borne by the other Australian States.

MR. MORAN: There you are wrong.

MR. LEAKE: Although that statement is made by the hon. member, I am not convinced by it. We may be under disabilities. Of course, if we federate we give up certain rights. But although those rights will not be administered by ourselves, they will be administered for us, and we, through our representatives, shall have a voice in that administration. I say that therein we are in the same position as the other States of the federation. As to the statement that the reason we did not succeed with the amendments was that we were not united, I think I have explained that, had those amendments been suggested at the proper time and in the proper place, we should, I dare say, have been in a position to render that assistance which the Government subsequently expected from us. But let us not forget that all the time those amendments were being asked for from Parliament, and suggested by the Premier, the right hon. gentleman's own Ministers would not support them. There has been a split in the Cabinet over this matter for the past eighteen months, and there is one still.

MR. MORAN: It is a non-party question.

MR. LEAKE: I am only saying that, curiously enough, that party is split up.

I cannot understand that, and of course Ministers will subsequently explain it. I must really repudiate the suggestion that neither I nor my federal friends will trust the country with the management of the tariff for five years. I have never said anything which would bear that construction, and I go so far as to say that if it were possible to obtain that five-years tariff and still enter federation, I would, although personally not in favour of it, waive my objection, in order that there should be no obstacles to our joining federation. That has been the position taken up by the Federal League throughout, but we maintained that we would not for one moment imperil our joining the federation as an original State, and consequently we refused to discuss amendments which we knew we could not by any possibility obtain. The hon. member (Mr. Moran) has already delivered one very strong anti-federal speech this session, and I dare say that when he comes to speak on the second reading of the Bill he will give another. I hope that when he does speak I shall attend with great care to what he says. It was not only the hon. member, but also the Premier, who twitted us with having advocated the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill, and we are now jeered at because it is proposed by the Imperial Parliament to make an alteration in the Bill.

MR. MORAN: Several alterations.

MR. LEAKE: I maintain that for all practical purposes we are still advocating and are going to obtain the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill—

MR. MORAN: Not at all.

MR. LEAKE: Let me finish my sentence, do. We are going to obtain the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill which the colonies will have, and we ask for nothing more than that. To speak of the alterations with regard to appeal to the Privy Council as being vital to federation is absurd, for they are nothing of the kind. The question of appeal to the Privy Council was never discussed in this House. It is true it was discussed at the Convention, and I voted for the clauses as they stand in the Bill; but I do not object to the appeal to the Privy Council, and if the amendment is made by the Imperial authority, I shall cheerfully accept that amendment, because I find that the other colonies are going

to accept it, and without a referendum, too. I am perfectly willing to respect the opinion and the feelings of the Imperial authorities with regard to the retention of the right of appeal. Of course the hon. member (Mr. Moran) knows full well that this is not a vital question, and he is only using badinage. His desire to interject and interrupt leads him to make the remarks he does. At any rate, if there is a referendum, there will be no necessity to have a referendum here on the point, because provision is or will be made in this Bill to accept it subject to the amendment. Therefore, we need not bother as to the vitality or otherwise of the amendment. That is a trouble which has to be faced by our neighbours, and, if there is a referendum at all, it will have to be in the other colonies. With regard to the Bill itself, the only objection I have to it is that the existing roll—and when I speak of the existing roll, I mean the roll existing at the present moment—is not wide enough, and if the question is to be referred to anybody, it should be referred not only to the electors who are on the roll, but every other person who is entitled at the present moment to become an elector, and to have his name placed on the roll. Nor can I see any great difficulty in accomplishing that object, because if, in addition to permitting those whose names are on the roll to vote, we grant to everybody who can obtain it, and should obtain it on application, an electoral right, there is no reason why we should not have a full and most comprehensive election on this measure, and that, too, without any unnecessary delay. Of course I do not propose to explain in full detail how I would carry out my suggestion, but having made the suggestion, it is only right I should say something about it, and I firmly believe this question of electoral rights is little better than a matter of drafting. If the people are permitted to obtain electoral rights, they should, if their names are not on the roll, be permitted to record their votes on the production of such electoral rights. And I would say these electoral rights should not be given unless the parties applying for them can satisfy the authorities they have been residents for a certain term, and in other respects are

qualified not only to get on the roll but to vote. It is idle to suppose that the roll which exist at the present moment fairly represents the qualified electors of the colony; and in a big matter of this kind we should afford every facility, and give to those who have recently been struck off the roll every assistance to get back again so as to be able to vote upon this question.

MR. DOHERTY: Why do you not have the same system for Parliamentary elections?

MR. LEAKE: I will go so far as to support it in regard to Parliamentary elections; but the exigencies of the occasion are not so great at a Parliamentary election as they are at the present moment. I take it we desire to get as full an expression of opinion from the people of this colony as possible, and if we want to ascertain the will of the people, we must not confine the referendum to the small number of electors at present on the roll. If permitted to do so, I shall be perfectly prepared, when this Bill is in Committee, to assist the Premier in framing clauses which will meet this question, provided he will assent to the suggestion I make. I throw this out as much for the sake of argument as anything else. I hope hon. members will see it is reasonable, and I notice from the reports that the matter has been suggested in another place. If that be so, surely if the majority of Parliament desire to see my suggestion adopted, we have sufficient drafting capabilities in the city to carry out our views and to embody them in the Bill. I do not propose to reply at length to the criticism of the hon. member who moved the Address-in-reply; but great stress was laid by him on the fact that certain colonies in British North America obtained terms. If I remember rightly, the position of those colonies with regard to the Canadian federation, and ours with regard to the proposed Australian federation, are not analogous; that those terms were offered to them to go into the federation of Canada, after the federation was formed. Here we are striving to get in as an original State, and time here is of the essence of the proceeding, for if we do not go in under the Bill, we cannot go in as an original State. Of course we can stand out, and trust to making the

best of a "deal" with the federal authority afterwards; but I for one am deady opposed to that, and will strain every nerve in resisting such a suggestion. I think it would be infinitely to our advantage to accept the terms which the Bill offers to us to enter as an original State, in preference to standing out with the hope of getting better terms.

MR. MORAN: You cannot do worse.

MR. LEAKE: I cannot hope to convert the hon. member; but in expressing my views, I know I am expressing the views of the majority of federalists in and out of the House. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, and I do so with considerable pleasure. The Premier has adopted the only course which was open to him, after the varied experience of the past few months; that is in at last proposing to refer this Bill, and to give to the citizens of Western Australia the same privileges and to recognise the same constitutional rights which are enjoyed by their fellow citizens in the neighbouring colonies.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion for adjournment put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 21 minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 24th May, 1900.

Efficient Schools (a correction)—Question: Fraud (alleged) against Railway Department—Return ordered: High School attendances—Address-in-Reply: Presentation—Electors on Parliamentary Roll—Game Act Amendment Bill, discharge of order—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

EFFICIENT SCHOOLS (A CORRECTION).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A clerical error occurred in the reply to the question asked by Mr. R. S. Haynes yesterday. The name of the Scots College was omitted from the list of schools which have applied to be considered efficient or secondary. It is only right that I should make this correction as early as possible; although it could be gathered from the last paragraph of my reply that the Scots College should have been included.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Then the reply will read: "It is hoped that the Scots College and the Christian Brothers' College," etc.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may add that it may be thought these examinations should have taken place by this time; but the inspectors have been very busy just now, and the examinations for the scholarships do not come on again until October, therefore no school will be affected.

QUESTION—FRAUD (ALLEGED) AGAINST RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

HON. C. SOMMERS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether the attention of the Government has been called to an article appearing in the *Sun* newspaper, published in Kalgoorlie on the 6th May, wherein serious fraud was, it was alleged, committed by the Perth Ice Company against the Railway Department; 2, If so, have any steps been taken by the Government to disprove the allegations contained in the said article; 3, And, if so, what steps.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—1, Yes; 2, Investigation was at once begun and has not yet been com-