

ADJOURNMENT.

HON. G. RANDELL: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until to-morrow evening at half-past seven o'clock.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: May I take it that to-morrow's meeting is intended to be only a formal one?

HON. G. RANDELL: Yes; no business will be done.

THE PRESIDENT: I think hon. members may take it that there will be no business.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 7.45 o'clock, until half-past seven the next evening.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th December, 1901.

Ministerial Re-elections, etc.—Papers presented—Railway Workshops at Midland Junction, Report—Government Intentions: Statement by the Premier; Motion for Adjournment, debate, division—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS, Etc. (5 SEATS).

The SPEAKER announced the return of writs issued for elections to the seats for Coolgardie, Toodyay, Perth, Murchison, and North Murchison, by which it appeared the following had been elected:—Coolgardie, Mr. A. E. Morgans; Toodyay, Mr. T. F. Quinlan; Murchison, Mr. J. L. Nanson; Perth, Mr. W. M. Purkiss; North Murchison, Mr. J. B. Holman.

The new members having been introduced, took the oath of allegiance and signed the members' roll.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Transcontinental Railway, Report on preliminary examination of country between Kalgoorlie and Eucla, by Mr. Muir; 2, Goldfields Regulations (new).

Ordered to lie on the table.

RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AT MIDLAND JUNCTION.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. GEORGE brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to report on the arrangements for constructing and fitting up the new Workshops at Midland Junction, and moved that it be printed. This was an urgent matter, owing to the long adjournment of the House; and if there were any means by which the House could immediately express an opinion upon the report, such means should, in the interests of the country, be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: The House could not be called upon to express an opinion on a report which hon. members had not yet seen. The report could at once be printed, after which it could be considered.

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS.

STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Morgans): I think the time has now arrived when Ministers should make some statement to the country through this House, as to what are our intentions with reference to the Government of this State in the immediate future. Since last we met in this House, we Ministers have faced our constituents; and hon. members are already aware from the newspaper reports that some of my colleagues were unfortunately defeated at the polls, that two of my colleagues lost their positions as members of this House—[MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear]—and one his position as a member in another place. But so far as the Government are concerned, they do not look upon these as ordinary defeats.

MR. GREGORY: Moral victories!

THE PREMIER: And I will explain why we do not look on them in that light. We look upon the loss of the two Assembly seats as a victory for the

Labour party in this House, and not as a victory for my friend opposite (M. Leake).

MR. TAYLOR: Better own up to it.

THE PREMIER: I may say at once, I am rather surprised to see that the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) is not sitting on the Labour bench, because certainly, when he went before his electors, he swallowed the Labour platform and the Labour ticket *holus bolus*.

MR. JOHNSON: What about Coolgardie?

THE PREMIER: And therefore he ought to sit on the same bench as the Labour members. However, notwithstanding the fact that we have a good majority in this House, a majority of five with which to carry on the business of the country, notwithstanding that I think there is no doubt we could successfully carry on the business of the country with the majority we have behind us, at the same time, in view of the fact that three members of the Government were defeated at the polls, we are desirous of respecting the usual constitutional practice, and it is our intention to ask the Governor to grant a dissolution. (General applause.)

MR. JAMES: We have forced you at last.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You are not yet in office.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member says he and his friends have forced our hands.

MR. JAMES: At last.

THE PREMIER: I am perfectly willing to let my friend enjoy himself in that belief; but I would point out to the House that it is not owing to any force which has been brought to bear on us by the Opposition that we take the action which I have just announced, but it is owing to our respect for constitutional principles and for parliamentary practice.

MR. JAMES: Too thin.

THE PREMIER: We saw in the recent elections an evidence of the desire of hon. gentlemen opposite to remain in power. Whether their desires and intentions were to go to the country remains to be seen, and it is for the country to judge. It is not for me to accuse them of infidelity to the causes they represent—not for one moment; but I will say that during the late elections we had opposition of a kind seldom experienced

in parliamentary life. When newly-appointed Ministers, on accepting office under the Crown, ask their constituents to return them, it is, to say the least, unusual, although I do not wish for a moment to say it is unconstitutional, for such Ministers to be opposed with the same relentless energy as that with which we were opposed during the recent elections.

Opposition MEMBER: And will be again.

MR. CONNOR: And so will you.

THE PREMIER: I think I may say it is the first time in the history of parliamentary life that a late Premier has gone to the constituency of another member who had been appointed in that Premier's place, and has gone to that constituency with the object of defeating the newly-appointed Premier. I do not know, but I doubt whether in parliamentary history there is to be found a parallel case. I do not object to this, because notwithstanding all the efforts of the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake), and all the vigorous energy which he put into the struggle, with his great desire to upset me from the position I have held for so long a time as representative of Coolgardie, I am glad to say his efforts failed, and I was returned by a greater majority than I ever got before.

[MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] This at least must show to my hon. friends opposite that the country is not tired of this Administration; and when I refer to another member opposite, the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) who also undertook a campaign in my constituency, I may say that I regret very much the hon. gentleman did not receive that warm welcome which probably he desired, and thought he deserved. The hon. member made several fruitless attempts to address my constituents; but he failed, and was obliged to beat an ignominious retreat from the back of the platform, and get away by the midnight express for Perth.

LABOUR MEMBER: Kurrawang did it.

THE PREMIER: The member for Cue had been always regarded in this House as a prophet, but a prophet who was always wrong; and on this occasion he came down to Perth, and in a speech he made at an election meeting in the Mechanics' Institute he said he was

perfectly certain I was going to be beaten in my election at Coolgardie. That is not the first prophecy in which the hon. member has found himself wrong; and I can only hope he will learn some wisdom, and not be so apt or so quick at prophesying in the future, because he was certainly a long way out on this occasion. The reason that has guided the Government in deciding to ask His Excellency to dissolve Parliament is that we desire to place ourselves unreservedly before the constituents of the country. I can assure hon. members that, so far as the Government are concerned, we have not the slightest anxiety in going to the country; and it is our firm opinion that when we do so we shall win seats, and return to this House with a greater majority than we have now. That is the opinion we hold; and so firmly do we hold the opinion that we are prepared to face the country, and I am safe in saying we are far more anxious to face the country than are our hon. friends opposite. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh! oh!] At least that is my opinion. The position was this. The present Government have a majority of five in this House. When the late Government resigned and we took office, our Ministers went to the country and two of the Ministers from this House were defeated; but that still leaves us with a majority of five in this House, and we still consider we have a working and a practical majority to carry on the business of the country. There is no doubt we can do so; and I have a farther feeling that, as time went on, if we had decided to face Parliament without a dissolution, we should have received the support of several gentlemen now sitting on the other side of the House, and before the end of this session I have no doubt we should have got some converts to our cause, and we should have been stronger at the beginning of the next session than we are at the present time. The position resolves itself thus: either we must carry on with the majority we have now, or there must be a dissolution, or some attempt must be made to get a coalition. With regard to the first alternative, we considered the matter most carefully, and we have come to the conclusion that in face of the defeat of three Ministers, which was nothing particularly strange under the circumstances, and for which defeats I

may say it was not at all necessary for us to throw up our position as a Government, because I believe there are many precedents in regard to the defeat of Ministers, and those precedents would have convinced this House that it was not at all necessary for us to look at the position as being too difficult for the Government to carry on—I say in regard to the defeat of those three Ministers, the consideration we had in our minds was that of loyalty to the constituents, and our desire was to give to the constituents of this country an opportunity of pronouncing judgment on the political situation. That was our desire; and we were not actuated by fear as to our ability to carry on the business, because we are satisfied we have a working majority; and when we remember also that my hon. friend on the other side (Mr. Leake) carried on the Government of the country for over five months with a minority of two in this House, it will be easy to see that we on this side should be able to carry on the business with the majority we have now at our back. But our desire was to follow the constitutional lines as closely as possible; and although we had precedents that would have justified us in remaining in our positions and carrying on the business of the country, although we had those precedents to justify us and a strong majority of supporters in this House, yet notwithstanding these considerations we said: "No; we prefer to allow this matter to go to the country: we will have a dissolution, and we will allow the people of the country to decide as to the respective merits of the Governments, and as to who shall rule the destinies of this State." The other alternative was to form a coalition Government. Attempts were made—I will not detail them—to bring this about, in order to avoid the necessity for a dissolution, which to a large extent in one sense may be regarded as a disaster to the country at the present moment. These attempts failed; and now the only remedy left is for me to come to this House and inform hon. members that it is my intention, on behalf of my colleagues and my party, to ask the Governor to grant a dissolution. There would have been no difficulty whatever in filling up the Ministerial vacancies; but we consider the proper course is the one I have outlined to the

House, and that is the course we have decided to take. We do not think it is desirable for us as a Government to lay ourselves open even to the suggestion that we are holding the reins of power without the authority of the constituencies. We think we have taken the proper course in deciding to do as I have stated; we believe the country will appreciate the position we have taken up; and, as I said, I am certain that when the general elections are over, the Government will come back with a majority very much larger than that which supports us at the present moment. When the resolution of "no confidence" was passed in this House, it was carried by a majority of two against my hon. friends opposite; and as we on this side have now a majority of five, therefore we feel our position is actually stronger than when that resolution was passed. I shall not take up the time of the House farther, because I have given to the House, and through this House to the country, our determination in regard to the dissolution of Parliament. I am now going to ask that, in view of the approaching holidays and seeing also that on Monday next the Governor General of the Commonwealth will arrive in this State, that the following Wednesday is Christmas Day, and that from thence to the middle of the second week in January we shall be in a period of holidays, it is my intention to ask the House this afternoon that it should adjourn until the 7th January next, which will be about three weeks from the present time. This is necessary in view of the fact that a dissolution is pending, and the necessary arrangements have to be made. I would like to point out that there is another matter in connection with this. The opening of Parliament to-day, or rather the calling together of Parliament, was rather early for us, seeing that my friend Mr. Moorhead has really not yet had time to get back to Perth. I believe he will not be able to arrive until to-night, and if Parliament had been called together say a few days later, it certainly would have given us a better opportunity to deal with the difficult position we have had to deal with during the last few days. At any rate, I intend to ask the House to grant an adjournment until the 7th January next, in order to enable the

necessary arrangements for the dissolution to be made, and to get over the period of the holidays which we now have upon us. I have to thank members for their kind attention. I will not say more, but ask the House to be good enough to grant the adjournment in order that the business of the country may be proceeded with and the necessary arrangements for a dissolution be made, and also until the period of holiday-keeping has passed over.

THE SPEAKER: Do you move that the House at its rising adjourn until January 7th?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Does any member second that?

Motion seconded.

Mr. LEAKE (West Perth): It is my intention to oppose this motion.

MEMBER: Of course.

Mr. LEAKE: "Of course" the hon. member says: I repeat "of course," and I do so because I desire to uphold parliamentary and constitutional practice. [**MEMBERS:** Oh!] I do not propose to follow the Premier in his flight into the realms of prophecy as to what will possibly be the result of the dissolution. I content myself with forming an opinion from recent events. Nor is it necessary for me to traverse the hon. member's observations with regard to what he has been pleased to term an unusual practice in opposing Ministers at the poll. I thought, and my friends too thought, we were following a constitutional course, because there is a provision in our Constitution Act which says that Ministers on their appointment must seek re-election; and in the absence of the dissolution which my Government advised some time ago, our only possible chance of testing the feeling of the country was to oppose Ministers. We did so with the result that three out of six were rejected. The hon. member who sought re-election in the South-West Province at Fremantle was defeated, and that defeat was brought about by a majority in five electorates: Perth represented at least one electorate, and I think we may take it for granted that Perth voices the opinions not only of Central Perth but of the metropolis and the suburbs. North Murchison, too, not only voices the opinion of one electorate, but I think it may give some indica-

tion of the feeling in the neighbouring electorates and on the goldfields generally. I claim, therefore, that indirectly the people have spoken against the present Administration and in favour of mine in twelve or fourteen electorates. I think I am entitled, in order to justify the position I take up this afternoon, to review shortly the position and the circumstances which have led up to the conditions of to-day. I and my colleagues were defeated on a no-confidence motion which was introduced by the then leader of the Opposition, the leader of a recognised party and a gentleman who is in a position to voice the opinions of hon. members. The hon. member succeeded in carrying that vote against my Administration, and in the ordinary course of events he was asked by His Excellency the Governor to form an Administration, but failed. Then we find a departure from the ordinary procedure was adopted in summoning to the counsels of His Excellency a gentleman who up to that time had represented no party in this House: I refer of course to my friend the present Premier. Circumstances have placed him in the fortunate or unfortunate position which he finds himself in to-day, that is that three out of his colleagues have been rejected. The warning which has been given cannot, I submit, be idly disregarded either by the hon. member or other hon. members in this House, particularly by hon. members who may represent constituencies either embraced in the constituencies which have rejected Ministers, or in the neighbouring constituencies. Thus it will be seen the advice which I and my colleagues tendered to the Governor last month was the proper advice, and I am glad to think that this opinion is now indorsed by the action which the hon. member proposes, namely to ask for a dissolution. Here I may remark, however, that the hon. member declares it his intention to ask for a dissolution, but hitherto he has not favoured the House with his views or his intentions in the event of a dissolution not being granted. It is possible, however, that one of his colleagues will be able to tell us what they will do if a dissolution is not granted. The Premier in effect tells us that he would not attempt to carry on. I assume therefore that he will not. It follows therefore

that if there is no dissolution, I suppose there will be a resignation. I put that to the hon. member. When the hon. member was summoned to the councils of His Excellency the position he assumed was this, that he practically guaranteed that not only could he appoint six Ministers, but that their seats were secured to them. Subsequent events have shown that half those Ministers were rejected. If the Premier sought to appoint others in the place of those Ministers rejected, it might be possible that half the balance would be rejected, and he would be relegated to the position he is in that afternoon. And perhaps the Premier might go on *ad infinitum* until the whole of the members on his side of the House were exhausted. I submit to you that such a course is absolutely against the principles of the Constitution. The Governor is no doubt entitled to ask, "What guarantee have you beyond your bare word that the three gentlemen you seek to appoint now will meet with a better fate than those you selected on a previous occasion?" If members will refer to Hearn on *The Government of England*, second edition, page 258—you see I am precise—in speaking there of the presence of Ministers in Parliament he says:

So imperative is this rule that if a Minister lose his seat in Parliament, constitutional practice requires that although he is not legally bound to do so, he should resign his seat.

Therefore the two gentlemen who failed to secure seats in Parliament are, if guided by the Constitution, bound at once to resign their office. And more especially does that apply to the hon. member who was defeated at Fremantle, because by Section 43 of the Constitution Act it is provided:

There may be six principal Executive offices of the Government liable to be vacated on political grounds, and no more.

One at least of such Executive offices shall always be held by a member of the Legislative Council.

We find then that really the Constitution is being evaded, and particularly is that done by the course which the hon. member has proposed to the House this afternoon, namely to delay, to suspend the Constitution in effect until the 7th January next, about three weeks. I submit with every confidence to you, sir,

and to the House that the hon. member's clear duty is to fill up the gaps in his Ministry at once. I anticipated a statement would be made this afternoon that the Ministers who have been defeated would have resigned, and that the hon. member was prepared to appoint others in their places, and to have moved this afternoon, as he should have done, that the seats of the new Ministers should be declared vacant. That I emphatically declare is the proper constitutional principle and parliamentary course to have adopted. It was the hon. member's duty to report to the House what had happened, and not to have asked us for any time or indulgence whatever. The country cannot be carried on without a Ministry, and whilst Parliament is in session each Minister must have a seat in Parliament. There is no justification for the three weeks' delay which the hon. member this afternoon asks for.

THE PREMIER: A fortnight of it is holiday, you know.

MR. LEAKE: I cannot help that: circumstances arise even during holidays when Ministers' advice is required. It was very ably put the other day by one of the Perth journals—I believe it is the one which the Premier acknowledges has given him the best support—that the Premier's task was to avoid a dissolution, not to advise it. I dare say the hon. member will not deny that, when his advice was sought by His Excellency the Governor, it was sought with the idea that the hon. member might carry on the business of the country without a dissolution. But now, the first time the Premier meets the House, he has to give the House advice directly in conflict with that which he gave to His Excellency. He tells the Governor, on the one hand, "I do not want a dissolution: I can carry on without it." To-day he tells the House, "I must have a dissolution." That circumstance arises only by reason of the lack of foresight or judgment on the part of the hon. member, superadded to which we find the mandate from the people which has been given at the late elections. I will not follow the Premier through all the observations which he made, because a good many of them were not at all *à propos* to the occasion; but I affirm that the bounden duty of the Premier is, either to fill the gaps in his

Ministry, or to resign. Then, simultaneously with the tendering of his resignation, he might have sought from the Governor a dissolution. I contend that if there should be a dissolution at all, the dissolution is with me who originally advised it, and that I am entitled to be placed *in statu quo*. My advice to the Governor was to dissolve Parliament. He sought the advice of two other hon. members, both of whom have failed in the task intrusted to them. One hon. gentleman had to resign his commission, and the other hon. gentleman finds himself with only half his Ministry elected. Consequently I again repeat, what will the Premier do if the Governor refuses a dissolution? Will he come back on the 7th January next and say: "I have again reconsidered the position, and I believe I can carry on the business of the House with a majority of five"? If that majority of five would be good enough on the 7th January, it is good enough to-day, and there is no need to adjourn—[OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—and we can proceed with the work of the session until the end of this week. Supposing the Premier succeeds in getting the dissolution he asks for, and goes to the country as a Minister, what will the position be then? Nothing, I presume, will be done 'until the 7th January. I suppose nothing will be done without again taking the House into his confidence. A general election is not likely to be brought to a conclusion for about six weeks. At the conclusion of the general election when all the writs have been returned, it is the duty of the Governor to summon every member to sit in Parliament; and that means a delay of a fortnight or three weeks, carrying us well up into February. Then assume that the country speaks in my favour—and I, in the light of recent events, have the right to suppose that it will. [MINISTERIAL MEMBER: Query?] Of course, my statement may be questioned, and I think the hon. member who questions it does so honestly; but I have a right to the opinion I expressed, and it is that the country would declare in my favour at the general elections, as it has declared in my favour at the Ministerial elections. What would be the result? It would be my duty to challenge the Premier directly the House

met. If I were successful, I should be called upon to form a Ministry. No doubt I could do so; my colleagues and myself would again have to face our electors; and possibly—unconstitutional though it appears to have been during the last few weeks—the game would be repeated. Possibly I myself should have to face an election, which would mean a farther delay of at least a fortnight.

THE PREMIER: You know you set a bad example.

MR. LEAKE: Oh! Then the hon. member intends to follow it? I anticipated that. Therefore it would be almost impossible for the House to meet until March, possibly the middle of March; and in the meantime the country is without a Ministry which has the country's confidence: half of the Ministers indeed have been rejected. And such Ministers, without any fear of the possible consequences of their acceptance of office, and in the absence of all supplies, are administering the affairs of the country. I say that is an absolutely unconstitutional practice; and I appeal to the Premier not to take a step which, I submit, is altogether unwarrantable. In the few remarks I have made this afternoon I have endeavoured to adhere to principle, and I do not want to hurt the feelings of anybody. During the early part of this session I admit having been as absolutely defiant—and intentionally so—as it was possible for any man to be. But I will for the future abandon that policy; and whether I am in this place or in the other (Treasury bench), I hope hon. members will, at any rate, give me credit for good intentions; and I shall not, unless in self-defence, adopt those tactics to which I have referred. I have buried the hatchet. I have buried it in the soil, and not in the body of an opponent. But I ask hon. members, and I ask the Ministry, to regard the position with a view, not to what is personally convenient, but to what is proper for the country, and with a view to what is constitutional. I have quoted authority both from the text-books and from the local statute, and I have expressed my own opinion; and if I am wrong, constitutional advisers on the other (Government) side will no doubt be prepared to follow up the argument. But I ask the Ministry not

to overtax our indulgent good nature—[MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Oh, oh!]
—and expect us to grant a farther respite, and thus, in our opinion, imperil the interests of the people.

MR. GEORGE: Do not be sarcastic.

MR. LEAKE: I am not sarcastic; and although my remarks may appear to be as amusing as they are I am certain unpleasant to some hon. members, yet to those hon. members of this House who believe in true parliamentary and constitutional principles, I know that I shall not appeal in vain. I have justified the position I have taken up, and I consequently must oppose the motion which the Premier has submitted, namely that the House at its rising adjourn until the 7th January. I should not object to an adjournment either till to-morrow or till the next day, to enable the hon. member to fill up the gaps in his Ministry. I think he would be entitled to that. But he should have come down this afternoon prepared to do that, or, failing his doing so immediately, he should have come prepared to ask for an adjournment till to-morrow or the next day to appoint his Ministers, and to come to this House and declare their seats vacant, in order that the people might have a farther opportunity of testing the value of his choice. But there is no justification for the Premier's carrying on the business of the country for three weeks, and possibly for a period of three weeks longer, with three Ministers who have been rejected by their constituents. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]

MR. R. HASTIE (Kauowna): I thought there would be a discussion on this motion, and I wish to say a word or two. I do not wish to follow the course the Premier has taken, nor to enter into the constitutional aspect of the question, which has been so ably treated by the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake); but I should like to impress strongly upon the House the position in which we are. It is about six weeks or perhaps seven weeks since the then leader of the Opposition introduced his motion of no-confidence. At that time, I remember strongly protesting that its effect would be to delay the business of the country for at least four or five weeks. Almost everyone declared my statement was ridiculous. Yet experience has taught

us that for the last six or seven weeks we have been at a standstill; and the Premier invites us to-night to take a course that will make it absolutely impossible for us to consider any parliamentary business for the next two or three months. To my mind, it will be impossible for us to continue the business of the country till that time. One thing appears rather strange to me: that the Premier assumes he will get a dissolution from the Governor. I do not know whether he is justified in that assumption; but if there be a doubt on the matter, then let us calmly consider the question, so as to decide whether we shall agree to the position the Premier puts before us, which position in a large measure is that for the next two months this defeated Ministry, the half of which has not been returned by the country, is to run this country. The defeated Ministers will be beyond the control of Parliament; they will have no person who can call them personally to account.

MR. CONNOR: There is a majority here, on the side of the Government.

MR. HASTIE: If there be a Government majority in Parliament, then let us sit here and legislate.

MR. GEORGE: We want to go to the country.

MR. HASTIE: If you have a majority in Parliament, and that majority is frightened to carry on the Government in Parliament, then let us know that fact at the earliest possible moment. The Premier, in some very nicely stated remarks, referred to some gentlemen or to one gentleman who had beaten an ignominious retreat from Coolgardie. I should have thought the Premier would have remembered the maxim about people who live in glass houses. We can all remember the hon. gentleman's going to Coolgardie for a special purpose, not carrying out that purpose, promising to fulfil his mission in Perth, and not having pluck enough to do it there, nor am I aware that he has had the pluck to do it in Coolgardie; and therefore I hardly think he should give this over-exaggerated account of the event in which that other gentleman took part.

THE PREMIER: You were an actor in the same scene, were you not?

MR. HASTIE: The Premier was good enough to ask the House to extend a

certain measure of indulgence to him and to his Ministers. Is that fair? We have already given a very fair measure of indulgence to those who occupy the Treasury bench; and he asks us for more.

HON. F. H. PRESSE: The indulgence has been on the Government side.

MR. HASTIE: We are sent here in the first place to govern this country; and if present circumstances are to continue, Parliament will have comparatively little to say as to the affairs of the country. Much has been said about the Government majority. Let us have a division and see. Let everyone in the country see who in this House are willing to bring all political things to a stand in the meantime; and who the members are that are willing to do their duty, and to carry on the work of Parliament.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I should like to make a few remarks in the interests of the country, having nothing to do with party. The remarks of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) appear to me in this way. He says that what the Premier proposes to do is unconstitutional. But what he (Mr. Leake) suggests appears to me to be as great an evil, if it is an evil; for he says that if a dissolution is to take place, we cannot do any business in this House till March next, and that to carry on till then without a Government having the confidence of this House would be unconstitutional. But surely it would be just as unconstitutional to take the course which he suggests; for it brings us to this point, and I think we will see the wisdom of the practice (I will not say the law) of Parliament, that of not interfering with the re-elections of Ministers. If the party in power are not strong enough to carry on the affairs of the country, the proper way to meet them is in this House, and not on the hustings; because on the hustings the question has not been one of policy at all, but has been one of personality. I contend that the interests of the country should not be played with in this battledore and shuttlecock fashion. The leader of the Opposition also condemns himself in this way, that while he is a great stickler for constitutional practice, and is condemning the Premier for taking a course which may be out of the common, yet we

have to remember that for five and a half months he continued a practice which was certainly unconstitutional, by carrying on the affairs of the country while supported by only a minority in this House. He urges that the present Premier should resign. But surely if the present Premier should resign now, the hon. member (Mr. Leake) should have resigned immediately he found himself, as Premier, in a minority in this House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So we did.

MR. HARPER: It was admitted at the time that the position was somewhat humiliating for the party then carrying on the Government; but still they adhered to the position. What we want is to get on with the business of the country, and to take the shortest way to do it. The leader of the Opposition has told us that if we have a dissolution there may be no business done till March next, and that it would be most unconstitutional that the administration of public affairs should be carried on for that length of time. If the ordinary constitutional practice had been followed, and if Ministers, good or bad, had been allowed to retain their seats, and be defeated in this House if they did not suit hon. members on that side, I could have understood the argument; but members on that side, while knowing they are in a minority and could not carry on the business, yet make a complaint to the country that although they could not carry on themselves, they must try to prevent others from doing so, by the unusual practice of throwing all their personal influence into the election contests outside, to prevent Ministers from obtaining re-election, and in that way prevent the business from being carried on in Parliament.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I should be sorry for the occasion to pass without saying a few words in regard to it. We on this (Ministerial) side have been twitted with not being mindful of our duty to the people of the country. We are mindful of it, by asking for a dissolution, as being the shortest way to cut through the difficulties which environ the Government at the present time. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) has said, very truly, that the proper way to have done with Ministers would be to have fought them in this House and

defeated them here; and a proper regard by hon. gentlemen opposite for their duty to the people that they are talking about now would have been to have carried out that course, and permitted the business of the country to be carried on, while fairly criticising it as it could have been criticised in this Chamber. I can quite understand the Premier not desiring at the present time to put up more new colleagues to be shot at—not shot at by outsiders standing for election against them, but by members of this House who, instead of attending to the business of their constituencies, have been rushing about all over the country like so many blooming agitators.

MR. TAYLOR: You don't like it.

MR. GEORGE: No; and the hon. member will not like it, for the rope is already woven that is to hang him.

MR. TAYLOR: We will see you in the country.

MR. GEORGE: I can promise the hon. member that if they do see me in the country, they will see a man; and if they see him as my opponent, they will see an agitator. I do not rise for the purpose of barneying with a gentleman from the backblocks who does not understand political or parliamentary usage, but for following the constitutional example so respectfully shown by the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake). In my opinion the country has a right to say, "If you cannot settle your quarrels as you should settle them, in the Houses of Parliament, we (the electors) desire that the business of the country should proceed; therefore, come to us and we will settle you, and the new Parliament that is elected can then settle our business." I say the interests and the trade of this country are being paralysed by this squabble, which ought not to have arisen. Let the new Premier and his colleagues hold those seats, and he and they may continue to hold them if they can give us fair and equitable government. But I say that in this session we have had nothing but personalities, devised and designed by those members who sit on the other side of the House. I am going to vote for dissolution; and I hope that if one result should be that I must be divorced from the companionship of one or two gentlemen I see on the other side of the House, I shall carry with me the

consolation into my home and my business—that, while the divorcement may perhaps relieve me from the duty of attending here, it will also relegate those members back to the business for which they are fitted, and relieve them from attending here to business for which they have proved themselves unfitted. For the late Premier to try and make out that the present Premier has no right to get a dissolution, that a dissolution belongs to himself, is only his way of saying that he wants to take the government of this country into his own hands, and wants to use it as an election weapon. We on this side say we will have that weapon, if it is to be used. He (Mr. Leake) has had enough of weapons before: he has had any amount of rope allowed him, and the only pity is that while he had so much margin of rope he did not hang himself with it.

MR. W. H. JAMES (East Perth): I will avoid, as far as possible, some of the remarks made by the Premier that hardly became him, and I will also avoid the tone of the member for the Murray (Mr. George). I thought the position was that when the Leake Government were defeated, they recommended to His Excellency that a dissolution should take place, because this House was so constituted that a stable Government could not be formed, unless there was to be a general election. I hope I am right in saying that was the advice given by the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake), that there should be a dissolution to enable the country to judge between the Leake Government and the then Opposition. However, that advice was not followed, because the Governor was advised, I have no doubt, by the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), and subsequently by the present Premier (Hon. A. E. Morgans), that a dissolution was not necessary, and that a Government could be formed and could carry on the business without a dissolution of Parliament. Acting on that advice, the late Government resigned their commissions, the result of which we find to-day. I desire to point out that it was because the present Government said they could carry on without a dissolution that they got the chance of forming a Government. They said six weeks ago that they had a majority in this House; and what we say now is that as there is a majority in the

House supporting the present Premier, or rather a majority believed to be loyal to the Government, why should that majority adopt the uncommon view put forth by the Premier, and say "We do not agree that a party having a majority in Parliament should carry on the business of the country, but we will go to the country." If we in this House are not to concern ourselves about the important provisions of the Constitution Act, and if we should leave this question to be determined by the House, surely in a question like this, where one side accepts the position of a majority of the House, why should that majority not go on with the business of the country?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. L. Nanson): Do you object to a dissolution?

MR. W. H. JAMES: Why should not those members who said five weeks ago they could do without a dissolution, stand to their colours now and give to the man who then asked for a dissolution the chance of going to the country on it? They take our policy, and now they are going to take our advice and go to the country on it. The present Government party came into existence only because they said "We can do without a dissolution"; yet directly they find they cannot get on without a dissolution, they change their view and say they want a dissolution. They have changed their view in five weeks, because we have convinced them that our view was right. What are they going to do now? They will go to the Governor and say, "Mr. Leake was quite right: you ought to have had a dissolution five weeks ago. We made a mistake. We put the country to all that trouble—[Mr. HARPER: We did nothing of the sort]—a blunder was made, and we now ask you to give the dissolution which Mr. Leake asked for, and which you said was not necessary." That is what we object to: we want our good friends to be loyal. If they say they do not care for the country, and that they are in a majority in the House, let them loyally accept the position and carry on. If above all things they are anxious to secure the best interests of the country, and they say the best interests are to be promoted by allowing a majority in this House to control the Government, they have the majority, and they should exercise the use of the majority that can

best secure those interests which they say they hold so much at heart. That is a simple position to take up. I think we have a right to object to the vague remarks of the Premier, who tells us that he proposes to recommend a dissolution. That is all. Why was not this dissolution recommended when the last Ministerial returns came in a few days ago? There was ample time. The telegraph was available by which they could get the advice of their colleagues, and there was time to have given advice to be acted upon yesterday or to-day. Why is this delay? Why should we adjourn to the 7th of January, that in the meantime the advice may be tendered by the Premier, Mr. Morgans? The Governor may say, "Mr. Morgans has made so many blunders, I do not care to follow his advice this time." Supposing the Governor will not follow his advice, what are we going to do? Why cannot the Premier give the advice to-morrow? Why should we adjourn to enable him to come and say to us, "I have advised the Governor to grant a dissolution"? The point I desire to make is this. We said we wanted a dissolution all along, and they are suddenly converted. It is wonderful how we have converted them! We are agreed upon the need of a dissolution, and the only point between us is as to whether we should carry the dissolution or they should.

MR. DOHERTY: That will be settled.

MR. JAMES: I am glad my friend is in the confidence of the Governor. He generally knows a good deal. As that is settled, the only point is as to whether we shall adjourn to the 7th January to see whether the Premier will give the advice to the Governor. Why cannot he go to the Governor to-morrow? Why cannot we meet on Thursday or Friday, and why cannot he come before us and say, "My advice has been accepted"? But as it is now, if we carry the motion we shall adjourn until the 7th of January, and the intervening time will be lost. Why cannot we adjourn for three days? Let the Premier tender his advice. It does seem to me that to adjourn to the 7th of January for the purpose of enabling the Premier to go to the Governor and say, "I tender certain advice," and to enable the Governor to say, "I accept it," is adjourning far too long. It could certainly

be done in three days. That would be ample time, and, if it were done, I think we should have no difficulty in agreeing upon the matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): Seeing the tone which this debate is now taking, and considering the circumstances in which the country finds itself, it seems to me most desirable that members on both sides of the House should have time to consider the situation, and that the Premier should have time to interview His Excellency and decide upon a definite course of action. For that reason I move that the debate be now adjourned.

MEMBERS: Until when?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: To-morrow.

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. member move that as an amendment to the motion before the House?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It could be moved as an amendment; but, as it is for adjourning the debate, I thought I was in order to move that the debate be adjourned.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; that is in order.

Motion (adjournment of the debate) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	22
Noes	...	...	...	22
A tie	...	...	...	0

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Connor
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Doherty
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gregory	Mr. George
Mr. Hastie	Mr. George
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Harper
Mr. Holman	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Holmes	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Higham
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. James	Mr. Monger
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Morgans
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Leake	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Piesse
Mr. McWilliam	Mr. Pigott
Mr. Oats	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Parkiss	Mr. Sayer
Mr. Reid	Mr. Smith
Mr. Reside	Mr. Stone
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	Mr. Rason (Teller).

THE SPEAKER: I give my vote with the Ayes.

Motion thus passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

MR. LEAKE (speaking from the Government side of the House before members returned to their regular seats): I

move that the House do now adjourn. (Some laughter.)

MR. F. CONNOR: Is the hon. member (Mr. Leake) in order in speaking out of his place?

THE SPEAKER: No; he ought to be in his chair.

THE PREMIER (speaking from the Opposition side before members had all resumed their places): I beg to move that the House do now adjourn.

MR. LEAKE: Must not the hon. member move it from his own seat?

THE PREMIER: I will do so. [Resuming his regular seat:] I beg to move that the House do now adjourn.

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at six minutes to 6 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 18th December, 1901.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 7:40 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ADJOURNMENT.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): As I understand there is a probability of the Legislative Assembly being adjourned until Friday, a motion to that effect having been made in the other place, I rise to move that the House at its rising do adjourn until Friday, at 5 o'clock p.m., if that will suit hon. members. I see no necessity for our meeting at half-past 4, under the circumstances; and supposing the motion in the other place is not carried to-night, there will be nothing for this House to do to-morrow in any case. It may be perhaps inconvenient to hon. members to sit on Friday, but that is the only course open to the House at the present moment. I move

that the House at its rising do adjourn until Friday at 5 o'clock.

HON. A. B. KIDSON (West): May I suggest, for the consideration of the hon. member (Mr. Randell), whether it would not be more convenient to meet at a quarter-past 5? Five o'clock would be very inconvenient to members from Fremantle, as they would have to come by the train leaving at half-past 3 to be here at that hour, that being an hour and a half before the time stated.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Make it 5:30.

HON. A. B. KIDSON supported the suggestion.

Question (5:30 o'clock) put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at seven minutes to 8 o'clock, until the next Friday, at 5:30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th December, 1901.

Paper presented—Political Situation: Debate on Adjournment; Amendment passed—Assent to Supply Bill—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Regulations of the Peak Hill Roads Board under Width of Tires Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

POLITICAL SITUATION—DEBATE ON ADJOURNMENT.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion (after Ministerial statement by the Premier) "That the House at its rising do adjourn until the 7th January."

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): My object in moving the adjournment of the debate yesterday was to give the Premier