

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

the opportunity of interviewing His Excellency the Governor, and of ascertaining whether His Excellency was disposed to grant a dissolution. I think the House is justified in asking for an answer to that question, before entertaining a proposal for any extraordinary delay. There can be no reason whatever for delay in asking the question, and I anticipate there would be very little delay in obtaining an answer. The proposal as put before the House is to adjourn until the 7th January, when it is proposed by the Premier to ask His Excellency to dissolve this Parliament. Now there is no certainty whatever that if such a question were asked on 7th January, an affirmative answer would be given; and I think we are justified in opposing this adjournment, and in asking for a distinct answer from the Government benches as to whether, in the event of the House deciding to adjourn, there shall be a dissolution. There can be no question, however, as to the nature of this motion of the Premier, and of the opposition which is now being shown to it. The motion carries with it the life of the Government. The failure to carry this motion would be a distinct defeat for the Government, and there can be no side issue on that question. If I know anything about constitutional practice, the negation of this motion would practically be a vote of want of confidence. In view of this, we have to look the question seriously in the face. The Premier, in presenting his case, started out with a suggestion that the member for Cue, namely myself, had to run away from Coolgardie because he could not get a hearing. Now I suggest to the Premier that perhaps his statement was scarcely in accordance with the dignity of what was practically a no-confidence debate. But at the same time I suggest to him that there was a certain gentleman, the Premier of this State, who went to Coolgardie for the purpose of delivering the great address which every Premier is expected to deliver, and that he, too, failed to get a hearing in the same town. I would also suggest to him that after he had secured election with some considerable trouble, and after a severe contest—

MR. GORDON: But by a big majority.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He again failed to get a hearing, but got certain

rotten eggs, which came into the bargain. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Oh, oh!] So honours are fairly even on that question, except that the Premier has the obloquy. Of course, the Premier knows there is no significance whatever in either of those incidents. For instance, when a member chooses to go into another constituency, he always runs the risk of opposition; and it would be just as fair for me to argue that the hon. member would not be heard in my own constituency, as for him to argue that I ran away from Coolgardie.

MR. GEORGE: What business had you in Coolgardie?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is my business.

MR. GEORGE: And the business of others, too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I want to notice something more important to which the Premier referred when dealing with this question. In passing, he said the member for Cue always posed as a prophet in this House, and was always wrong. Now, the Premier must know that is absolutely inaccurate, because I have never posed as a prophet at all. Again and again I have declared that I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. I have made some forecasts, principally about finance, which have generally turned out to be fairly accurate. But the Premier did prophesy. He positively declared that he would come back with the whole of his following behind him. He made that distinct prophecy. And, did he so return? Was that prophecy fulfilled? And he has taken to prophesying again, and says that if a dissolution be granted he will come back with a stronger following. Perhaps he will. I shall not prophesy on the subject. I am only calling attention to the fact that while the Premier accuses me of posing as a prophet, which I am not, and while I have never posed as a prophet, the Premier himself is engaged in prophesying with all his might.

MR. DOHERTY: You are the son of a prophet.

MR. GEORGE: It is "the pot calling the kettle black."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I wish to call attention to another statement made by the Premier, that the defeats of his

Ministers, and the victories of the Leake party, were practically victories for the Labour party. Now the Premier is fully acquainted with the circumstances of those contests; and he knows perfectly well that the city of Perth, for instance, is certainly not a Labour constituency, and that the majority cast for the member recently returned represents more than the whole of the electors on the roll who could properly be classed as Labour voters.

THE PREMIER: I said the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) had to swallow the Labour platform and ticket.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member says the member for Perth had to swallow the Labour ticket. Granted. Supposing that were so, if he swallowed the Labour ticket, it was for the purpose of obtaining the Labour vote.

THE PREMIER: Oh!

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear, and laughter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am quoting the Premier's argument. Do not be in too big a hurry. The insinuation is that the member for Perth swallowed the Labour platform in order to obtain the Labour vote. My argument is that the Labour vote was less than the majority. How does that fit his argument?

MR. GEORGE: You cannot prove it, anyhow.

MR. CONNOR: You are prophesying now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The next point is the Premier is not correct in his statement: the member for Perth did not swallow the Labour platform. Take the next case. Will the Premier say that the Province from which his Colonial Secretary (Mr. Moss) was unfortunately displaced, was dominated by the Labour vote? Why, there were not enough Labour votes proper in that province to constitute half the majority. So that argument amounts to nothing. It may possibly be said the Labour party, the Amalgamated Workers' Association, had something to do with the defeat of the Attorney General (Mr. Moorhead). That is so, because the greater proportion of the people of that district may properly be classed as workers. But the argument is that the vote cast against the Premier's Ministers was cast against them by the influence of the Labour party. Now I

say it was not so cast. And, moreover, I say that the Leake Government have never been tied to the Labour party; that they have never made any pledges to the Labour party; that the Labour party have supported the Leake Government because they approved of the Leake policy; and seeing that the Morgans Government have absolutely swallowed, "*holus bolus*," to use the Premier's own expression, the platform, the policy, the Bills, and everything in connection with the Leake Government, there is just the same reason for the Labour party to follow the Morgans Government as for their following the Leake party. That kind of logic is altogether worthless. I wish, however, to pass from these considerations, to refer to what has been practically the *gravamen* of the offences imputed to the Leake party. The complaint is that we opposed Ministers, and it has been argued, in the Press and out of it, that there was no ground for our so doing, or that it was unusual. The Government have not gone so far as to say it was unconstitutional; because that would be absurd.

MR. GEORGE: They said it was unfair.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But they do say it is unusual to oppose Ministers. Now the Premier must know that the very three last Ministries elected in Queensland, in New South Wales, and in Victoria, respectively, had every one of their members opposed, and several Ministers were defeated. He knows very well that in 1835, Lord John Russell was opposed, and successfully opposed. He knows that in 1845, Peel was opposed and three of his Ministers were defeated.

MR. DOHERTY: And he carried on.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And so will you carry on, if you can.

MR. DOHERTY: Tell us the lot: give us the whole story.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I shall leave you to tell it. I will tell my own story. I wish to point out that there is nothing unconstitutional—that is not argued—but there is nothing unusual, nothing improper, in opposing Ministers. Now regarding the position which we take up, Hearn, one of the ablest writers on constitutional practice, says on page 275 of his work:—

The Crown is often obliged to consider, in making its appointments, the candidates' chances of re-election.

This is the whole point, that if a Ministry be formed, it is supposed to be formed by a party that is in harmony with the country; that being so, it is exceedingly difficult to oppose a Minister successfully; and consequently, because of the fear of failure, an attempt is seldom made. I admit that, but the very provision in our constitution is the safety-valve of it. If it were not for this clause in our constitution, any set of men without any followers at all might jump the Treasury benches and hold them until Parliament died by effluxion of time. But a provision of this constitution supposes that the Government who propose to administer the affairs of the State shall have a majority behind them in the country, and consequently that there will be no difficulty in getting Ministers returned. We said at the outset that this majority which has defeated the Leake party on the Treasury benches was in a minority in the country, and it was our bounden duty in justice to our convictions to give the people every opportunity possible to answer whether we were or we were not a majority. And if we are to take the result of the elections, we say again that the Leake party represents a majority in the country, and the mere fact of there being a majority in the House is no proof that the country would be satisfied with the new Government.

MR. GEORGE: We want the country to elect a new Parliament.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We want a dissolution, and we want it now. Make no mistake--we have been pleading for a dissolution and we want it, and want it now. We do not want to wait until the 7th of January.

MR. DOHERTY: Then what are you objecting to?

[Several interjections.]

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I want to point out that the remedy proposed will not meet the difficulties of the present case. If the seats vacated were all in this House, a dissolution would remedy the mischief to a certain extent, but a dissolution will not remedy the mischief in connection with the Upper House. What is to be done in the present case? We cannot carry on constitutional Government unless we have a Minister in

the Legislative Council. The proposed dissolution will not remedy that. It will not put a member back there. Do the Government propose to fill the vacancy in the Legislative Council, and, if so, do they propose to fill it at once? That is a question that ought to have been answered, ought to have been explained to this House; and in the meantime do the Government propose to carry on during this interim until the 7th January onwards? Do they propose to carry on the Government with defeated Ministers, and if so, is that a constitutional procedure? [MEMBERS: What authority?] Professor Hearn.

MR. DOHERTY: Give us Bagehot.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I shall give you what I like. Professor Hearn says:

No Minister can now retain office for a week in opposition to the wishes of the House of Commons.

He says again, on page 276:

It is a fundamental rule that all non-political officers must be subordinate to some responsible Minister. This rule arises from the very nature of our political system. The Ministers who are responsible to Parliament are the heads of the great departments of the State; and their responsibility relates to the proper administration of these departments. They are therefore by their official position entitled, and by the theory of the constitution are required, to direct the policy of the departments over which they severally preside. For that policy they are answerable, at the peril of censure and consequent loss of office, to Parliament.

At page 277 he says:

Undoubtedly the system of double command is an inconvenience. But it is the price, and practically the moderate price, that we pay for Parliamentary Government.

I ask, if we are to carry on until the 7th of January, to whom are the heads of the departments responsible? To certain gentlemen who are not members of Parliament? There are cases in the constitution of a Ministry in which gentlemen are taken who are not members of Parliament at the time, and who are expected to, and who do afterwards, obtain seats in Parliament; but this is a case where not only are the gentlemen referred to not members of Parliament, but they were members of Parliament and they have been rejected by the country, which is a very material difference. They have, I say, been rejected by the country. It is possible—it has at times been done,

and therefore may be deemed constitutional—that a Ministry may fill up its ranks from persons who are not members of Parliament, in one or two cases, perhaps, and find seats for these gentlemen afterwards; but it is not on record anywhere that I know of that a Minister who has been rejected by his constituency can continue for any lengthy period to administer an office.

MR. HARPER: There is a case in the House of Commons at present.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: To whom are those gentlemen responsible? They are not responsible to Parliament, because they are not members of Parliament. They are responsible to nobody.

MR. GEORGE: Yes; they are.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They are responsible to nobody. They are absolutely irresponsible administrators of Government departments. What may occur under such circumstances? The country makes the Parliament, and the Parliament makes the Cabinet, and here we find that three Ministers of this Cabinet have been defeated in the country. It has been said that this is practically unimportant. Anson, a valuable author on political practice, says in Vol. I., page 29 (second edition):

The Crown has to deal with a body of men who stand or fall together, because they represent common interests and the opinions of a party.

I call attention to that. If it be true that a Ministry is a solid body which stands or falls together, I contend that the rejection of three Ministers by the country has entirely annihilated the Morgans Ministry.

MR. GORDON: No fear!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It has.

MR. GORDON: Oh, no.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I know members are prepared to say they are not annihilated, but I am speaking of constitutional practice.

MR. DOHERTY: Why all this fuss and talk?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I will read it again to the hon. member, who does not seem to have grasped the constitutional importance of the question:—"The Crown has to deal with a body of men who stand or fall together, because they represent common interests and the opinions of a

party." What party do the Government represent?

MR. GORDON: Not the ex-party, anyhow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will any individual in this House or out of it tell us what party the Government represent?

MR. CONNOR: They represent the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What party does the majority represent, then?

MR. CONNOR: This party.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is the defeated party. The hon. member points to the Premier and says that the majority represent "this party," namely the Premier's party. I repeat, that is the defeated party. The representative argument is perfectly good. The hon. member is perfectly logical, and I thank him for his assistance; because it has come to this. The country has said "We reject the Morgans Ministry"; therefore the country is—

MR. GEORGE: Oh, don't get so excited!

MR. DOHERTY: Why do you occupy the time of the House when we are asking for a dissolution?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am perfectly justified in occupying the time of the House, and I shall occupy less if the hon. member interjecting will consent to occupy less at present. Anson goes on to say:—

The dismissal of one is as a rule to be regarded as an attack on the policy which all represent.

My argument is that the country makes the Parliament, and that the Parliament makes the Ministry. Three Ministers have been defeated, and I say that in those defeats the voice of the country has spoken. It is the voice of the country on the Ministry: it is the voice of the country on the party which the Ministry represents.

THE PREMIER: On three of them; not on the whole Ministry.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Three is a good half, you know. The three who have been returned—

MR. GORDON: They do not carry on in a minority, anyhow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have not carried on at all yet.

MR. GEORGE: No. You are "carrying on."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I argue that the people are the supreme arbiters in

this question; consequently dissolution is a reference to the people, who are our masters. The people have to decide on Parliament, and Parliament has to decide on the Ministry. We know how, under existing circumstances, it can come about that there may be a majority of this House not representing public opinion. We know the small electorates; we know the pocket boroughs; we know that six members are sitting for 1,700 voters, while one member is sitting for 5,000. We know how the possibility and the actuality of this state of things comes about, that there should sit in this House enough members to eject a Ministry which was in harmony with the people—

MR. GEORGE: Oh, no!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And which represented a majority of the people in this State.

MR. GEORGE: Not a bit of it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have had a proof of the fact in the rejection of three Ministers who went to the country for re-election.

MR. CONNOR: What about Coolgardie?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then there comes another most significant fact. The hon. member who moved a vote of want-of-confidence in the Leake Ministry was perfectly in order and perfectly in his place in endeavouring to form a Government. It is no secret, or rather it is an open secret, that the hon. member in question failed to get a Ministry together simply because he could not secure members who were prepared to meet their constituents.

MR. GEORGE: That is not true.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say it is true.

MR. GEORGE: Well, I say it is not true.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Public opinion, at any rate, is against the member for the Murray. The assumption, whether right or wrong, is as I have stated. It may be wrong: we will grant that it is wrong.

MR. CONNOR: Oh, accept a dissolution and be done with it!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member in question failed to form a Government; and then we had the unprecedented spectacle of the formation of a Government by a gentleman who represents no party. [OPPOSITION MEM-

BERS: Hear, hear.] The Premier has absolutely no party, and he has never had a party.

MR. CONNOR: He represents a majority here, anyhow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. gentleman represents a majority which is bound together with a rope of sand, namely dislike of the Leake party. The Leake Ministry was not ejected on account of its policy; because the present Government have swallowed the Leake policy. [Several interjections.] The present Government have not administered at all as yet; and they cannot be said to represent the voice of the country, because the voice of the country has spoken against them whenever it has had an opportunity of making itself heard.

MR. GEORGE: Tell us, what is "a rope of sand?"

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Consequently I say the party represented by the present Government has no real, tangible existence.

MR. GORDON: What about your own experiment in forming a Ministry, eh? (Laughter.)

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Now we come to this position—

MR. DOHERTY: Tell us, what about the formation of your Ministry?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: My Ministry was all right, perfectly right. My Ministry was formed; and that is more than can be said of the present Ministry. My Ministry took power and got the approval of the country. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]

MR. GORDON: Where was your party at that time?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say the Ministry I formed has the approval of the country yet. Let us test it by reference to the country.

MR. DOHERTY: You let Leake sit on your chest, anyhow. (Laughter.)

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I will go on if you can obtain order in this House: it is somewhat difficult, I admit. We find Ministers in power with no mandate from the people. We find in power an Administration one half of whose members have been rejected by the people. I may be incorrectly informed, but I am informed that one Minister—

MR. GORDON: Oh, it is a pity you have not re-formed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am informed that one Minister —

[Several interjections.]

MR. DIAMOND: Have a little decency! Give a man a show!

MR. DOHERTY: Oh, decency!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should be glad to attempt the re-formation of some hon. members, but I am afraid they are past reforming. I am informed that one Minister has sent to London an order for £100,000 worth of railway plant, contrary to advice of the heads of his department. That Minister is not a member of Parliament. I am not saying that the order is wrong or that it is right: I am saying merely that an order of considerable importance has been sent to London by a Minister who is not responsible to this House or to the country.

MR. GEORGE: You should never listen to tittle-tattle.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I understand that the Premier is engaged—or, if he is not engaged, that he is about to engage—in the signing of one million pounds' worth of Treasury bills to be issued. I am not going to say at this juncture whether these bills should be issued or whether they should not be issued, though I may say that if I were in charge of the Treasury those bills would not be issued.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What would you do?

MR. GORDON: You will lose the "com." this time.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh!

MR. HOPKINS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask you whether it is in order for the member for South Perth to interject words implying that the late Treasurer received commission in connection with the issue of Treasury bills.

THE SPEAKER: I did not hear the interjection of the hon. member.

MR. GORDON: I admit practically the accusation of the hon. member for Boulder; but I meant only to refer to the com-ic position.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member ought not to interject at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is no commission ever attached to the issue of Treasury bills. The remark springs only from the very low comedy of the hon. member. I want hon. members to look seriously at the position, if it is possible for some hon. members to be serious. I

do not propose to say at this juncture whether it is desirable or undesirable, whether it is right or wrong, to issue a million pounds' worth of Treasury bills at the present time; but I say emphatically to this House and to the country that it is a most improper proceeding for a Ministry, half of whose members have been defeated by the country, to take on itself the responsibility of issuing one million pounds' worth of Treasury bills in the name of this State. Such a proceeding is an outrage on constitutional government.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Would you have the bills dishonoured?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How could they be dishonoured before they are issued? The hon. gentleman does not know what he is talking about.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, don't I?

MEMBER: What about your Treasury bills?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The other Treasury bills are paid; so the hon. gentleman need not trouble himself about them at all.

MR. DOHERTY: You took good care of that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; I did take good care.

MR. GEORGE: Quite right.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not going to allow myself to be driven away from the point by members opposite. If the information I have be correct, an important order has been sent to London.—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is wrong.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: By a Minister who is not responsible to this House or to the country.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is absolutely untrue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Very well. That information is incorrect, then, as far as I am concerned.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say that here as a Minister.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. gentleman knows to whom I refer. I do not say the order, if sent, would be wrong; but I do say —

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Oh!

MR. DOHERTY: You are changing your tune.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I am not changing my tune. I said exactly the same thing just now. I wish to point out that this House has a right to control the finances of the country, and that a Treasurer with a Ministry half of whose members have been rejected by the country has no right to take on himself a large responsibility in the name of the country. I will put it in this way. The Premier's simple duty is to fill up the gaps in his Ministry. If he is not prepared to fill up those gaps, he should resign. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS : Hear, hear.] To ask this House to stand over until the 7th January, on the off chance of the Governor granting a dissolution, which he might not grant after all, puts members in this position, that we shall all have to go to work and canvass for our seats.

MR. DOHERTY : By Jove, you will have to !

MR. ILLINGWORTH : And not only ourselves will have to go to work, but also others who may desire to oppose us. We shall all have to start on an electioneering campaign ; and then we may learn, on the 7th January, that there is to be no dissolution after all. That is an unfair and improper position to put the country in and to put hon. members in. If there is to be a dissolution, let us know it at once. We on this (Opposition) side are prepared for a dissolution. We want a dissolution—we want it at once.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : Yes ; you do !

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I do not care if I go out of the House. The hon. gentleman interjecting will not be put out : his seat is perfectly safe. I want hon. members to realise the fact that even supposing my assumptions be incorrect, it is possible for the Ministry to incur heavy responsibilities during the next three weeks.

MR. DOHERTY : Oh, nonsense !

MR. ILLINGWORTH : It is not nonsense at all. It is possible for the Ministry to incur large responsibilities ; and I ask, is it constitutional or proper that a Government, half of whose members have been defeated, should undertake to carry on the affairs of the country ? Let us have the departments administered by responsible Ministers.

Put responsible Ministers in. Get them where you like. Do what you please, but fill up your offices. Then there will be some responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the country. Let us have at the head of the various departments men responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the country. I appeal to hon. members to pay regard to the importance of this particular point. All I ask is that the affairs of the country be carried on by Ministers responsible to the House. I maintain that I have proved from the authorities I have quoted that such is the proper and constitutional practice. If the Government and if the majority behind the Government are prepared to fill the vacancies and to conduct the affairs of the country, let them go on. If we are to have at the heads of the departments responsible Ministers, then well and good ; but I do protest against the Government carrying on with Ministers who are not members of Parliament and who are not responsible to anybody, and asking us to wait until the 7th January for the purpose of finding out whether the Governor will grant a dissolution, or whether he will not.

MR. PURKISS : The Ministry could find out in 24 hours.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : All I have to say, in conclusion, is that this motion seems to me very distinct, and of a character that cannot be evaded. If we (Opposition) succeed in defeating the motion of the Premier, it is a vote of want of confidence, as I understand constitutional practice. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS : Hear, hear.] I hope hon. members will bear that point in mind, and will treat the matter in that spirit.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. L. Nanson) : If the debate continues on the lines and at the length indicated by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), we may please some members of the House, but I am sure of one thing : we shall succeed in disgusting the country. The time has gone by for mere words, the time is now for action ; and yesterday, when my colleague the Premier announced that it was the intention of the Government to propose a dissolution, he anticipated, as I believe all members on this side of the House anticipated, the announcement would be received with the utmost joy by members

opposite. I am still ready to believe that members opposite are pleased with the idea of a dissolution, but I must confess they take a very remarkable way of showing their pleasure.

MR. HOPKINS: We want it now.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Boulder observes that he wants a dissolution now.

MR. PURKISS: You can get a dissolution in twenty-four hours.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If members want a dissolution, they should assist the Government in obtaining the settlement which we desire.

MR. PURKISS: Twenty-four hours will do it, man.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Cue has tried to make of this debate a question of no-confidence. The Government have no intention of answering that challenge in the slightest degree: we do not intend to make a no-confidence debate on a mere question of adjournment. The question of adjournment is in the hands of the House. We desire that the course of public business should be expedited in every possible way, and if it suits the House that we should adjourn only for a day or two, if it suits the House only to adjourn until to-morrow, we are absolutely and entirely in the hands of the House. What we wish members to understand is that the Government want no delay; they wish to push on with the dissolution with all the haste possible, and with that intention the Government leave it to the House to say when they will have the dissolution.

MR. PURKISS: Then why ask for the 7th of January?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: For this reason: we have every reason to believe that a dissolution will be granted. It is self-evident that once a dissolution is granted, no business is likely to be done of advantage to the country, and a good deal of business has to be done outside the House which cannot well be postponed; and I may inform members that a dissolution has already been applied for, but we have not received an answer to the request.

MEMBER: When did you apply for it?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was applied for to-day, and no doubt an answer will be received in a very short

time; and, if the House is anxious to adjourn for any particular time, if any member will propose a motion stating up to what date the House should adjourn, the Government have no intention of offering any factious opposition to it. We are entirely in the hands of the House, but let us at least get to the country. If members are anxious for a dissolution, why seek to delay it by every device that ingenuity can suggest? Why make long speeches on the general political situation? The time to make them is when members go before their electors. (Laughter.) We have no doubt whatever that a dissolution will be granted. One has only to look back over the events of the past few weeks to see that His Excellency the Governor has absolutely no reason for refusing a request of that nature.

MEMBER: To you?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leake Government was defeated on a no-confidence motion: another Government have been formed, and although we are willing to go on, we do not care to go on if it can be said of us that we do not represent the opinions of our constituents. I understand for the first time now that the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) objects to a dissolution because the constituencies are not altogether to his liking. If the hon. member allows us to remain in office for a convenient time, we are perfectly willing to introduce a Redistribution of Seats Bill; but now we can only fight an election on the basis of the existing constituencies. Why for goodness sake this delay, this attempt to prevent us going to the country? The question of a coalition has been referred to, and although the Government have made no direct overtures for a coalition, I understand indirectly by other persons overtures have been made, and these have been met with a blank reverse. I am not sorry to hear it. This situation should be settled once and for all, and the sooner the better. It astonishes me to find an agreement on this subject on both sides of the House, and yet members opposite delay the conduct of this matter.

MR. HOPKINS: We do not think you want three weeks for it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If there is an idea that we do not want

three weeks of an adjournment, as I have already said we are perfectly prepared to put up with a shorter time. If, on the other hand, the Governor should see fit to refuse a dissolution, then we are prepared to face the position and go on and fill up the vacant portfolios.

We do not anticipate that will be necessary. We prefer to go to the country and feel the constituencies as to what the verdict of the country shall be. It has been said that if there is to be a dissolution it should be granted not to the present Government, but to a former Administration. But it is a strange fact that although that argument has been advanced, no single instance has been quoted by the other side showing that such a course has ever been pursued. It is absolutely without precedent. Are the present Government to resign their positions simply to allow a defeated and discredited Government to return to office in order to obtain a dissolution? It is not suggested that the defeated Government should go back to hold office, but merely to get a dissolution. What the Governor has to consider is the interests of the country, not of a party. It is self-evident that if we have first to resign and a new Government to be appointed—that is that the old Government should be re-appointed—all the new Ministers would have to go up for re-election, and all their seats would probably be contested. There would be a delay of at least a month. Before we came within the reach of a general election, there would be a delay of another month, and before the general election would be completed probably instead of two months it would be three months before the verdict was announced. Why all that delay if the reappointment of a Ministry and the re-election of Ministers can be saved? In conclusion, I would like to urge on the House not to go on debating the question of general policy. Let us get to business. The country is sick and tired of this interminable wrangling. The country wishes to see this difficulty brought to a speedy conclusion, and that is felt by none more ardently than the members of the Government and the party behind us. I suggest therefore that some hon. member—we do not care from which side of the House he speaks—should move an amendment to the existing motion,

naming some date convenient to a majority of members of the House. The Government will then be prepared to fall in with the wishes of a majority of the House as to the exact date of the adjournment.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I should like simply to point out that the carrying of the motion proposed by the Premier means retaining in office for three months at the very least, and probably longer, a Ministry consisting practically of only three members, consisting of only three members of Parliament, and giving to these three responsible Ministers absolutely the control of the State for that lengthened period. I cannot pose as one who has had a lengthened experience or who has a wide knowledge of constitutional law, but as far as my reading goes I am certainly not aware of any parallel in the history of a British State to that which this new Government proposes to establish. I contend the voice of the people has been given, and given so clearly that there can be no manner of doubt in regard to it. When the Ministry went up for re-election they prophesied, and prophesied with all the positiveness that to-day they use in regard to the dissolution, that they would come back with undiminished numbers; but they come back to-day with their numbers 50 per cent. fewer. If we are to be guided by their past prophecies, we may assume that their numbers in the House will be diminished in about the same proportion if there be a dissolution at the present time. They are anxious for an appeal to their constituents, and why? In order that the first plank of their own platform may be avoided, the redistribution of seats. If we are to have an appeal made, if there is to be an appeal to the people of the State, we cannot have that appeal to the people until we have a redistribution of the constituencies. For instance, what does an appeal at the present time mean? It means that the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) appeals to 150 electors while I appeal to over three thousand, or just twenty times the number the member for East Kimberley appeals to. It is an absurd thing that such an anomaly should be perpetuated over another election. It means that the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) appeals to 600 electors, while

the member for Hannans (Mr. Reside) appeals to 6,000. There again is another anomaly. [A MEMBER interjected]. I do not doubt that the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) will appeal in vain, but that is altogether beside the question. The member for Irwin (Mr. Phillips) will make his appeal to 300 electors, and the member for North Perth (Dr. McWilliams) will appeal to 4,000. How can you get the voice of the people when you have on the one side 300 people giving their verdict, and on the other side 4,000. The Minister for Lands will appeal to 500 electors, and the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) to 4,000, or simply eight times as many as the Minister for Lands. The Minister for Works will appeal to 700 electors, while the late Premier, the member for West Perth, will appeal to 3,500.

MR. DOHERTY: What about the member for Pilbarra; how many will he appeal to?

MR. DAGLISH: I have not the figures in regard to all the constituencies: I am not touching Pilbarra or North Fremantle, but I am a sympathiser with the member for North Fremantle at the present stage. I sympathise very deeply with him, for I have been to his constituency and I know what the feeling is there. The time has gone by for words, and the time is now for us to get on with the business of the country, so the Minister for Lands tells us; but the proposal of the Government is that we shall not get on with business, but that there shall be a postponement for three weeks. What harm is there if we take up the three weeks, during which the Ministry propose to do nothing, in words. The real fact is that the Ministry are appealing for a three weeks' life.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are not wedded to the three weeks.

MR. DAGLISH: I have no doubt the Ministry would like three years much better, but at the present time they are appealing for three weeks only. If the Ministry have the majority of five which they boast they have, they may come with a farther appeal at the end of three weeks for still longer grace; but I ask the House to consider the question seriously, are we justified in so far sacrificing our duty to the people of the State by allowing any three members of the State to

control the affairs of the country for three months? That is what it amounts to.

MEMBER: Mr. Copley has been controlling it before.

MR. DAGLISH: I say this is not a question that should be settled on party lines; that on both sides of the House it is our duty to our electors to see that the government is carried on in a constitutional fashion; and that if this appeal by the Government be listened to, we are absolutely failing in that important duty. The Minister for Lands (Hon. J. L. Nanson) has told us the Government will not treat as a question of no-confidence a motion for adjournment. But, so far as my reading of constitutional practice goes, it is an invariable custom that when Ministers fail to control a House and to conduct the business as they set out to do, they recognise that the House has lost confidence in the Government.

MR. DOHERTY: Your own side were beaten dozens of times when they were in office.

MR. DAGLISH: If I have made a mistake in regard to constitutional practice, the hon. member interrupting can put me right.

MR. DOHERTY: Certainly.

MR. DAGLISH: But I think he would have a very hard job to find a precedent which would justify his contradicting me.

MR. DOHERTY: It is not a precedent, it is intelligence which is wanted.

MR. DAGLISH: I have no doubt the hon. member does want intelligence. (Some laughter.) I can only wish him an opportunity of getting it. We are told the Government would be justified in retaining their position even if they lost the control of the House, if the division of to-day were a repetition of yesterday's or were even more disastrous. But I contend the Government are putting themselves in a very humiliating position in making this contention. I contend that if the Government had not sufficient control over the House to be able to conduct the business as they say the business should be conducted, it is the duty of the Government at once to recognise the position and to relinquish office. And the Government will not retain, if indeed they possess, the respect of the people, should they adopt

any other course. It has been urged that the late Administration carried on with a minority; but the late Administration, we are now told, were doing precisely what the country wanted, for the present Ministry have taken every plank in the platform of the late Administration, have promised to carry out all that legislation which the members of the present Ministry and their supporters so strongly opposed a few months ago; and surely, in that very adoption of the platform of the late Government, the present Government confessed that their object was to get, and their object now is to retain, personal control, not in the interests of the State, because they propose to do simply what they stopped the other side from doing. I contend that the Leake Ministry had the whole of the House at their back, if members held a month ago the principles by which they now profess to be guided; and the adoption of those principles by Ministers proves that they had absolutely no justification for the undignified grab they made at the Treasury bench. Surely the time has arrived when we are to be guided by principles instead of by persons; surely the time has arrived when we should consider the country, and not self-aggrandisement. I consider that by their very policy the present Government have proved they had no justification for plunging the country into political turmoil a couple of months ago, for suspending legislation, for preventing the Estimates of expenditure being passed in proper time. We are now asked to say that the Government should go to the country without passing the Estimates for the present year.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You asked for that: now you are blocking the proposal.

MR. DAGLISH: I do not know why the Minister interjecting refers to me. I am simply a unit on this (Opposition) side; but I am quite convinced that the alleged application for a dissolution is all political bluff, and that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) is much less anxious for a dissolution, if the truth were known, than I am. I shall be glad to see a dissolution as soon as we can appeal to the people; but I do not want to see one until we can make that appeal.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is very thin indeed.

MR. DAGLISH: But that would not suit members opposite. An appeal to the people is not desired; but an attempt is made to block the carrying out of their own pledges, by getting a dissolution before they bring about a redistribution of seats, if indeed they are endeavouring to get a dissolution and are not simply "sparring for wind." My candid opinion on the subject is that the present Ministry are simply "sparring for wind," are trying to gain time at all costs, in order that they may, if possible, prolong their political lives. But I ask, are we not to give the interests of the people any consideration? Members on both sides know the country is being injured by this lengthened crisis. We know that business is injured; we know that in a large number of cases individuals are injured; we know that there is a stagnation of trade at the present moment, due to the existing crisis. We know that private enterprise is paralysed by it; and it is proposed by the Ministry that this paralysis shall be continued for a farther period of three months. I say it is time we gave the country some consideration; it is time we gave some consideration to the business people and to the workers of this State, that we set up a sound Government, broad-based upon the people's will, and that we gave a generous support to the Government thus established. I hope, I believe, I am satisfied the country wishes that there may be such an utterance from this House—and I have yet hopes of the House—as will enable us to replace the present Government with that Government which they superseded; that we shall then find a majority willing to assist the late Ministry in redistributing the seats, so that we may have an early appeal to the country, and that in the meantime the money required for the services of the financial year may be properly voted, in order that we may not have to carry on for a period of nine or ten months without any proper authority for the money which the Government must expend. I would, in conclusion, point out that in my opinion it is unwise that the present Ministry should get a dissolution, for the simple reason that they have shown a willingness to use their positions as Ministers for the pur-

pose of securing party advantages. I hold in my hand a telegram of 275 words, sent "on service," that is at Government expense, to a person in an electorate which a Minister was contesting, sent in the interest of that contestant; and I say it is an absolute scandal that public money, in any amount whatever, should be used for the purpose of advancing the candidature of any person, no matter on which side of the House he sit, no matter whether he be a Minister or a private member. This message, which I will read, is dated 9th December.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. F. CONNOR: To whom is it addressed? Is the hon. member in order in reading a message which will influence the debate, and at the same time in not telling us to whom the message is addressed?

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is quite in order in reading it.

MR. CONNOR: I ask him to either read the whole, or not to read it at all.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot say whether the hon. member is or is not reading the whole.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member is reading a telegram addressed to somebody, and he does not tell us who that somebody is. I ask that if he read it at all, he give not only the address it is sent to but the name of the sender; because, if there be anything wrong, hon. members do not want to be in a position to have bogus things like this brought up. I ask for your ruling.

MR. DOHERTY: It may be a bogus telegram.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member ought to say whom it is to, and whom it is from.

DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. DAGLISH: I was quite willing to do so. I should have come to the name of the recipient when I gave the name of the sender. But I will, if necessary, read the whole of the headings. The telegram is marked "O.C.S." It was received at the telegraph office, Nannine, W.A., on 9th December, 1901, and was handed in at Perth, addressed to H. R. Williams. It runs:—

The defeat of Ministerial candidates at Perth and Fremantle, while regrettable, has only

determined the party to carry out its policy of progress to the fullest. I have received messages from every section of the State deploring the results of the metropolitan elections, and assuring me of the popularity of our party and its progressive programme. To unify the party, and place its objects before the State in a clear and concise form, we are building a solid organisation. We are satisfied that once our policy is fully grasped, the party will obtain wide support. So far, we have been persistently misrepresented, and have not had time or opportunity to put ourselves right with the people. Our motto is, "stable Government, and the advancement of the State along the lines which past experience has shown to be advantageous." The statement that we are advocates of a policy of concessions to private enterprise in our public works is absolutely untrue. The principle of State ownership of our public works we hold as essential in the best interests of the State, and we propose to abide by it. So far, the party is in a considerable majority in the Lower House. The return of a Ministerial candidate by the Murchison electors will mean that the Government of the country, which is now neglected, will be vigorously and honestly carried forward, and put necessity for dissolution entirely out of question; their defeat will mean political and administrative unrest. All are concerned in seeing the administration of the country properly conducted at this juncture. Farther political complication will spell loss to every section of the trading and working community.—A. E. MORGANS, Premier.

THE PREMIER: I beg to state I never sent that telegram. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]

MR. DAGLISH: I am very glad to hear this disclaimer from the Premier; and I trust he will cause inquiry to be made in the Post Office, in order to ascertain who has so unwarrantably used his name.

THE PREMIER: To whom is it addressed?

MR. DAGLISH: To Mr. H. R. Williams, Nannine, and it was sent "on service."

THE PREMIER: I should like to say I do not know Mr. Williams, I have never heard of him until this moment, and I never sent that telegram.

MR. CONNOR: That is it: it is a farce.

MR. DAGLISH: I understand I have the assurance of the Premier that inquiry will be made.

THE PREMIER: Certainly. I shall inquire into the matter thoroughly.

MR. DAGLISH: This telegram has evidently passed through two telegraph offices; it is in full order; and un-

doubtedly someone has used the Premier's name, and also the Government funds, for the purpose of advancing the candidature of a Minister.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Is that a copy or the original?

MR. DAGLISH: The original.

THE PREMIER: I should like to say I shall be only too glad to inquire into this question; but I would ask the hon. member to be good enough to hand me the telegram.

MR. DAGLISH: I am quite willing to hand the Premier the telegram; and I trust the inquiry will be not only thorough, but successful in finding out who is responsible—

THE PREMIER: As far as I am concerned, I shall make a very thorough investigation.

MR. DAGLISH: And that the information will be given to the House when the inquiry has been made.

THE PREMIER: Certainly. There is one other point, if I may be allowed to interrupt the hon. member. I should like to ask him from whom he received this telegram, because that fact may help me in the inquiry.

MR. DAGLISH: The person whose name appears on the telegram received the telegram.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but from whom did you receive it?

MR. DAGLISH: I received it from the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman, newly elected).

THE PREMIER: I should like to ask the member for North Murchison from whom he received it.

[Mr. HOLMAN rose from the Labour bench, as if to speak.]

MR. DAGLISH: This is the original telegram; and I have no doubt the information required can be got by the Premier if he asks the member for North Murchison.

THE PREMIER: Thank you.

MR. DAGLISH: Of course the disclaimer of the Premier considerably affects what I was saying. I shall simply conclude by trusting that this House will give due consideration to the need for an appeal to the people, and for an immediate redistribution of seats in order that the people may be properly reached.

MR. HOPKINS (Boulder): I feel it is incumbent on me to add my share of protest against the proposal made by the

Premier to have this matter practically standing in abeyance for three weeks—[MR. HIGHAM: A fortnight]—when he might just as easily have gone to His Excellency before the House met, have asked for a dissolution, and have met the House and said the dissolution was refused or granted; and, if it was refused, that he was going to fill his Ministry with those members whose names he would then submit. I think that would have been a fairer and clearer way of placing the position before the country than the methods or tactics adopted by the Premier. I for one will not be a party to assisting three members to carry on the administration of this country for a period of some three months, neither will I be a party to assisting gentlemen who have been defeated in the country to retain their portfolios for that period, or for a shorter one. I do not think it is in the interests of the country. The Premier told us the stand he was taking was hedged around by precedents—something he got from ancient history, probably, but which he failed to quote, and although invited to do so by members of the Opposition and by some of his colleagues, so far we have no intimation as to what those precedents really are. I think the Premier cannot be congratulated upon the manner in which he placed his side of the question before the country yesterday, inasmuch as I do not think any person would be likely to say that from a constitutional aspect his speech would bear comparison with that delivered by the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake). The Premier, in the course of his remarks, said his party were far more anxious to face the country than were members on this side of the House. I for one say that statement is not correct, for the simple reason that after three of his Ministers had been defeated his party met, and after sitting for eight solid hours, a communication came to the Opposition asking them to coalesce.

THE PREMIER: Not from my party.

MR. HOPKINS: Any way, the communication was received, and we decided, in as many seconds as the other party took hours, that a coalition was not desirable. The opinions of this party were expressed thus:—

That, in view of the opinion already expressed by the country in favour of the

late Leake Government, this meeting is of opinion that no proposal for a coalition of parties should be entertained.

And coincident with that, the party confirmed the advice tendered to His Excellency by the leader of the Opposition. This Parliament was chosen at the elections under the auspices of the Throssell Government, and then was initiated in this country the practice of sending to the country a Ministry half-representative: four Ministers went from that side of the House, and two of them were rejected. Mr. Throssell, who was elected, tendered his resignation and Mr. Leake was sent for, or rather Mr. Illingworth was sent for. Mr. Illingworth formed his Government, of which Mr. Leake was the leader. That Government carried on evidently to the satisfaction of the country, but the reforms which that Government introduced were not in accordance with the wishes of hon. members then on the Opposition side of the House, and it was these reforms which induced those hon. members to carry by a majority of two the vote which ousted the Leake Government from office. When the resolution was carried, the Leake Government immediately tendered their resignations, and no doubt they recommended His Excellency—I know they did, in fact—to grant a dissolution. Mr. Piesse, the leader of the Opposition, was sent for and he said, “No, it is unnecessary to have a dissolution”—we can easily assume this—“I can form a Government: I have the country behind me, and I have the House behind me.” After being allowed a week in which to perform that task, the hon. member sent in his resignation, and said he regretted he could not form a Government, but another member sitting on the Opposition side of the House, a member without a party, could form a Government with the confidence of the country and to the satisfaction of the House.

THE PREMIER: We are going to have a dissolution now.

MR. HOPKINS: That is all right, but you wanted three weeks to consider it.

THE PREMIER: We have said we will take less.

MR. HOPKINS: What was the position? The Premier and his Government went to the country, and if there was

opposition, that was to be expected. The result was that he, like Mr. Throssell, lost 50 per cent. of his Ministers. Three of them were defeated at the polls. The Government came back and met the House, and in the very first division that took place they were defeated. This is a matter which is worthy of some consideration. The Premier said that the House and the country were with him; but we have two instances in which that is not correct. We may readily conclude that the Premier will tender the advice which six weeks ago was given to His Excellency by the leader of the Opposition. The Premier yesterday, in the course of his remarks, gave us to understand that he was anxious for a dissolution. I for one am anxious for it. The Minister for Works said, “Yes; and you” (meaning me) “will have opposition.” I hope that, if I am to have opposition, it will come either from the Minister for Works or the Premier. That is my sincere desire. As to whether it is desirable to continue at the present time, the bulk of members must feel themselves getting sick and tired of the acrimony that has been displayed during the past session. I was one of those who in the past advocated a redistribution of seats before a dissolution; but the time has gone by to consider that aspect of the question, and the sooner the whole thing is submitted to the country, and the country is allowed to return members on clean-cut lines, supporting either one party or the other, the better. Whichever party comes back in a majority, I shall be satisfied, if elected, and I have no doubt I shall be, to give it every reasonable support to carry out the measures now before the House, on the condition that a redistribution of seats will be one of the first measures introduced in the first session. The Premier said yesterday, “I have, farther, a feeling that as time went on, had we not decided on a dissolution”—in other words, they thought that if they got three or four weeks’ respite, in that time public opinion would probably have died out a bit, and there would have been no need for a dissolution at all. But I do not think it is in accordance with constitutional government to tolerate this thing any longer. If there have been precedents to guide the Premier, it would

have been better if he had quoted them ; but instead of that, he has allowed the constitutional aspect of the question to go by default. It is unnecessary for me to refer to the remarks by members on the other side of the House yesterday, more particularly those from the refined and cultured gentleman who represents the Murray (Mr. George). I question if he was even in order when he said that members on this side of the House lacked (I think he termed it) constitutional principles, and that we were going round the country like so many "blooming agitators." That may be his opinion, but he will probably find, when the dissolution takes place, as I hope it will and before the holidays come, that he along with a few others will remain in the country to carry out the sort of arguments which he has been placing before the country and this House in the previous debates during this session. I wish to say I most emphatically protest against any farther delay ; and bringing down this motion is only another indication of the way in which this Government are prepared to hang on to office, even in the teeth of public opinion.

MR. EWING (South-West Mining) : I do not intend to detain the House for more than one or two minutes, and I rise to move an amendment, for I am certainly not in sympathy with the motion. I recognise that serious things have happened to the Ministry since they went to the country. They have not come back with the strength they expected, and to a certain extent the country has spoken against them. Although I am on this side of the House, I must admit that fact. The amendment I intend to propose is this : "That the House at its rising adjourn until Friday next." I think it is but right to give the Premier and his colleagues reasonable time to consider the situation. It has been stated by the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. L. Nanson) to-night that a dissolution has already been asked for. If that be the case, 48 hours is not too long to give the Governor. [MEMBER: Make it to-morrow.] I will not make it to-morrow. I stick by my original amendment, Friday. It is as much inconvenience to me as to any other member, but I want finality. I hope the House will agree to the amendment, because it is not an

unreasonable proposition. The proposition of the Premier, to my mind, is unreasonable, and I would not sit in this House and allow any Government in the position the Government are in at the present time to carry on until the 7th January. I think that by Friday the Governor will have arrived at a decision in this matter, and either will grant a dissolution and the present Government will resign, or they will go on with the affairs of the country. I am not prepared to say the Government have not the confidence of the country : I do not think that has been proved ; but if the Government go on and fill up the vacancies that have occurred in the Ministerial seats, they will thus farther test the feeling of the State ; and if they are then defeated, of course there will be no alternative but to resign. It seems to me unreasonable, and I do not believe those hon. members who get up in this House and say they want a dissolution. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] For my own part I am prepared to stand here and say I do not want a dissolution. If the Ministry in power at the present time cannot carry on the affairs of the country—I do not say they cannot—then the best thing the country can do, in the event of our returning to our constituents without settling this difficulty amongst ourselves, is to elect none of us to the next Parliament of this State. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I think the present position of affairs is a disgrace. I admit, however, that to a certain extent I am responsible for the position ; but I claim that I acted honestly, and I believe I acted in the way which was right at the time. I trust that the outcome will be for the good of the country ; but whatever the outcome may be, it is incumbent on us, as representatives of the people, to do our best to avoid a dissolution. Any proposed solution of the difficulty will have my heartiest support ; because I do not believe that any of us are prepared to go back to our constituents with the admission that the legislation which has been placed before the House during the past six months is to go absolutely for nought. I should like an assurance from the Premier that the Ministers who retain office to-day against the voice of the people shall immediately resign their positions. [OPPOSITION

MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I take it that the clear duty of these Ministers is to resign. I do not propose to enter into the constitutional aspect of the question at all: I know nothing of the constitutional aspect; but I will say that if I had accepted a Ministerial office or if it fell to my lot to accept a Ministerial office at any time, and I on going to my electors were rejected, I would not hold my portfolio another 24 hours. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] If the dissolution be not granted, then in my opinion it becomes the duty of the present Government to go on; and I hope it will go on, in the interests of the State. If there are no hon. members on this (Government) side of the House able to fill the vacant positions, if there are no members here sufficiently secure in their seats to go to their constituents for re-election, then it is a plain and evident fact that this side of the House has not the confidence of the country. That is undoubtedly so. We must abide by the wish of the people; and in my opinion it is improper that portfolios should be retained by gentlemen who have not the confidence of the country. With these few remarks I beg to move, as an amendment to the motion:

That the words "Tuesday, 7th January," be struck out and the words "Friday next" inserted in lieu.

MR. McDONALD: I second the amendment.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): In reply to the hon. member (Mr. Ewing) who has proposed this amendment, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the gentlemen who, although not members of the Legislature, are at present holding portfolios as Ministers of the Crown, do not hold those portfolios by their own desire, or for themselves, or of themselves. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] They hold those portfolios at the desire of this party, and not by their own desire.

MR. TAYLOR: They should not hold them. The voice of the people is against them.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I want to put the true state of the case plainly before the House. I wish it to be clearly and distinctly understood that

those hon. gentlemen—and they are hon. gentlemen, and they would have been a credit to the positions they fill had they been returned by their constituents—hold their portfolios solely at the request of the Premier and at the request of this party. [LABOUR MEMBERS: Laughter.] I venture to affirm that the gentlemen in question do more credit to the positions they hold than could be done to those positions by any members who sit on the Labour bench. Those hon. gentlemen do their positions credit by reason of their social standing, by reason of their moral character, and by reason of the position they hold in the country. I speak advisedly when I say so. I want it to be clearly understood that those gentlemen hold their positions not because they themselves wish to retain them: they retain them at the request of the Premier and at the request of the members who sit on this (Government) side of the House. I ask the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing) to put himself right in connection with this matter; because his speech has created a somewhat erroneous impression.

MR. EWING (in explanation): I wish to say that the hon. member has quite misunderstood my observations.

MR. CONNOR: The House misunderstood them.

MR. EWING (in explanation): I think that no member who listened with sufficient intelligence could misunderstand my remarks. I did not for one moment reflect on the character of the hon. gentlemen retaining office. I said only that in my humble opinion the practice was a wrong one. I am satisfied that the hon. gentlemen in question, in retaining their positions after being defeated at the polls, are acting at the wish of the Premier. For my part, however, I maintain that it is the clear duty of the Government to see that the offices are resigned and that other members are appointed to them as soon as possible, that is if the Government intend to go on. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I have to explain that I perfectly understand the hon. gentlemen in question are willing to resign at any time, and that it is only at the request of the Premier they continue to hold their positions. I do not think I have reflected in any way whatever on those gentlemen.

MR. CONNOR: I do not wish the hon. member to think that I accuse him of having reflected on the gentlemen referred to; but I say that undoubtedly his speech created a wrong impression. His remarks certainly tended to create an impression which should be removed, and which I rather flatter myself has now been removed, not only by what I have said, but by the explanation which the hon. member himself has been moved to give. We all know the hon. member to be one who would not say anything unkind, even if it were necessary to do so. In the present circumstances, however, there is no necessity whatever for saying anything unkind, because the position is quite clear. Those hon. gentlemen who are retaining their positions are doing so on behalf of and at the request of this party.

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; and against the will of the people.

MR. CONNOR: They are doing so in the interests of this party and for the public good. I desire to go into this matter fully, particularly because my friend who holds the position of Colonial Secretary did not want to accept office. He took the position against his will, and against his own better judgment.

MR. TAYLOR: And against the people's will.

MR. CONNOR: The gentleman in question said, "I have no desire whatever to take office, but I believe the rule of the Morgans party to be the best in the interests of the country, and therefore I will take all the chances in the interests of that party, and in those of the country." I maintain that the country owes the gentleman in question a debt of gratitude, which debt I hope Western Australia will some day repay to him. As regards the question whether the House shall adjourn till Friday or till the 7th of January, I do not think it makes much difference; because the desire of hon. members on this (Government) side of the House is that the wish expressed by hon. members who now sit in Opposition, and who went all round the country expressing that wish, that we should appeal to the country and ask the country to decide who shall rule, may be given effect to as speedily as possible. When we offer those hon. members their wish, when we tender them a dissolution, whether on Friday

next or on the 7th of January, they should accept the offer, and accept it loyally and gratefully. Dissolution has been the watchword, the cry of these hon. members all along. Now, however, they oppose the motion. They said they wanted a dissolution; but now, when it is offered to them —

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; we want a dissolution.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Well, help us to get it, then.

MR. CONNOR: In reply to the hon. member for Mount Margaret, I have no hesitation whatever in saying—of course I speak only in a political and not in a personal sense—that I do not believe him. I must say I do not believe him.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, go on! You are all right.

MR. CONNOR: I tell hon. members that if we go to the country—which I know we shall do sooner or later—I believe this party will come back stronger than it is to-day. I do not hesitate to predict that this wave of what may be termed—

MR. DOHERTY: "Leakomania."

MR. CONNOR: Yes; "Leakomania"—I believe the result of an election will be to spend the force of this wave of "Leakomania;" in fact, I believe that all the water will, as the result of an election, evaporate, and that nothing will be left of this great wave. I believe that this (Ministerial) party will come back here and conduct the affairs of the country in a proper fashion. Before the question is put, I wish to refer to a few remarks made by the former Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Illingworth), the hon. member who until recently graced one of the seats on the Treasury bench. Without the slightest necessity for doing so, the hon. member went into certain financial statements and questions. He told us all about what he had done in connection with the finances of the country, how he had pulled the country through and placed its finances on a solid basis. He confined his remarks entirely to what had occurred in connection with the consolidated revenue, and his statement of what has occurred in that respect is very satisfactory. But the hon. member to-night forgot, as he has forgotten in other debates in this House on the same subject, to tell us

anything about the expenditure in connection with the loan policy of the country. He forgot to tell us that he had said he could do without using Form J, and that he could carry on the affairs of this country without making use of that form. He told us that the expenditure in connection with our loan policy would be £2,000,000 per annum for the next two years. That means £1,000,000 for six months.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When did I say that?

MR. CONNOR: In the course of your Financial Statement.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said anything of the kind.

MR. CONNOR: You undoubtedly said it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Never. You are drawing on your imagination for your facts.

MR. CONNOR: I am not drawing on my imagination for my facts. I am drawing on what the hon. member said in this House, and I will prove my statement by *Hansard*. The hon. member told us that he could carry on for six months in connection with the loan policy of this country. He said he had to redeem Treasury bills to the amount of £1,000,000. He told us also that when he took office there was nothing in the Treasury chest, that the Treasury chest was quite empty. Now we find he paid to the London and Westminster Bank £500,000. We find also that in floating this loan, which he stated would enable him to carry on for six months, he realised approximately only £1,300,000. Out of that amount we find he paid £500,000 to the London and Westminster Bank. That reduced his available balance to £800,000. That balance of £800,000 has been more than exhausted by the amount required to do what the late Government intended, namely the redemption of the £1,000,000 worth of Treasury bills. This leaves a deficit of £200,000 on the Loan Estimates. And yet the hon. member has stated that he can carry out the loan policy of the country for six months without borrowing, and with an expenditure of £1,000,000 for six months! And this is the gentleman who comes here and asks us to give him control of the Treasury!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never made any such statement; and there is nothing of the kind to be found in *Hansard*.

MR. CONNOR: It is an absolute fact, all the same.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I said exactly the opposite.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member stated that he had £1,000,000 worth of Treasury bills to redeem. I desire to ask him a question or two, through the Chair. Was there any money in the Treasury chest when he took office? He says there was none. Did he float a loan, and did that loan realise £1,300,000? It did, approximately. Did the hon. member pay the London and Westminster Bank £500,000?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; I paid them £1,000,000.

MR. CONNOR: That was for the Treasury bills, and for the Treasury bills only. Yet the hon. member tells this House that he could carry on the loan policy of the State without making use of Form J.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not say that.

MR. CONNOR: You did say it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No.

MR. CONNOR: I tell the hon. member that he did say it; and I tell him farther that I will make it my business to show him in *Hansard* where he said it. It is useless for the hon. member to deny the accuracy of my statement. This is the gentleman who comes here and asks us to permit him to carry on the affairs of the country, and desires that we shall have no voice in their conduct, but shall simply let him come over here and take charge. I maintain that if any ordinary business in this country were carried on in the same fashion, it would mean ruin to that business. It would mean ruin and bankruptcy; and to that calamity I say this country will drift if its affairs are left in the hands of the hon. gentleman. Of course, I am not speaking of him now personally: my remarks refer to him politically, as Colonial Treasurer. I maintain that to leave the affairs of the country in his hands would land us in a state of bankruptcy. I should not have referred to this financial question had it not been for the hon. gentleman himself, who has "drawn the badger," so to speak. This is a point I wished to make in speaking on the no-confidence motion;

but the hon. gentleman stopped me from making it. I, however, make the point to-night, and leave him to chew it up and think about it. But to come back to the question of whether we should carry the amendment or not, I tell hon. members that if this (Ministerial) side of the House wished to pass the original motion, we have at our back the numbers to carry it. If we want to do so, we can adjourn to the 7th January. [OPPOSITION MEMBER: Well, get that adjournment!] But we do not want it. Unlike hon. members opposite, we want to compromise for the good of the country. We want to come to an understanding whereby all this trouble will be finished for a time; so that some of the business which is behind in connection with public affairs may be worked off. That I understand is also the wish of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), who went into the country to preach that he wanted dissolution at any price, that he wanted dissolution at all costs, and then came back here and said he did not want to dissolve, but wanted to go on with the business of the country.

MR. HASTIE: That is not true.

MR. CONNOR: That hon. member now says, "Never mind a dissolution: let us go on with the business of the country."

MR. HASTIE (in explanation): I wish to say that what the member for East Kimberley has stated concerning myself is absolutely untrue; and the hon. member knows it.

MR. CONNOR: I do not know what I did say about the hon. member. (Laughter.) I know, anyhow, that at least has been the policy of the Labour party, and the hon. member is their leader, and it is the expressed wish of the Labour party that a dissolution should take place. I do not think they do want it, myself: some at least do not, I know. That is how the cry went at Fremantle. They fought the Fremantle election on that, and that is how the cry went at the Murchison and at Perth.

MR. TAYLOR: And succeeded, too.

MR. CONNOR: I wish the hon. member would remember that he is in Parliament: he is not now at Clermont (Queensland) or Charlemont, or even at Mt. Magnet or rather Mt. Margaret. We have arrived at this position: mem-

bers opposite demand a dissolution, and we are satisfied to go to the country and give them what they ask for. When we were supposed to be opposed to that idea, they were clamouring for it. Yesterday, when the Premier came forward and said "I am satisfied, I will appeal to the country," what did we find? The proposal was opposed in every possible manner by members opposite. They do not want it, and, if any be honest, they will say that what I am now saying is correct. Members opposite are now hampering this desire for a dissolution. Whether there is an adjournment until Friday or until the 7th January, I do not care, but I shall support the amendment, as that seems to me to be the most practicable and the quickest way to get over the trouble. I hope there will be no more disputes about it, and I hope that when members come here to vote, and when the question as to whether we shall go to the country or not is brought forward, they will not say one thing and mean another.

MR. GARDINER (Albany): I have very great pleasure in supporting the amendment of the member for the South-West Mining District. We are placed in this position: we are lowering the dignity of the House by useless "chaff" on the question whether we are willing to go to the country or not. If every man stood on the pillar of truth in the House, I know that there is not a solitary member who wishes to go to the country if he can help it.

MR. HOPKINS: Speak for yourself.

MR. GARDINER: Not for fear that he will not be returned; but every member feels that he will have to go through a good deal of trouble and expense and a good deal of worry; and if we go to the country and come back, we know that one of the first measures which it is required should be brought on is a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and when that is passed we shall have to go to the country again. The Premier in speaking last night referred to a majority of five on the Government side of the House. I venture to say that any thinking man would tell the House that in the present condition of things and under the present constitution, by an appeal, five or six would be the largest majority one could expect in this House. Consequently if the Premier has a

majority of five in the House before he goes to a dissolution, he has a right to try and exhaust his position. In addition to that it should not be forgotten that whilst the Premier has a majority of only five on general questions, he has to receive the support of nearly every member on this side of the House on those measures which the late Administration brought forward; therefore the Premier has a large working majority on those measures which must be passed before a Redistribution of Seats Bill is brought forward. A good deal has been said with regard to the position we were forced into when we asked for a dissolution after the Leake Government were defeated. I will not say that every member feels as I do, but I was bitterly opposed politically to two or three Ministers with whom I claim friendship, and I should have preferred to have left the position to the country, rather than have fought those Ministers; but seeing a dissolution was denied us, we had nothing to do but to maintain the position which we had taken up. It is better for us, instead of saying to one another you will never come back, to let us appeal to the country; but I say there is not one member in the House who wishes to appeal to the country if he can get out of it. That is truthful, and I know a majority of members have that idea. If we have to appeal to the country, let us have a decision as quickly as possible. We decided that in our caucus, and I believe those on the Government side have decided it in their caucus; therefore if it is to be done, let it be done at once: then we can go to our constituents during the holidays, which will be a considerable advantage to most of us, for we can put our time in then trying to win back our seats. I do not think members fear a dissolution, because if a member thinks he does not represent his constituents, then there is only one honourable course, and that is to resign his seat; therefore we need not banter words on that position. Let us support the amendment and get the decision of His Excellency as quickly as possible. If that decision be against the Premier, as it was against the late Premier, then the Premier will try, I presume, to exhaust all other means before he makes an appeal. I feel this course will commend itself to the House

as a dignified one. We are supposed to be 50 sensible men in this House, 50 men who are not actuated by personal motives or greed for office, but 50 men who are supposed to be actuated with a desire for the benefit of the country. Yet there appears to be an insuperable difficulty in forming a Ministry that everyone can support; consequently when we have exhausted all the pacific means, there is only one thing, the redistribution of seats and an appeal to the people. Let the people decide which of these two parties, or which programme, the country will support. Whatever the result may be, I venture to say that any Government will not be in a position of having more than five or six of a majority after the appeal is over. I counsel the Premier to try and exhaust the means at his disposal before he resorts to a dissolution. I do not fear a dissolution any more than any other member.

THE PREMIER: I have asked for it.

MR. GARDINER: If that cannot be done, there is only one thing: appeal to the people; send us back to see if we have kept our pledges to those who sent us here.

MR. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): I think it is necessary that I should make a few remarks, after hon. members have had so much to say about the Labour bench. I certainly think there is no member in the House who has traversed so much of the State during the last six months as I have. I have visited some 40 electorates since I was returned to Parliament, and I have no doubt in my mind as to the opinions of the people in the country. It is folly for members on the Ministerial benches and those supporting the Government to say that they have the people behind them, and that the defeat of the three Ministers is not a decided vote against the Government. I say that if you look into the position you will find, as has been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition yesterday, that the vote in five constituencies for the seat for the Western Province—that is five constituencies in the State Parliament—showed a majority against the Government. It was the same way in the metropolis and at North Murchison: the people decided in a similar way against the Government, notwithstanding those elaborate telegrams which were sent to the people of one con-

stituency, and the people there received them all in good faith. I believe there were 20 more telegrams of a similar nature to that already referred to sent to the one electorate. Notwithstanding all the power used by the Premier —

THE PREMIER: I never sent the telegram.

MR. TAYLOR: Telegrams were signed by the Premier, and I do not think the Telegraph Department of the country would receive telegrams signed by the Premier of the country without the departmental officers having some knowledge that they were genuine. I do not think the Postal Department is carried on so loosely, and I am pretty well satisfied in my mind that these telegrams were received in good faith that they came from the Premier.

THE PREMIER: I have denied them, you know.

MR. TAYLOR: You have denied them, but that does not alter the fact that we have no knowledge that the department will receive telegrams from Bill, Jack, or Harry purporting to be from the Premier. There has been a decision arrived at, and I feel confident that if the Government keenly felt their position they would tender their resignations. The Government should say that they would bow to the will of the people; and if they do not say that, they are not worthy of support. The Government should tender their resignations—that is my opinion; but I am a Labour member, and am not supposed to have so much dignity as members on the Government side; I am not supposed to have such a keen sense of justice in knowing what is right or wrong; still I believe the country is with me when I say that the voice of the people is against the Government. I think this House should abide by the decision of the people, and I say that the Premier should at once select other men and fill up his Ministry. If he cannot do that, it is his duty to resign and send back his commission to the Governor. The Labour bench has been accused of being frightened of a dissolution. I certainly deny that. When I sat behind the Government three months ago I challenged hon. members on the Opposition side of the House to move a motion of want of confidence, and I still want to go to the country. I do not want to go to the

country for the purpose of having the trouble of electioneering, because my electorate is a very large one, and a very difficult one to get over; but in the interests of stable Government and of the country I say that we should have a dissolution. Still I do not want it to hang over for three weeks: I want to-night to have it if I can, and if the Premier will alter his motion to get the decision to-night, I would like to see that; but I repeat, members of the Labour bench are not frightened to go to the country. It is all very well for members on the Government side to make the Labour members the object of their vituperation; that is not the way to carry on the affairs of the country; and I feel when we go to the country we shall have a stronger representation of Labour sent here than we have at the present time. I think that is what is frightening members on the Government side. They are frightened at the power the Labour party are going to wield in this country; they are frightened of the democracy of the country. When the Labour people and the democracy of the country combine to keep the ball rolling which they started this session, they will bowl a number of gentlemen out at the next general election. In conclusion, I would say that we should have a decision at the earliest possible moment; if before the House rises for tea, the better.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear. I agree with you.

THE SPEAKER: I do not know if it is desired to take a vote now, or to adjourn for the usual hour?

[Several members intimated intention to speak.]

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverly): I do not wish to prolong this debate, but I do wish to plead with hon. members and ask them to see whether something can be done to get on with the business of the country. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Before I deal with that, I wish to say a word or two regarding some remarks of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), because he argued in what may be described as a logical frame of

mind, and wished to urge strongly some precedents which he quoted. One was that the fact of a Government being defeated on a motion for adjournment was tantamount to a vote of want of confidence. If that be logical, the hon. member has not carried out constitutional practice; for his party did not resign when they were defeated some time ago on a motion for adjournment. Therefore, if he asks this side to follow what he calls "constitutional practice," he is only condemning himself. With regard to his other point, that a portfolio should not be held by a man who has not a seat in Parliament, and that there is no precedent to the contrary that he can find, I think I can inform him that there is at present in England a Minister who was defeated at the last general election, who still held office, who was again defeated the other day, and who, so far as we know, still holds office; and that is Sir Horace Plunkett.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He did not occupy his Ministerial position while not holding his seat.

MR. DOHERTY: Yes; he did.

MR. HASTIE: He is not a member of the Cabinet.

MR. HARPER: He holds a position in the Cabinet at this day, and it is recognised that the practice is unusual, but in consequence of his great ability and the value of his services to the Government, they consider that the custom should not, in his case, be followed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is one man in a Government of 16; not half the Government.

MR. HARPER: That does not alter the case: it is the principle with which I am dealing. That is the only point I wish to make, that the hon. member, in quoting ancient authorities, is not thorough in his logic. The next point is a legal one. I do not profess to pose as a lawyer, but I wish to point out that our amended Constitution Act, Section 43, under the head of "Executive," says, "There may be six principal Executive offices of the Government." It does not say there shall be six; it says "may." It provides for a maximum, but not for a minimum. There is nothing contrary to the Act in one, two, or three Ministers

carrying on the Government, so long as there is one in the other House.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, it is quite legal.

MR. HARPER: But that was not the line taken by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth). That is all I wish to say in regard to his remark.

MR. LEAKE: But with regard to the seat in the Council, you see the Act is emphatic.

MR. HARPER: Yes; I grant you that. But I wish to point out, and to urge on hon. members, that we are only six months after a general election, and that, so far as we can see, there is very little difference between the lines of policy urged by each side; that the whole difference is personal from start to finish.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then why did you put us out?

MR. CONNOR: Because you could not carry your measures.

MR. HARPER: If the hon. member will hold his tongue, I will tell him why he was put out. The hon. member was put out because of the exceedingly personal line taken by the late Premier—[MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—which the late Premier has admitted, and to an extent apologised for last night. If he says he will not do so again, which he said distinctly last night, that is an admission that he was wrong in the line he took; and I think I may safely say that when we came into this House at the beginning of this present session, if the late Premier had followed the course he says he will in future follow, he would still be Premier of this State. I am confident of that, because I know there was a large number of people in this House quite prepared to give him cordial support, and he might have won over many others; but it is well known that when one comes to stir up personal animosities, trouble arises. Now surely we, as a body of men desiring to advance the interests of those who sent us here, should try to overcome those personal animosities, and to get on with the business of the country. I must congratulate the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) on what I think the wise line of argument he pursued, and on his attempting in some measure to pour oil on the troubled waters; and I wish I could urge on hon. members to think first of the country, to forget all the personal

animosities of the last few months, and to see whether some approach can be made to form a Ministry which will go on with the country's business, and will give us some political stability. I think I may safely say that however strongly we may feel one against another in this House, that feeling is not shared by the country. It may be worked up by people going round and abusing one another; but at the same time, I am sure the thinking portion and the business portion of this community do not want personalities: they want work done. Look at the position in which we are now. We have a whole army of civil servants to a large extent idle, through our not being able to get over our personal grievances. We have the whole country waiting for improvements to roads, bridges, and railways, which cannot be effected because of the personal animosities in this House. Now surely we, as reasonable men, ought to be able to overcome some of these personal prejudices, and to form some Government which will proceed with the work of the State. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Darglish) has pointed out that if we do go to a general election, the same thing will have to occur again shortly afterwards. Well, what is the advantage to the country? The country has been condemning us all the time for not having been rational in our course, and why cannot we do it now? I think it is a disgrace to our understanding that we, mere passengers in the stage of life, and short ones too mostly, cannot smooth over our little differences in our paltry short lives, in the interests of the country, which must go on to the end of time. Surely, rather than indulge our likes and dislikes in regard to individuals, why do we not look first to the interests of the country, and last to the interests of ourselves or of individuals whom we may like or dislike, or to whom we may have antipathies?

MR. G. LEAKE (West Perth): It is my intention to support the amendment which was moved by the member for the South-West Mining District. I must, in order to show my consistency, do that, because yesterday when I informed the Premier that I intended to oppose his motion for adjournment till the 7th January, I expressed my willingness to agree to an adjournment for a day or two

to enable him really to make some definite and conclusive announcement to this House. I assume the Premier will follow me now and make a few remarks, and will say what he proposes to do; and if he does so, and if it suits his convenience to farther consider the position he is in, and to accept the resignation of defeated Ministers and to appoint other Ministers, or definitely to announce a dissolution, I must adhere to what I said yesterday, that I will place no obstacle in the way of his having full time for consideration. The mover of the amendment said he was impressed with the fact that the constitutional course is not being followed, namely the resignation of Ministers accepted and fresh Ministers appointed. I may point out that there is a distinction between the case in England which was referred to by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) and the present case; for in Mr. Plunkett's case, when he was defeated the party were ready at once with a vacancy for him, and he was enabled to contest his election.

MEMBER: Seven, eight, or nine months afterwards.

MR. LEAKE: If the Premier wishes time to consider which hon. members opposite should resign in order to create vacancies, I do not want to raise any objection to that; but I confess candidly that I really feel I have got the control at this moment.

MR. CONNOR: Vote on it.

MR. LEAKE: That is my honest conviction, and it is because I have the control I desire to see a test vote taken in this House on the question of the adjournment till the 7th January.

MR. CONNOR: Then vote.

MR. LEAKE: As the hon. member interjecting is not the Premier, he does not assist me in any way by his suggestion. If the Premier is desirous of testing his strength and my strength in this House by a division on this question, I am perfectly willing, and moreover I assent to the proposed adjournment (amendment) till Friday, in order that we may have an absolutely full House. I am conscious the defeat of the Ministry last night was the result of an accident; but the responsibility rests upon the Government to redeem that defeat, and until that defeat is redeemed in a fair and

proper manner, I am entitled to consider my side has the control of this House. I do not think there is anything unfair in that. I tell the Premier openly that I consent to this adjournment till Friday, in order that every member may be in his place, and so we may have a test vote; and my opinion is that if a test vote is taken, I shall win. I may as well say at once that I see no hope of any coalition. If the Premier agrees to this amendment to-night, there is no doubt that it is to a certain degree a surrender of the position which he has taken up.

MR. GORDON: Oh! oh! A flight of fancy!

MR. LEAKE: I think it is a surrender of the Premier's position. He was defeated last night; but, as I say, it perhaps was not a really fair test, because the House was not absolutely full. Let us take that test vote on Friday night, and see whether there is some other alternative which has not yet been mentioned. I ask hon. members to consider this, that if we adjourn till Friday night what is to be done?

MR. CONNOR: Dissolution.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier, no doubt, will say in a moment. If we do meet on Friday night, what is to be done? Will the Premier still insist on an adjournment till the 7th January. Whatever he elects to do, I shall be satisfied with it, so long as he makes it a test vote. The member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) has said this would be to-night a test vote; and I confess I came to the House prepared to make it a test vote, but in view of the circumstance of this amendment being moved, I am willing to postpone that question until Friday, and I do not think I can say fairer than that. We do want to know who has the majority in this House. The Premier has declared that he has a majority of five. If, on a test vote, it is found he has a majority of five, I shall be satisfied; but I cannot be satisfied with a bare assertion, because — and the Premier will correct me if I am wrong — he declared some short time ago that he had a majority of ten or eleven in this House. It has now dwindled down to five, and that so far is a bare assertion. We cannot prove that until we have a test vote in the House; and we cannot do it better than on the question of the adjournment of the

House till the 7th January. I am perfectly willing, if the Premier prefers it, to table a definite motion of "no confidence in the Government," if he would rather fight the question on that ground; but I do not think there is any necessity for that course. We want to know who has the control, whether it is the Government or the Opposition. I was twitted with being in that position before I resigned; and I must ask hon. members to bear with me when they twit me in that manner, and to consider that a great number of members in this House declared that it was their intention to give me a "show," and to turn me out when it suited their convenience.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Not quite that.

MR. LEAKE: Had they declared on any particular vote or occasion that they would make it a test vote, I was bound to accept the situation, and it was not until a definite no-confidence motion came down that I was fairly challenged. I was challenged on it and was beaten, and I resigned. I should have acted unconstitutionally if I had not done so; and I do not see why other gentlemen should not be also guided by the constitutional practice when they find themselves placed in a similar position. The present Government were defeated in this House last night, but, as I have said, if it is not thought by members that the vote last night was a fair test, then let us take it again on Friday night. I do not wish to be thought pusillanimous; I have never been afraid of a straight-out fight on any question in this House; and I do not propose to retire from my position without really another, or at any rate a division—that is to say, some test of the feeling of Parliament. I do not want, by what I say, to create any feeling of irritation, although probably the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) thought the few remarks he made would goad me into an indiscretion. [MR. HARPER: No.] I assure the House that I have sufficient control of myself and my temper, and that I am not going to lapse into those errors which the hon. member appears to deprecate. I confess I was defiant during the last session; and I do not regret it. I have not apologised for anything I did.

MR. CONNOR: You ought to, if you have not.

MR. LEAKE: Well, any way I have not apologised up to the present moment. When the member for Beverley tells us that the reason why my Government was put out, and the reason why my party is kept out, is the feeling of personal hostility to myself, I am not impressed with the nature of the constitutional principles with which some members are imbued.

MR. HARPER: On your own side as well.

MR. LEAKE: On my own side, perhaps, too. I know full well that the personal hostility to myself in this House is extreme. Knowing that, I am prepared, if it be in the interests of the country, not only to retire from any possible Ministerial office, but to retire from Parliament altogether, if my presence here is so irritating to hon. members as to militate against the interests of the country. If that be the case, I am better out of Parliament.

MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.

MR. HARPER: Quite unnecessary.

MR. LEAKE: If I have the assurance of hon. members that it is so, I shall not hesitate to retire. I may say, however, that I am not convinced of the existence of any personal hostility towards myself on this side of the House. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I have more than once publicly thanked my followers for their loyalty; and I have every confidence in them at the present moment. But I do know that I am the object of enmity on the other side. Possibly that enmity has been the result of my indiscretions—[MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear]—and I am not, as the member for Beverley suggests, going to do it any more. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] At the same time, whoever likes to accuse me of indiscretions may rest assured that I shall not allow myself to be goaded into those tactics which my accuser seems to deprecate.

MR. HARPER: Hear, hear.

MR. GEORGE: All right, then.

MR. LEAKE: My party, I say, has the control. The member for Beverley said there was no difference on the question of policy. If, then, conciliation is the order of the day, why not bury the hatchet and follow me? (General laughter.) That seems to me the readiest way out of the difficulty in which some people have involved themselves.

MR. CONNOR: The reason is that your party is in a minority.

MR. LEAKE: The member for East Kimberley says my party is in a minority. That, again, is a bare assertion, and an assertion which cannot be controverted until we have a test vote.

MR. CONNOR: Well, take it to-night!

MR. LEAKE: That test is what I court. I am prepared to vote to-night. If the Premier says that he intends to force the vote—[MR. CONNOR: Good old gag!]
—for the 7th January, I will divide the House on it. But I am perfectly content to accept the amendment which has been proposed by the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing). However, I do ask the Premier, if he is in favour of the amendment, to say what he will do on Friday next. That really is the position; because at the present moment the only proposal we know of is one to adjourn the House until the 7th January. I declared yesterday, and I declare again to-night, that that proposal does not meet with my approval, that I shall oppose it, and that if it be forced to a division, the result of that division, so far as I am concerned, will be considered a test. I do not think we are entitled to take any step, either with regard to a dissolution or with regard to anything else, until the feeling of the House has been tested in the proper parliamentary way, and on a well-organised division. We do not ask for a snap vote: consequently I do not intend to take that advantage which I might have taken on the division of last night. Let us have everybody in the House, and let us divide on Friday night, if possible, on this important question. There is only one other matter which I desire to refer to. A great deal has been said about a dissolution. It is said that a dissolution can take place at once. I think I am right in saying that it is not proper for the Ministry to come into Parliament and either directly or indirectly threaten the House that unless they obtain a sufficient majority—that is to say, unless the Premier gets his own way—there shall be a dissolution. That, I think, is clearly improper.

MR. CONNOR: That is what you did.

MR. LEAKE: That is what has practically happened or what is practically happening now. am, therefore, not-

withstanding the implied threat, still willing to be bound by the test vote which I ask for either to-night or on Friday. The Premier, it is true, has said he intends to ask for a dissolution. He being the chief adviser of the Crown, we impliedly assume that if he asks for a dissolution he will get it: otherwise, he will say so. I am entitled to consider that when such a statement is made in this House, it is in the nature of a threat. [THE PREMIER: No.] I do not use the term "threat" in an offensive sense, but merely as one which I consider sufficiently explicit to convey my view of the situation to hon. members. I intend to support the amendment; and I have given my reasons for doing so. I repeat, I court a test vote. I ask the Premier to say whether he will fill up the gaps in his Ministry or whether he will take any other course: also, whether he will make any proposition to the House when we meet again on Friday. If the Premier desires to come to a division speedily, I shall do what I can to induce members on this side of the House not to debate the matter at any great length, or indeed any farther. Let us decide, once and for all, so that we may know where we stand. If the Premier has the control of the House, I have no doubt His Excellency the Governor will be bound to follow the advice which the Premier may tender. If, on the other hand, the Premier has not the control of the House, then I think we are right in saying that His Excellency ought to seek other advisers. That is the position which I take up, notwithstanding the personal animosity which exists against myself. I throw all that in, and will let hon. members opposite make the best of it on the division.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth): I am in favour of the amendment; and in rising to support it I wish to take exception to certain remarks of the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake). He has put it to the House that members sitting in Opposition to him, when he held the reins of Government, had promised him "a fair show." I particularly desire to impress on members the expression used by the member for West Perth, "a fair show." He was promised "a fair show," he says; and I am one of those to

whom the hon. member alludes. That "show," however, it was not necessary to give him; because he and his Government made the "show" for themselves. Having made that "show" for themselves, it was our duty, as representatives of the country and of our electorates, to "show" the Government out. This we did.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear. Quite legitimate.

MR. GORDON: The legislation which the late Government claim to have passed was not passed by them at all, but by the members sitting in a majority in Opposition. No legislation introduced by the Leake Government was passed by the Leake Government. It so happened that the measures in question were brought in by the Leake Government; but they were initiated by Mr. Throssell, and then adopted by the Leake Government, being finally passed by the late Opposition sitting in a majority. The Leake Government could not possibly have passed that legislation, unless we, sitting in Opposition, allowed them to do so. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] We allowed them to pass legislation up to a point when we were satisfied that they were capable of passing no more; and then we passed them out. The member for West Perth has, in the past, posed as one of the jokers of the House. I plead guilty to having fallen, to a certain extent, in the same category; and I can only express my regret at having been classed with one of the hon. member's calibre. Last night the hon. member practically apologised to the House for the tactics he had adopted in the past; but to-night he is playing the same old game of bluff with "Bring along your objections to us; bring along your no-confidence motion." The ring, the true ring was there again to-night when the hon. member said, "We will test the feeling of the House on this; I want to test the feeling of the country; we had a division in the House last night in which my party had the advantage, and I might have followed that advantage up, and fought it out." But that is only the hon. member's boast and bluster. There was absolutely nothing in the division of last night. At the best it was only a technical point, whether we shall adjourn till to-morrow or to the 7th January.

THE PREMIER: To Friday, or to the 7th January.

MR. GORDON: Whether the adjournment is to Friday or to the 7th January. You know perfectly well, as regards this test question of yours, that I and several other hon. members sitting on this (Ministerial) side of the House do not want to keep the country waiting, and will side against the Premier in this matter. The hon. gentleman thought it advisable, in the best interests of the country, to adjourn to the 7th January. He took into consideration the civil servants of the State, a number of whom want their holidays. Moreover, the hon. gentleman took into consideration the fact that the country wants a holiday, and that every business man wants a holiday. I maintain the Premier gave consideration to the country and to the workers when he asked for an adjournment to the 7th January. But that is not a point for a no-confidence debate. What a harum-scarum question on which to base a test division! How the hon. member for West Perth does blab it through! "Take your test vote any time you like!" Whether we shall adjourn to the 7th January or to Monday or Tuesday next, is an absolutely ridiculous point to base a test division on. The ex-Premier's conduct to-night convinces me that he will never, to his dying day, give up his sham defying and his bluster. I support the amendment.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): I stand here to-night [general applause] in a different position from that which I occupied on the last occasion when I had the honour of addressing the House. On the occasion I am speaking of, a want-of-confidence motion was carried in this House by a majority of two. Having that majority, I left the House with the prospect and in the belief of being able eventually to form such an Administration as would be able to carry on the government of the country. I took up the task of forming that Administration with the desire to do my duty. I entered on the task, although my majority appeared to be but small, in the way I think every patriotic man should take it up, that is to face the occasion and do his duty by using his best endeavours to carry on the affairs of the State. I was, unfortunately, unsuccessful. The reason

of my non-success is one which I do not intend to give to the House to-night; but I will say that I think the support which is promised to a member, and especially to one who has taken a prominent position in the House, is one that should be accorded him outside as well as inside the House. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Although my majority was small—a majority of two—I was determined, even if I came into the House with only a majority of two, to attempt to carry on the Government of the State from this (Ministerial) side of the House. I should have met the House; and if I had been defeated, I should have taken my defeat in the way in which I think every man should take it. That is to say, having met with the disapproval of the House, it would have been for me to take the first opportunity of tendering my resignation. I made my best efforts, and tried for some days to form a Ministry; but, as I said just now, I did not succeed. It has been stated here that perhaps I took a course which I ought not to have taken in recommending to his Excellency that Mr. Morgans, the present Premier, should be sent for. My reason for making that recommendation was one which I have previously expressed, namely that I was of opinion Mr. Morgans had a following sufficient to enable him to carry on the business of the country. I arrived at that opinion from my knowledge that amongst the members whom I had previously consulted there was a large majority in favour of Mr. Morgans taking the lead. With the object of preventing the trouble which might arise from a political crisis, I accordingly advised that Mr. Morgans should be sent for. I considered that if sufficient support were given to that gentleman, and if he were able to form a Government with the large following which I expected he would have, the result would be satisfactory to the country. We have now seen the result of the formation of Mr. Morgans's Ministry. Unfortunately there has been a defeat of two Ministers.

MR. KINGSMILL: Of three Ministers.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Of three Ministers, true; but of only two from this House. When taking my seat here yesterday, I was not aware of the course the Government intended to take. I was absent from the caucus meeting; not intention-

ally, but because business engagements in the city prevented me from attending. When the Premier announced yesterday his intention to ask for a dissolution, that was the first intimation I had that he intended to take that course. It would have been far preferable for the Premier to have filled the vacancies and fought with the majority he has at his back, in preference to asking for a dissolution. If the Premier has sought a dissolution from His Excellency and His Excellency has decided that a dissolution shall not be granted, no doubt the Premier will take the course of filling the vacancies and going on, because a majority of five is sufficient to carry on the business of the country satisfactorily. I have known of instances in which Governments have carried on the business of a country with a majority of two. I myself was prepared to carry on the business of the country with a majority of two, with a visible majority of two and a prospective majority of four, which majority, if I am to judge by results recently, might have diminished to a majority of one, because we have seen what has happened. What are we to depend upon? Are we playing with politics in this country? It seems to me that we are playing with politics. Most people know my motives: they are not selfish. I do not place this before the House in an egotistical way, but I say to-day that there is not a seat in the country safer than mine. I say this in regard to these matters to show it is not a question of selfishness with me in regard to office. I would not to-morrow seek to take office; in fact I do not wish to take it, and most members know that. I am not an office-seeker in the sense of the term. My desire is to do the best in the interests of the country. Long ago I gave up my business to come here—five years ago—to help on the country. I did it at great detriment to myself and my business, and I have always endeavoured to continue on the same lines. We should set aside all selfish interests in the matter, because it is not a question of our own selfish interests, but the interests of our own country—a rising country of vast magnitude, of great resources, and at this time it needs great attention. What the country needs to-day is most careful handling. I have heard words used in the House during the

course of the debate last night and to-day which savour somewhat of ridicule. Many remarks have been made which mean that we are treating this matter as one of levity. This is not the time to treat the question as one of levity. It is the most serious time in the political history of the country, and we should do our utmost to try and bring about a solution of the difficulty. I think the member for West Perth in speaking to-night no doubt was imbued with a more sanguine temperament than last night, when a snatch vote was taken at an unfortunate time and carried in the absence of one member of the House.

MR. LEAKE: It was not a snatch vote.

MR. PIESSE: It was unfortunate that it did occur at that time, yet perhaps it may lead to some greater good which was not expected at the time. I think we have come to a stage when this matter needs looking at seriously. Although the member for West Perth has shown to-night an attitude more sanguine than was shown last night, still after all he must know, notwithstanding the fact that he may on the vote of the House to-night perhaps secure a victory—a very narrow majority if he gains it, yet if it comes to a question of working he will be in no better position in the House than he was before, because the majority will be so narrow that it will be quite impossible to carry on the business of the country unless we find more members sitting on the Government side of the House, that is provided the member for West Perth comes into power. I think if it comes to a question of dissolution, which perhaps after all we should avert, because only recently we have come from the country and it is not a time for a dissolution, and to have an election on the existing rolls means the return of members to the House almost similar in regard to their political opinions to those returned previously, so that there will be very little difference between the members who will come to the House from the new election and those who came to the House at the last election. Therefore there will not be much prospect of carrying on the business of the country if there were an election. Then there would be the turmoil of an election and all the trouble and difficulties, without the result which the country would expect. Therefore a general elec-

tion should be avoided. As I said just now, I do not fear an election ; the people who returned me to the House I do not believe have lost confidence in me, and I should get back no doubt without opposition as I have done on five previous occasions. But we should not satisfy our own selfish interests, but look to the interests of the country. There will be a number of members or perhaps several members who would be returned without opposition, others without difficulty, still there would be others who would have a good deal of difficulty and trouble in their electorates. But that is not what we have to consider : it is not a question of our own self-interest, but a question of the interests of the country. If we can by any possible means in our power avert the dissolution which it is intended to bring about, we should avert it. I think this, too, notwithstanding the leader of the Opposition said that there would be no coalition as far as he is concerned, that unless there is some way of coming towards one another there is going to be difficulty, because an election will not help us in the way it is expected. Coming back to the question of fight, I may say that I am as good a fighter as the hon. member, and with a majority of five at my back, if I thought I had sufficient to carry me through, I should go on with it. [Hear, hear.] I would go on and let the House decide what course should be taken ; and that is what should be done. I think myself that is the better course, the only patriotic and right course to take. It seems to me we must remember there is a prospect of coming to some understanding : if not, let us fight on. I am ready to cast my lot in with the Premier ; I have already given him my support, and I believe those on the benches behind me will support him ; but at the same time, from the tone of the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, he evidently expects to have a majority. If that is the case, it seems that we have some waverers again, which goes to prove what I said in my remarks in the first instance, that we are not able in this day to count on the political honesty and determination of our political people to stand to the men whom they should stand to.

MR. PIGOTT (West Kimberley) : I have listened very carefully to what has been said this evening, and I am very

much surprised that though we hear from the Opposition side of the House a lot about constitutional law and practice, and what will eventuate in the case of a general election, I am sorry to say I hear not one word, or suggestion even, that we should first consider what is good for the country in general. I was not present when the debate on the no-confidence motion took place, and I say candidly I am very glad I was not present. I have read through the debates, and after reading them through I did with my copies what I would like to see done with all the records of that debate—I cremated them. I have sat in the House only for a little while and my voice has not been often heard, but if we come to a general election I should go before my people, and I am certain that they will give me credit for the very fact that there has been no occasion on which I could stand up and use what little power I have for the good of my constituents. There has been hardly an occasion in the House, when I have been present, when what is good for the country has not been entirely put on one side for the purpose of discussing personalities. This is very much to be deprecated ; but the vote which was taken in the House last month proves undoubtedly that things could not be carried on under the late Premier's control. I am very sorry for the result that has since come about. Mr. Morgans, I believe, formed the strongest Ministry it was possible to form from amongst members of the House. These men went before their constituents, and I will say this, they were beaten. Though three of them came back, three Ministers have been beaten, and I take that as a defeat ; but there was one thing that might have been done, if members of this House had considered the welfare of the country alone. They would have seen the position was this. A deadlock had come about, and something should be done : personalities should be put entirely on one side, the hatchet buried, and the leaders of the different parties come together and find some way of carrying on the business of the country until such of the legislation as is absolutely necessary is carried. I think nearly every member has come here pledged to a redistribution of seats. The leader of the Opposition has undoubtedly come here

pledged to that. When he refused, as I have heard from the Opposition benches this evening, the chance offered to him of having this Government carried on by means of a coalition, he threw away the greatest chance which ever came to him or is likely to come to him of making himself extremely popular with the people of all sections and classes of the country. If Mr. Leake had taken with a good grace that which was offered to him, he might have made his stipulations in this way: "I will join hands with you, Mr. Morgans, temporarily until we carry through what is absolutely necessary in the way of legislation for the time to carry on the Government through the present difficulties, on the distinct understanding that when this new Redistribution of Seats Bill, which is necessary, is passed we shall have a dissolution." If that had been done, I contend the country would have been saved an immense amount of money. The loss that the country will feel through this dissolution at the present time will be enormous. I have not the slightest doubt about that. There is one gentleman, His Excellency the Governor, who sees this. Why did he refuse a dissolution in the first place, why did he refuse when he was asked a second time, and why is he still trying to do without a dissolution? He is doing all this for the good of the State, and he gives us as members of this House every opportunity of bringing into effect a Government which would carry us over the present crisis, say even only for a few months, when all party politics might be put on one side, a Bill for the redistribution of seats might be enacted, and we could go to our constituents all knowing that we had done some good. I look around, and I dare say I see a good many more here who may possibly be present to-night or on Friday night for the last time in their political life. I would ask all members of the House to try and forget what has gone on for the last few weeks. I would like those who are returned at the next election to make up their minds that when they come into the Assembly they will behave themselves with that amount of good feeling and gentlemanly feeling which I consider should be shown in the precincts of this Chamber. (General applause.)

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. T. F. Quinlan): I rise with great pleasure to succeed my friends, the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), the member for Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), and the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott). I do so for a reason which I believe to be in the best interests of this country. This question of difference should be settled, the affairs of the country should be considered, and personalities should be entirely extinguished. I admit that the debate on the no-confidence motion was somewhat personal, or I may say personal in the extreme, and I hope that during the course of the debate on this subject that element will be lessened in a great measure. I am sorry my friend the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) thought fit to make a very grave reflection on one of my colleagues—I refer to Mr. Wilson—when he said that hon. gentleman had undertaken the responsibility of committing the country to an indebtedness of £100,000 for stock ordered. I instantly replied that it was untrue, for the reason—and if members of the whole House are not aware of it, at any rate the ex-Ministry are—that those orders go through the Works Department, and no such order has been transmitted during my period of office. Farther, I may remark that anything which has been done has only been done because it has been absolutely necessary, for we felt that until the return of the whole of those who stood for office, we should not be justified in committing the country to any expenditure other than what was absolutely necessary, and which we knew this House, whatever members it may consist of hereafter, would carry into effect. I may farther add that during that very short period we have at any rate adopted in a couple of instances a scheme which I hope, trust, and believe will save this country hundreds of thousands in the future, so that we shall have done some little at least in the last few weeks. My friends who may be in office will realise at all events that, short as our time has been, we have had some commercial experience which will be of value to this country. I will leave it to my successors, whoever they may be, to continue the new system with regard to ordering goods for this country. Having

had that training which I venture to say we have had at any rate in commercial if we have not had it in professional life, we have before us many good schemes, and should it be the desire of this House and this country that we shall not remain in office to carry them into effect, and should I sit in the House in future as a member only, I shall endeavour at any rate to assist those who may be in office in efforts in that direction, which will save us an immense sum of money that has absolutely been wasted in the past. With regard to my friend the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill), I am thankful to him for the assistance he gave me when I took the office he occupied formerly, and indeed if occasion should arise when he should resume that position, I shall return him the compliment. At any rate I can say this. There was one object in so far as we were concerned, and that was to direct our best energies to lessening the cost of administration in this country, which, if it continues as it has been doing, will be simply ruinous. We were not given sufficient time, but we have ideas, and we know from practical experience, too, that we could carry into effect such measures as would, I say, insure the saving of immense sums of money. I may add also that I wish especially that no reflection should be cast upon my friend, because if I have suggested some changes for the benefit of the country, he will recognise, I am sure, it is not because I have differed in regard to the mode of business procedure, but it is because perhaps in certain particular instances he has not had that commercial experience which we have had; therefore he will understand that I am not reflecting personally upon him in any way. So far as concerns the works which were proposed even by the Ministry of the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake), it was impossible, as members will readily understand, to carry them into effect. As I have already remarked, we did not want to commit the country to an expenditure for things other than those which are absolutely essential. The member for Beverley (Mr. C. Harper) made special reference to the staff of the civil service, and indeed it is to be regretted that the staff have to be paid whether they do the work or not, and I appeal to the common sense of any member here if it

is possible to have them fully employed during this time of disturbance.

MR. LEAKE: Yes.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore I contend in that point alone, apart from any other consideration, the sooner we get into a practical business position the better for all parties. The country is suffering, at whose hands? The late Ministers may contend perhaps that it is because they have been turned out of office. [MR. KINGSMILL: Hear, hear.] They were turned out of office, so far as I am concerned, at any rate, because they were in a minority.

MR. KINGSMILL: At the wrong time, though.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I submit to the hon. member, and I am sure my good friends will admit it also, that I did not want to wait for any time. Directly I saw that there was a minority ruling, I did all I possibly could amongst my party to bring about the motion of no-confidence.

MR. KINGSMILL: That would have been quite right.

MR. GEORGE: We gave you a show.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did so because I felt that it was contrary to custom in any line of life for the minority to rule. However, I was overruled by the majority of our party, and consequently the matter was delayed; so I am not responsible for its having taken place at this particular time.

MR. KINGSMILL: It was a tactical error, was it not?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The holidays are approaching and the busy season, and few of my friends opposite are aware (with the exception of two business men, and those two will understand it) of the great loss in trade to this country. The sooner we get out of the difficulty the better. I prefer that we should get over it by some amicable means; not that I care, as I have said over and over again, a snap of my finger whether I am in office or out of it, but I consider the country first, because I have such interests that are suffering, and those who belong to me are suffering likewise. Reference was made to last night's division. My friend the member for West Perth must know full well that he need not have boasted of that division.

MR. LEAKE: I did not desire to take it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have a very happy knack of putting things, as most lawyers have. I ain not used to that kind of business. I prefer to be wrong or right, and in that instance, at any rate, the hon. member was certainly wrong. Our friend the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell), who suffers from an affliction, was within the precincts of the House but did not hear the bell, otherwise the motion would not have been carried; so that if there be any doubt in the minds of hon. members opposite—and I do not think there is—I wish to dispel it. They certainly cannot claim that as a victory. I do not think the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) paid the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) any compliment in his speech to-day when he said (and I hope and trust it will not be followed out in the future elections) that the hon. gentleman merely swallowed the Labour platform to get the Labour vote. I appeal to hon. members to say whether that does credit to any party.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not say so.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that has to be done to keep in politics, I would sooner be out.

MR. HOPKINS: What is wrong with the Labour platform?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not speaking of the platform. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) still keeps pressing himself forward. I say I am not discussing the merits or demerits of the Labour party, but I assert it is a most dishonourable thing to say in this House, and to say outside, that one swallowed the platform of the Labour party in order to get the support of that party. The sooner they get rid of that system the better. The member for Cue also refers to members occupying "pocket boroughs"; but he has represented a "pocket borough" for a good while, though I for one will take care that he will not do so in the future, so far as I can help it. I have endeavoured to have a fair distribution, and, if I may be pardoned for digressing for a moment from the subject before the House, I ask whether any hon. member has thought yet that by saving a paltry £200 a year per member there will be less members to guard against manipulation for corrupt purposes, which I know has taken place in political life. With a fair body of men costing £4,000

or £6,000 a year for the two Houses, there are more eyes upon the public Treasury, and things are not likely to be managed in such a way as to cost the country, for the sake of saving that amount, perhaps £100,000 per annum. So far as I am personally concerned, I can say without fear that I have never yet followed the principle which has been proposed or suggested by the member for Cue, that of swallowing certain measures whether I like them or not, for the sake of obtaining votes; and I hope and trust that I have the confidence of this House and of the people whom I represent, for that reason. I had intended to refer to another matter in respect of the utterances of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth); but I have thought fit, since I have had my tea and feel somewhat cooler on the subject, to leave the matter alone, though I could hit the hon. member very hard if I chose to do so.

MR. GEORGE: What is that? Kalamama?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I regret indeed that the member for Cue, who is looked on as a very able man in this House and outside of it, who has, so far as I have been led to believe, made statements with accuracy in this House, has countenanced upon one occasion, on the public platform, the defamation of the character of my friend Mr. Wilson, when reference was made to an account for some £1,200, and it was suggested that Mr. Wilson had thereby benefited through the Railway Department. An audit has since been made; and surely the member for Cue will have the conscience and the decency to admit that, the audit having proved that Mr. Wilson was correct, the member for Cue should have contradicted that statement. [**MR. GEORGE:** Hear, hear.] The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said we were ready to grab office.

MR. TAYLOR: He tells the truth.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think it comes very well from the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor)—the truth. It is something new from him. Suffice it to say, however, I do not think the three Ministers who sit on this bench are seeking the paltry sum attached to each of their offices. I hope and trust we are able to live without that. If I

had not one shilling in the world, I could not be tempted to vote against my own convictions.

MR. GARDINER: The same may be said for the other side, you know.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) says, "Never mind the country."

MR. HOPKINS: Come to my constituency, and fight me.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He says, "Never mind the country; let us back at any price."

MR. HOPKINS: No; I did not say that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Excuse me: I took a note of it. You will find it in *Hansard*: "Let us back at any price." That is, let your party back. The hon. member will not benefit, except as regards his ordinary salary; and I do not object to his having that, so long as the electors return him, though I do not think it very well earned.

MR. HOPKINS: They do not think much of your opinion, up my way.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Come up my way, and we shall see how you fare.

MR. HOPKINS: A bad thing for you if I did.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I appeal to hon. members that the sense of the House should prevail on this occasion; and although I consider my friend the Premier is justified, because he has the reins in his hands, in seeking a dissolution, I do not conceal the fact that personally—I hope in the interests of this country—I wish it not to be granted, no matter who may have the reins, because I consider a dissolution would be detrimental to our general welfare; but I do hope whoever may be in office will consider first the country and its interests, and will not be dominated by my friends on the bench over there (Labour party). The writing is on the wall: it spells ruin to this country if one section of the community is to control the whole of us. There must be fair representation; and for my part I welcome it. I have had my share in the same line of life as labouring men; I do not forget it, and my sympathies are certainly with the poorer classes, and always will be. But I appeal to hon.

members, and ask whether this country is to be dominated by one section of the community.

MR. TAYLOR: It has been, for ten years.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have heard even the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) say, and my friends have heard it, that he could at the present day, having such power, such organisation as the Labour party have, put up a wax doll as a candidate for a constituency, and gain the seat against any man. I ask, is that a fair statement? Are members prepared to follow that example? Are we to be bullied in that manner? I appeal to the sense of the people, and ask them to realise the importance of such an utterance from one of the leaders of the Labour party. I have something to lose, and I appeal to those who have something to lose. If such a party should prevail, they will suffer likewise, as well as I. I need give only one instance of the utterances of one of the Labour party. I may mention this instance, because I feel I am justified: there were other members present when it took place. This Labour member was cornered in an argument; and one of my friends on this (Government) side put a question to him. The argument of the Labour member was that labour could do without capital; and when he was finally cornered, after a good argument, by two very competent men sitting on this (Government) side of the House, one said to the Labour member, "Supposing I had £2,000 in my pocket, and I was in doubt as to the future of Western Australia, and I preferred to retain that sum in my pocket rather than spend it on a building which I had in view, thus giving employment." Mark you, I do not say that was the first consideration, for the first consideration was the return which would accrue to the owner; but such an enterprise must likewise benefit every trade in the community, and must give employment. When that position was pressed home to the Labour member — [MR. TAYLOR: Name him] — he sits here to-night: when he was asked, "What would you do if I decided to keep that £2,000 in my pocket, and not spend it and give the employment which you and your party seek to give?" I cannot use the expression of the Labour

member in reply, because it is too coarse, and I am sure the Speaker would soon call me to order. [MR. TAYLOR: Chance that.] But I am sure I am safe in saying, without the adjectives, that the reply was, "We will take it by brute force." I appeal to hon. members, is this the kind of thing we want? Are we to be overruled by the Labour party?

MR. TAYLOR: What member said that? Name him. He was "pulling your leg."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have played that game before; and it would be impossible for him to "pull my leg."

MR. TAYLOR: Yes; but you have not played it in the same manner, or you would not be where you are.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know full well the state which matters have now reached, and I extremely regret the course followed by my friend the late Premier, from whom I have had occasion to differ in politics, but whom I look upon as my friend. What has he done? He has, so far as I can judge, gone about the country, on what shall I call it?—shall I say on an ex-Ministerial circus? He went round the country; he said he swallowed everything in the Labour platform. I hope he did not mean that; and I trust when he goes to the electors he will be able to tell them that he said it only for the purpose of getting their votes to defeat my friends who are absent to-night from the Treasury bench.

MR. KINGSMILL: I do not think he said it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: My absent friends went through the country connected with a good party, meaning to do well. The people had for the moment been carried away by a few agitators who had gone round the constituencies, men who had not a feather to fly with, and who did not care a tinker's curse what became of the country.

MR. GREGORY: You accepted their policy.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We accepted your policy? I am not aware that your policy was accepted. Let me tell the country, as you are pleased to interject, that the policy of the late Government was prepared in the very same room in which the policy of this Government was considered; and those hon. members in Opposition know full well,

and the member for West Perth (Mr. Leake) knows full well—

MR. JAMES: The Throssell Government left no trace of it behind.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because we had the brains to provide the Leake Government with a policy, we had the brains, but the Labour party thought fit, during the last election campaign, to throw out the most brilliant man we had in this House, the man who possessed the best brain in this House, and who will ever be a loss to the State of Western Australia.

MR. GEORGE: And who has done more good to the Opposition than ever any hon. member opposite will do.

MR. J. RESIDE (Hannans): I am somewhat astonished to hear the language of the Minister for Works in reference to the Labour party. I certainly think his words are unwarranted here to-night, and I consider he has struck the key-note of many members on the Government side of the House, when he says that the reason for the objection to the Leake party is that they had the support of the Labour party.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about the £2,000? That is the man.

MR. RESIDE: I should like to call the attention of the House to the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), when he said to-night that the reason of the objection to Mr. Leake was a personal one; and to what he said during the debate on the no-confidence motion, that the reason why the Leake Administration should be hurled from office was that they should not be allowed to go into recess under the domination of the Labour party. And I believe that is the true reason why members on the Government side objected to the Leake Administration. I say that is unfair; and when the Minister for Works said that any man who would swallow the Labour platform is unfit to represent the electors in this State, I say the Minister is no democrat anyhow, because the Labour platform is merely a democratic platform, a platform which has been carried into practical politics in other lands and other States, and has been for the benefit of those States. And I say that what the workers of this State are aiming at is the good and the welfare of the whole community; and when he says that one

section of the community shall not rule the country, I say the section we Labour members represent here is the majority of the people of this State, and the majority should rule. I say that is democracy; and those so-called democrats on the Government side of the House are not democrats at all, because democracy is with them only the word of an hour: it is thrown out to catch votes; they do not really believe in it; and, personally, I believe that those so-called democrats who have swallowed the Leake policy have really done so for the sake of office; and I do not believe in their juggling. Why have the Labour party supported the Leake policy? Because we considered it as being for the benefit of this country. And why did we desire to see the Leake Government remain in office? Because we trusted them in preference to the party who have now jumped the Treasury bench. And as regards the present political situation, I certainly think it a peculiar thing, if the Government boast of their power and supremacy in this House by reason of their working majority, that they do not proceed and carry on the Government as they should do. Why should not those Ministers resign who have been defeated by the people at the polls in this State? And why should not the Premier fill the vacancies thus created, or try again, if he is not able to fill them at the first attempt? The proper course, I say, is for the defeated Ministers to resign; and if the Premier will not agree to the suggestion thrown out by the leader of the Opposition to have a test vote in this House, I say it is the duty of the leader of the Opposition to table, at the earliest possible moment, a notice of motion of no confidence; for I am perfectly satisfied that those who at present occupy the Treasury bench have not the confidence of the country.

MR. GEORGE: It is a matter of opinion, is it not?

MR. RESIDE: Well, seeing that I have travelled over a goodly portion of the country, and have seen a good many people and addressed them, I have some experience of what opinion the public have on the matter.

MR. GEORGE: Still, it is a matter of opinion, is it not?

MR. KINGSMILL: It is a matter of public opinion.

MR. RESIDE: It appears to me the question is, whether it is to be a dissolution or a solution. I have advocated a dissolution, and I do not care about retiring from that position; but at the same time, I should like to see a redistribution of seats before we go to the country, because if we appeal to the country on the present rolls, there is a possibility of parties coming back to this House very equally divided, and the people who occupy the Treasury bench have given us no promise at all that they intend to bring in a redistribution of seats on an equitable basis. They do not say they will do that at an early opportunity; in fact, they are trying to hold on to office for another three weeks, and they do not give us any definite pledge that at the end of three weeks they will have a dissolution, or that an arrangement will be come to for carrying on the Government. They say, "Hang up the political situation, and go on in the same shilly-shally manner for another three weeks." I am agreeable to the amendment moved to-night, and I will not support the motion. I hope some arrangement will be come to, and the matter at once brought to a head. If we are to have a dissolution, let us have it at the earliest possible moment. I believe the country is ready for a dissolution; and if the country is ready, members should be prepared to face their electors. We on this side have endeavoured to carry on the business to the best of our ability, and we have been baulked by the conservative element in the House. I say this is a democratic country, and only a democratic Government should rule; and the sooner such a Government is put in office the better. I, for one, shall support the amendment, and I am in favour of having a dissolution as soon as possible.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I rise, not to speak in support of the amendment, but solely for the purpose of objecting to certain remarks of the Minister for Works (Hon. T. F. Quinlan). I object to the introduction of a private and probably jocular conversation into a speech made before this House. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I say that it is an outrage on the House that any remarks made in the course of a conversation which is understood to be private

and privileged—and so understood, I think, by every member on both sides of the House—that such remarks should be introduced into public discussions. [OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I do not know whether any Labour member spoke as the Minister for Works has stated. I do not know what Labour member the Minister for Works refers to. Of course, I have no means of knowing who is the member alluded to, or indeed whether the member in question is not as fictitious as “Mrs. Harris.” But I do say that even if there be any ground for the Minister’s assertion, we are falling to a low level indeed if we have private conversations, possibly of a jocular nature, introduced into debate and made the means of casting a slur on any member whatever of this House. I rise simply to protest against this kind of thing, and I believe I shall have members on both sides of the House with me in that protest.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. E. Morgans): I take it there is no other hon. member who wishes to speak on this amendment, which I may say at once it is my intention to accept. I desire to explain, at the same time, that the only object I had in suggesting an adjournment until the 7th January was to enable us to get over the period of the holidays. I had no desire or intention whatever of attempting to defer the decision of this important matter of a dissolution; and I do not think there is anything in the motion, especially after the explanation which I gave, that would lead any hon. member to suppose that I had any intention whatever of attempting to delay the business of the House, or to prolong in any way the present crisis. If we arrive at some decision to-morrow night, I shall be only too glad.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Friday night.

THE PREMIER: I mean Friday night. I shall be only too glad. A little later I shall explain exactly what I have done, and what it is my intention to do.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER: Before I do that I have a certain explanation to make. Some reference was made by my friend the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing) to the defeated

Ministers who still retain office. I wish to explain to the House that those hon. gentlemen retain their positions at my request. [MR. CONNOR: Hear, hear.] I asked them to be good enough to do so. The day after their defeat they desired me to accept their resignations; but I requested them, as a matter of convenience to myself and also on account of the exigencies of the departments of which they had control, to retain their positions for a short time. I asked them to retain office as a personal favour to me, and they did so.

MR. TAYLOR: Against the wishes of the people.

THE PREMIER: Therefore I wish hon. members to understand that the action of the defeated Ministers cannot possibly reflect any discredit on them, as their action was taken as a favour to myself, and I think to the country also.

MR. GEORGE and MR. CONNOR: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER: My friend the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) said that if I accepted this amendment he would look on my action as a surrender of the position. I do not see that at all. It is competent for any member of my party or indeed for any member of this House to propose an amendment to any motion which may be brought forward. This is not a question on which you can constitutionally rest a vote of want of confidence. It would be absurd to suggest that such a thing as the adjournment of the House to a certain period could form the basis of a vote of want of confidence. Therefore I do not think there is any weight whatever in what the leader of the Opposition said as to a surrender of the position because I am prepared to accept an amendment proposed by one of my friends and supporters. With regard to the position generally, I may state that I have made a formal appeal to His Excellency the Governor for a dissolution. It now rests with His Excellency to decide whether or not he will grant that dissolution; and I am waiting for the result of his decision.

MR. TAYLOR: So is the country.

THE PREMIER: So far as I am concerned, I have heard various opinions expressed here to-night with regard to a dissolution; and I say at once that I am in favour of a dissolution—[MR. TAYLOR:

Hear, hear]—and that a dissolution is what personally I would like to see carried into effect. I have requested His Excellency to grant a dissolution, and I have impressed on him with all the vigour at my command to extend to me the dissolution and to grant the request I have made. It is now for His Excellency to decide what he will do. There were certain advances made by members on both sides of the House with regard to a coalition.

MR. HOPKINS: Not on this side.

MR. KINGSMILL: Not on this side, I think.

THE PREMIER: I do not know. Certain hon. members on both sides discussed the question of a coalition. As regards that point, I may say that I look on a coalition as a matter of convenience and as a matter of business, and with respect to what is in the best interests of the State. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] As a reasonable man, therefore, I shall be prepared at all times to discuss any important proposal which may result in advantage to the State. It appears, from what has gone before, that there is little hope of any solution of the present difficulty in that direction. From what the leader of the Opposition said to-night, I take it that it is perfectly useless to expect any good to result from pursuing farther discussion on those particular lines. If that be so, I can only say that probably His Excellency the Governor will be influenced by this circumstance to some extent in deciding the matter. I believe His Excellency may possibly have hoped that some solution of the kind indicated might have been arrived at. I think that was the object he had in his mind when he refused a dissolution to the leader of the Opposition on the first occasion. I think His Excellency hoped that in a House of 50 members there would be a chance of forming a Government which would be stable and lasting, and one that could successfully carry on the work of the country. I can only say that between now and Friday I shall place myself in communication with His Excellency the Governor, and shall ask him to be good enough to take into his favourable consideration at the earliest possible moment this question of granting the dissolution I have

asked for, before Friday afternoon, in order that I may announce it to this House. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] As to the reference made by the leader of the Opposition to a test vote, if this dissolution is granted a test vote will be quite unnecessary. [OPPOSITION laughter.] Therefore, I really do not see why the hon. gentleman, believing as he did that this dissolution would come about, should have pressed the matter of a test vote so closely on the attention of the House. I believe that he, in common with myself, is under the impression that the dissolution will come about; and, therefore, such a question as he suggests is outside the sphere of consideration at the present time. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] There is another thing. We know that the leader of the Opposition is a lawyer and a special pleader, and we know perfectly well he knows how to take advantage of every situation. On this occasion, I may say he has shown his prowess in this respect; he has shown his skill with regard to this test vote. I have to point out to the House that in suggesting a test vote on this question on Friday night, the hon. member was thoroughly well aware that a considerable number of my supporters are hundreds of miles away from Perth, and could not possibly be here on Friday night in any circumstances. The hon. member knows that perfectly well.

MR. HOPKINS: Where is your majority, then?

THE PREMIER: I am not discussing the question whether this ought to be so, or ought not to be so. I say it is so.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is not so.

THE PREMIER: I am merely referring to the fact that the leader of the Opposition knows perfectly well that those supporters of mine are away and could not possibly be here on Friday night.

MR. LEAKE: Who is absent?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Butcher and Mr. Phillips.

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Phillips could be here on Friday night.

THE PREMIER: There is also Mr. Hutchinson. Efforts have been made to get those hon. gentlemen here.

MR. KINGSMILL: Perhaps they are not "taking any."

THE PREMIER: We have made efforts to get those gentlemen exactly on the same lines as my friends on the Opposition side wish to make efforts to get their supporters around them. I presume in a House of this kind—and the remark applies especially to my side—where members have their constituencies so far away from the capital, it is not an easy matter at all times to get one's supporters together. That is so, although a majority of five is really a very good working majority to go on.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes; if you have it.

THE PREMIER: As a matter of political practice, it is a very easy thing indeed to take a catch vote and defeat a majority of that sort on certain special occasions. I do not for a moment wish to accuse the leader of the Opposition of desiring to take such an advantage as that. I consider that what he said to-night was very fair, so far as it went. He stated he was prepared to admit that, notwithstanding the Government were last night, I will not say defeated, but at any rate were met by an equal vote in this House, to a certain extent it was not a fair vote, and not a fair test of the position of parties.

MR. LEAKE: We claim two or three of the gentlemen who are away.

THE PREMIER: My friend says he claims some hon. members on this side of the House.

MR. LEAKE: No; some who are away.

THE PREMIER: Oh, those who are away. If that should prove to be so, then I can only congratulate the hon. member on having acquired them. The hon. member referred to this question of a dissolution. In that connection I wish to point out that on several occasions he and his friends, when on the Treasury benches, threatened a dissolution.

MR. LEAKE: No.

THE PREMIER: I think so.

MR. LEAKE: No.

THE PREMIER: I think so; but if I am wrong I do not wish to press the point. I certainly was under the impression, however, that I have heard the hon. gentleman make such a threat. At any rate, I can say that he defied the majority in this House to bring forward a motion of want of confidence.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear; certainly.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE PREMIER: Now, with regard to the dissolution I have asked for, I think I have done all that can be expected of me; and I think I might even seek the congratulations of gentlemen on the other side for having done the very thing they wished to do. [MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I think that the thanks of members on the Opposition side of the House are due to me: I think they owe me their warmest thanks for having asked the Governor to pursue a policy which they desired to pursue. [MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] In view of the fact that I have told the House the exact position so far as I am concerned, namely that I have asked His Excellency for a dissolution, and farther in view of the fact that I am prepared to accept the amendment of the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing), it is not necessary to continue this discussion any farther. But before sitting down I would like to say this. Some reference was made by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), and I am sorry I am obliged to refer to that member again, with regard to rolling-stock. He said that £100,000 worth of rolling-stock had been ordered. Of course that has already been denied, and I think the hon. member should really exercise some care before bringing such serious charges as this before the House. There is absolutely no ground for a charge of that kind, and I think the hon. member should take some care before making charges of this kind. I do not think he wished to mislead the House, but a gentleman occupying an honourable and responsible position should exercise some care before he brings charges of this kind before the House, and through the House before the country. As to the Treasury bills, I say none whatever have been signed. And in this regard the hon. member was wrong again.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said that.

THE PREMIER: I understood the hon. gentleman to say that Treasury bills for one million had been issued or signed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (in explanation): It would save time if, just at the outset, I should say with regard to the £100,000 worth of rolling-stock, that I distinctly stated that such a report was about

[MEMBERS: Oh!] I never said it was correct; but if hon. members got that impression from what I did say, I am very sorry indeed, and I withdraw unconditionally. I said such a report was about. I was not trying to charge anyone, but I said that at the present time Ministers who are not responsible might do certain things. [MEMBERS: Oh!] With regard to the Treasury bills, I said most distinctly simply this, that I understood steps were about to be taken for the issue of a million of Treasury bills; and if that is incorrect, I withdraw it. But I never said they were signed.

THE PREMIER: I consider the explanation of the hon. member most satisfactory, and I do not wish to pursue the matter any farther. I can only say that I am prepared to accept the amendment of my hon. friend—and that is that this House should adjourn until Friday at half-past four, or if he chooses until half-past seven, because I do not think it will be necessary, provided we get this dissolution, to meet in the afternoon.

MR. LEAKE: What will you do, if you don't get it?

THE PREMIER: That is for me to decide when I know the decision of the Governor. I do not think I can be expected to say what I would do in a hypothetical case. Therefore, as soon as I know the decision of the Governor, it will be for me, on Friday evening, to decide and state to the House what I am prepared to do. I wish to say, and I will repeat it with all emphasis, that my desire is, although I am not sure I am in entire accord with members on this side of the House as to a dissolution—my desire is that this State should decide this question that is now occupying the attention of the House, that this State should decide who is to rule in this country, and that this State should decide by the votes, through the dissolution, whether or not the Government are to stand. (Applause.) I do not fear a dissolution. That is what I am asking His Excellency the Governor to give. That is what I shall impress upon His Excellency with all the energy in my power.

MR. LEAKE: Would it not be necessary to mention an hour in the amendment?

THE SPEAKER: I think it would be desirable.

MR. EWING: I will make it 4:30.

THE PREMIER: Do you (Mr. Leake) object to 7:30?

MR. LEAKE: No.

MR. EWING: I would like to point out that some goldfields members wish to get away; therefore I would like to make it 4:30.

THE SPEAKER: Then it will not be necessary to mention the hour if it is to be 4:30.

MR. LEAKE: Friday is not an ordinary sitting day: that is why I mentioned it.

THE SPEAKER: Oh, yes.

Amendment put, and passed without dissent.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 21 minutes past 9, until the next Friday afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 20th December, 1901.

Leave of Absence—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 5:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by HON. G. BELLINGHAM, by leave without notice, leave of absence for one fortnight was granted to the Hon. J. D. Connolly (North-East), on the ground of sickness, the hon. member being laid up with measles.

On motion by HON. A. G. JENKINS, by leave without notice, leave of absence for one fortnight was granted to the Hon. C. Sommers (North-East), on the ground of absence from the State on private business.