

there is no single acre of the estate which is not taken up and cultivated.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Perhaps your present advisers may be wrong in this case.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Our present advisers say the land is good. I am sorry that, despite what they say about the land, the old idea still exists here, that nothing which does not bring grist to this portion of the State is worthy of consideration. I thought that old policy had died a natural death and I was staggered when Mr. Kingsmill, by an interjection the other night, reminded me of it. The day is long past when such a policy will receive the endorsement of the people of the State. A grave responsibility is cast upon the members of this Chamber; the making or marring of the Esperance district is in the hands of the Legislative Council. There is no doubt about that, and if this Bill goes out there will be probably an abandonment of settlement and that district will not have another opportunity for years of proving itself. And all for the sake of 60 miles of railway! Never in the history of Parliament has there been opposition to an agricultural proposition submitted by the Government of the day. This is the only one that has met with hostility, despite the fact that we have reports from all classes of public officials stating that there is an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of wheat-growing land, and despite the fact that there has been no mention on this occasion that there is not good wheat-growing land there. Even Mr. Cullen says I misquoted him; he says the country is good for other than sheep and lambs and that it is good for wheat, so that every member who has spoken has admitted that this is good wheat-growing land. I hope members will take the logical bent of the conclusions they have come to, and support the carrying of this Bill.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority against	..			2
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Klrwan
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. W. Kingsmill	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller).

Question thus negatived; the Bill rejected.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 9th December, 1913.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ELECTORAL—KALGOORLIE SEAT.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce to hon. members that I have received the resignation of Mr. Green as member for Kalgoorlie.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Agriculture: Report of the Department of Agriculture and Industries for the year ended 30th June, 1913.

By the Minister for Mines: Additional Regulation (No. 70b) under the Mining Act, 1904.

By the Minister for Works: By-law of Northampton Roads Board—Valuation on annual value. By-law of Dundas Roads Board—Valuation on annual value.

By the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Report of the work of the State Children Department.

QUESTION — TRAMWAYS SUPER-INTENDENT, APPOINTMENT.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Minister for ways: 1, Why were senior railway officers, with long experience and good records, passed over when making the appointment of Superintendent of Tramways? 2, What special qualifications does Mr. Shillington possess to justify his appointment?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, There was no obligation to award this position to seniority, or to make the selection from the railway service, but as there was no suitable man in the tramway service when it was taken over who could be appointed, applications were invited from the railway staff. Experience, record, and general qualifications were considered, and the officer considered most suitable by the Commissioner was appointed. 2, Answered by No. 1.

Mr. Bolton: Well, he is a bad judge.

QUESTION—RAILWAY EXCURSION RATES, GREAT SOUTHERN.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Are railway excursion tickets issued between Perth and Albany for two pounds first-class return and thirty shillings second-class return? 2, If so, as Narrogin is half-way between Perth and Albany, is it the intention of the Railway Department to issue railway

excursion tickets from Narrogin to Perth or Albany for one pound first-class return and fifteen shillings second-class return? 3. If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, This question has been brought before the Commissioner by the authorities at Narrogin on several occasions. The cheap fare, Perth to Albany, is a competitive one with the fares charged by the steamship companies. It would, however, be impossible—except at a heavy loss of revenue—for the special rates to be continued if intermediate fares were computed on a *pro rata* basis. Further, the practice followed in this connection is on all fours with that obtaining in other parts of the world. The intermediate fares are computed on “excursion fare” basis, and are subject to a maximum charge not greater than the through fare.

QUESTION — LIQUOR LICENSE, APPLICATION BY ASIATIC.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that Louey Ling Yack, a Chinaman who claims to have been born in Melbourne, and who is a partner in the firm of S. Fong & Co., applied for a gallon license at the last licensing court at Geraldton? 2, Is he further aware that the officer in charge of police at Geraldton (Sergeant Thomas) stated that he had no instructions to oppose the application, and that he did not see why he should prevent the Government getting the license fee? 3, As the consideration of this case has been adjourned until the 12th instant, is it the intention of the Government to strongly oppose the granting of this license in open court on that date. If not, why not? 4, Has the deed of partnership of the firm of S. Fong & Co. been registered at the Supreme Court as required by law? 5, If so, who are the partners in the said firm? 6, Is it the intention of the Government to issue instructions to the police to strongly oppose all applications made by Asiatics in future for licenses to sell liquor. If not, why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes, but it is stated Louey Ling Yack is an Australian. 2, Only from a newspaper report just received. 3, No, not on the point raised, as objection on the grounds of nationality would not legally stand, as he is an Australian. 4, Registration was effected on the 4th instant. 5, Sam Been Bylis, Sydney Fong, Louey Wing Hung, James Fong, Andrew Bean Fong, Louey Ling Yack, William Fong. 6, The Government will oppose this and all applications if found to be in contravention of the law, or if there are good and legal grounds for doing so.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Criminal Code. Compilation (introduced by the Attorney General).

2, Railway Surveys (introduced by the Minister for Works).

BILL — ROADS CLOSURE (No. 2).

Recommittal.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, Bill recommitted for further consideration.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the measure was considered previously the paragraphs in the schedule under the division "In the City of Perth" were struck out. One of the paragraphs represented a different road from the one resumed for market purposes. He therefore moved an amendment—

That the following paragraph be inserted:—"In the City of Perth a way delineated on plan 672 deposited in the Office of Titles, and being portion of Town Lot N147, abutting on the west side of lots 9 and 36, and lying in part between the south boundary of lots 9 and 10 and the north boundaries of lots 35 and 36; ways on the east side of lot 13 and lot 35 being substituted therefor."

This provided for the closing of a right-of-way in Highgate Hill between Harold and Mary-streets. The sisters of the Highgate Convent had acquired the freehold of certain blocks in addition to the area already held by them, and proposed to erect a new school. The blocks purchased were on the eastern side of the right-of-way, which previously formed the eastern boundary of their property. It was proposed to close this right-of-way and in return the sisters were giving the necessary area on the eastern side of the combined area, which would now be used for school purposes. This proposal had been approved by the Commissioner of Titles but the Registrar of Titles had held that it was necessary to obtain the sanction of Parliament by its inclusion in the roads closure measure, and the right-of-way was, therefore, included in this Bill in accordance with that opinion.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Members could only take it that the Minister had made full inquiry, but Parliament should be perfectly satisfied before agreeing to pass the proposals of any Government. Apparently the whole of the subdivision had been bought by the sisters and they were the only people who had any right of easement over this right-of-way. In such subdivisions there might be half a dozen owners, and if there were it would be a serious matter to make such a closure. The Minister, however, assured the Committee that the road proposed to be substituted would be taken from the land the Sisters owned, and that would be quite satisfactory to the residents of the locality. If that was so there could be no objection to the proposal. Matters of this kind, however, should receive careful attention at the hands of Ministers, because Parliament had to be guided more by what the Minister told members than in any other way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commissioner of Titles had assured him that this closure would cause no inconvenience to the public, and that, in fact, he himself had agreed to the alteration, and it was really on the representations of the Registrar for Titles that the proposal was included in a Bill in order that

there might be no doubt whatever on the matter.

Mr. LANDER: The closing of this roadway would not make any difference to anybody, and would not cause any inconvenience. The residents of the locality had no objection to it.

Mr. DWYER: Adjoining the convent grounds there was a right-of-way 12 feet wide running from Mary-street to Harold-street, and on the other side of the convent there was a vacant piece of land. The Sisters had acquired that land, and it was intended that this vacant piece of land should become portion of the convent grounds. The rights of the public would be conserved by making a right-of-way on the eastern side of the vacant piece of land; in other words, the old right-of-way would be closed and in lieu of that the new right-of-way would be made on the eastern extremity of the land, and it would serve the public just as well. It was merely an exchange which would not affect anyone.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It did not seem that there could be any exception taken to the proposal. The public would still have access by the proposed new right-of-way between the two thoroughfares of Harold-street and Mary-street.

Amendment passed.

Schedule as amended agreed to.

Bill again reported with a further amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—ILLICIT SALE OF LIQUOR.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Unlawful dealing in liquor:

Mr. WISDOM: The clause provided for a penalty of £50 for the first offence. There might be added a provision for imprisonment to this clause. It was known that in the case of sly-grog sellers the penalties which were imposed were no deterrent whatever. Those who were heavily fined immediately went back to the business, and in some cases they were caught and fined over and over again, and yet they persisted in the illicit sale of

liquor. There was no capital required in such a business; they simply put up a shanty and secured a few gallons of liquor.

Mr. Lander: And very often they make it themselves.

Mr. WISDOM: These people merely laughed at the penalties which were imposed, and often a week or two's business would be quite sufficient to enable them to recoup themselves. The Committee should provide for imprisonment in the case of the first offence, just as there was provision for imprisonment for a second offence. He therefore moved an amendment—

That after the word "pounds," in line 3 of Subclause 2 the words "or imprisonment for three months or both" be added.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The proposal of the hon. member did not go far enough. It was common knowledge that where there was no hotel in country towns the business of sly-grog selling was carried on to a very large extent. In his own electorate it was a growing evil, and drastic steps ought to be taken to suppress it. He would favour imprisonment direct without the option of a fine.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was his desire as much as that of any member to prevent the illicit sale of liquor by every means, but if he accepted the hon. member's amendment the punishment which was provided for the second offence would not then be high enough. He would be quite content to accept the amendment.

Mr. Wisdom: Make it twelve months for the second offence.

Amendment passed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved a further amendment—

That in line 4 the word "one" be struck out and "two" inserted, and in line 5 the word "six" be struck out and "twelve" inserted.

This would have the effect of increasing the penalty for a subsequent offence from £100 to £200, and the imprisonment from six to twelve months.

Mr. FOLEY: It was doubtful whether the doubling of this penalty would have

any more effectively deterrent effect. Some of these places would find it very difficult to pay a fine of £200, while others could pay perhaps £500. Would a person convicted of sly grog selling be required to pay £200 even after he had been imprisoned?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Undoubtedly it would be required of such a person. The object of the penalty was to put sufficient fear into the hearts of those dealing in illicit drink traffic to cause them to hesitate. The heavy penalty was only to be inflicted after conviction for a first offence. Once convicted of an offence of that kind there was no earthly excuse for any person returning to it.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Liquor carried about for sale:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Presumably the clause would not prevent commercial travellers carrying about their samples?

The Attorney General: No, certainly not.

Mr. LANDER: Would it not be possible to increase the penalty in this case as in the former one? To hawk the liquor about in a cart was one of the worst features of the traffic.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As we had increased the penalty in the first instance there was a good deal in the suggestion. Here the penalty was a fine of £50 for the first offence. We might reasonably, as in the previous instance, make it £50 or imprisonment for three months with hard labour or both.

On motions by the ATTORNEY GENERAL penalty for first offence increased to £50, or imprisonment for three months, or both; and for a second offence a fine of £200, or imprisonment for twelve months, or both.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was just possible that a commercial traveller carrying samples would come under the clause; so too might the holder of a gallon license.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not by any chance could a commercial traveller carrying samples be brought under the

clause, the object of which was to reach those illicit traders who from place to place carried about liquor for sale. The mere exhibition of samples of other liquor to be sold did not come within the scope of the clause.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Still, it might be possible for the selling of liquor by a traveller to come within the clause. A merchants' traveller, or a traveller representing a holder of a gallon license might easily find himself within the clause. This was not what the Attorney General wanted, and therefore the Attorney General ought to be very careful about the clause. Why not specifically exempt commercial travellers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would not do to make a special exemption for commercial travellers, because if that were done any person going abroad with liquor would be a commercial traveller. As the clause stood, the commercial traveller was perfectly safe.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause distinctly stated that there would be no carrying about of liquor for sale. The Attorney General should make certain that the clause was not going to do more than he intended it should.

Mr. LANDER: If the clause were not allowed to stand as printed, the object which it was desired to attain would not be accomplished. He had seen a publican in church with two whisky bottles in his pockets, prepared to sell the stuff by the small glass. He had seen the same thing at a dance at the Kirrup mills, where traders with bottles of whisky were selling it out by the glass. Without the clause it would be impossible to deal with this class of hawker.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Sale of liquor under pretence:

Mr. GEORGE: Some time ago it had been made public that certain storekeepers were in the habit of supplying housewives with liquor and charging it up as sugar or flour. Presumably the object of the clause was to put an end to that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object of the clause was to prevent the

subterfuge employed in selling a packet of tea and giving with it a bottle of whisky free of charge. Under the present conditions a storekeeper could sell a pound of tea and give in the whisky free.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—Supply of liquor to persons convicted of unlawfully dealing prohibited:

Mr. GEORGE: Assuming a man in the country had been convicted of a contravention of the provisions of this Bill, any wholesale establishment which supplied liquor to him would come under the operation of this clause?

The Attorney General: That is so.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Existing Australian wine licenses to expire on the 31st March, 1914:

Mr. DWYER: If the statements made by a recent deputation to the Attorney General were correct, this new provision was much needed, but he was informed that those statements were exaggerated, and he had been asked to request the Attorney General to defer final consideration of this clause and the following one, so as to allow an opportunity of the views of the Australian wine licensees, who were also fruit sellers, and the Australian vigneron, to be represented to him. If the evils which were said to exist through the uniting of the Australian wine licenses with the sale of fruit did exist, and young women and girls entered those establishments and the obtaining of fruit was merely an excuse for plying them with wine, these clauses were well merited, but if that report was untrue or exaggerated out of all proportion, it seemed hardly fair to deprive those people of their licenses at such short notice. They were in a somewhat similar position to the hotelkeepers.

Mr. Lander: There is no analogy.

Mr. DWYER: There was no analogy to the extent that this Chamber had already decided that hotel licenses should not be interfered with until 1920; also, in the case of an hotel the erection of an expensive building was made a condition

precedent to the granting of the license, whereas in the case of the Australian wine license all that was necessary was an ordinary shop. But these Australian wine licensees had taken leases of shops and premises on the understanding that they would be allowed to continue this trade. If the evils said to exist did exist, the sooner we swept away those licenses the better, but if the evils did not exist, and we were merely attacking a phantom or myth, and if in addition a great deal of injury would be inflicted on the Australian wine trade, such drastic action was not necessary. However, whether the evils did exist or not, in common fairness those people should have an opportunity of presenting their case, and the Attorney General should hold his judgment in suspense until opportunity had been allowed for that to be done. He, therefore, asked that consideration of these two clauses should be held over until Friday, so that these people could put their case to the Attorney General and allow him an opportunity of considering the evidence they would produce. Three of the leading holders of wine licenses had expressed to him their willingness that the police, or anybody else, should have the right to enter and inspect their premises at any time, and, further, that on one conviction of selling for consumption on the premises wine to any female their licenses should be taken away.

Mr. George: Where do they get their sale?

Mr. DWYER: Principally by the bottle, for consumption off the premises. That offer was an evidence of their sincerity in helping the Attorney General in his desire to have these premises conducted properly.

Mr. McDonald: Do you want to drive the women into the hotels?

Mr. DWYER: This clause would do that, because it was taking these licenses away altogether. If what he was informed was true, there would scarcely be three places in Perth in which Australian wine would be sold. These people made a little profit out of wine, a little out of fruit, a little out of confectionery, and a little out of soft drinks, and by the com-

bined profits from those classes of trade they were enabled to make a living; but if they were deprived of any one of those sources of profit their occupation would be gone. He hoped the Attorney General would keep his mind open until he heard the views of the people affected, and if they were able to show that the evils had been grossly exaggerated he might very well amend the law in the direction they suggested.

Mr. GEORGE: It was laid down that no Australian wine licenses should be granted except for premises where no other goods were sold or offered. There were places in the country where there were wine growers who were also orchardists and farmers, and who had apples and other produce for sale.

The Premier: They do not require to get an Australian wine license to sell their liquor, so they are exempt altogether.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In opposing this clause he was not influenced by the licensed victuallers. As a matter of fact, the licensed victuallers welcomed the proposal to shut up the wine shops and force the people who wanted a glass of wine into the hotels, where they would have to pay twice the price that they paid in the shops. Either we were going to manufacture Australian wine and sell it, or we were going to stop the growing of grapes. This was a wine-growing country, and we should allow the people facilities for the buying and drinking of wine. The statement about little girls and women being supplied with wine in the shops were similar to many statements made by people who were totally unreliable on questions of this description. They were people who were drunk with the desire to prevent other people getting what they themselves did not take, and their statements were no more worthy of consideration than the statements of any other extraordinary drunks. These shops should be allowed to continue as they had filled a fairly good purpose. He had seen them in operation pretty well all over Australia and had never witnessed the ill-effects mentioned by so-called reformers.

Mr. Thomas: What about the ill-effects of drinking inferior wines?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the hon. member was so inclined he could move an amendment providing they could not sell inferior wines and would be punished if they did so. If we were going to prevent all shopkeepers, chemists, and others from selling at all because they sold some inferior stuff we would not have many shops, particularly chemists' shops. It was to be hoped the clause would not be carried. The Attorney General should not be influenced by statements which, so far as he (Mr. Underwood) knew, had no foundation whatever in fact.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The arguments put forward by the member for Pilbara were most extraordinary. The hon. member professed to be a man of the world, and go about with his eyes open. It was surprising that any member should say women and young girls did not patronise these wine shops where they could enter under the cloak of going in for fruit and lollies. It was apparent to anyone who walked about our streets, not only in the evening, but in the daytime. A few evenings ago he had been particularly struck with the number of young girls who went into one of these shops in company with young men, and there was no question to his mind that they went in to drink wine.

Member: Possibly they went in for lemon squash.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If they wanted to drink squash they would not go to a shop where wine was sold and where a stigma would rest upon them for going in. If young girls wanted to get a drink of lemon squash they would go to shops reputed for making good squash, and not into a wine shop where they were absolutely careless whether they made good squash or not, and where wine was what they wanted to sell. Any member who would oppose such a clause as this could not possibly have the best interests of the country or the people at heart.

Mr. McDonald: There is no room for him in a democracy?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Perhaps not, and perhaps no room for a lot of others either. No harm whatever could be done by com-

selling these people to keep their fruit and lollies in a place altogether separate from that in which they sold wine.

Mr. DWYER: It was reasonable to protest against the member for Subiaco assuming the attitude of a superior person, and thinking that everyone who differed from him was eternally damned in a democratic sense. The hon. member had no monopoly of wisdom, even though he had come from Subiaco. He possessed no monopoly either in the cause of democracy or good government.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The hon. member is not right in saying I made remarks which I did not make.

Mr. DWYER: The hon. member said those who opposed this clause had not the interests of democracy at heart.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I did not use the word.

Mr. DWYER: It was to be hoped we all had the interests of democracy at heart and the interests of the people at heart. These two clauses should be allowed to remain in abeyance at present until the Attorney General heard the other side of the question. If there were evils existing through the supply of drink where an Australian wine license was associated with the selling of fruit, exactly the same evils were likely to exist where an Australian wine license was associated with restaurants, and if evils did exist in this direction the restaurant being run in conjunction with an Australian wine license should be banned just as much as the fruit shop.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The clause would have his support with certain modifications. It would be better in the interests of the trade to see wine licenses apply only to premises specially used for the purpose. He could not say from his own experience that these evils did exist, but the proposal might lead to better control of the trade. At the same time we should not make a drastic alteration in the law without giving those who were likely to be affected some opportunity of being heard. Under the law as it existed to-day certain licenses had been granted and it would seem very unfair to make a provision that these licenses should be ter-

minated on the 31st March next. At least they should be given 12 months' notice. He was as anxious as any other member to see no discredit was brought upon the wine growing industry, which had a great future before it in this country. These licenses had already been granted and the least that could be done would be to allow them to continue until the 31st December of the ensuing year.

Mr. Dwyer: Why not support my request to have consideration of the clause adjourned until the Attorney General hears the other side?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That was a reasonable request.

Mr. Dwyer: These people have not been heard.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It was to be hoped the Attorney General would postpone consideration of the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was quite right that we should hear both sides, but sometimes one side could be put too late. Sometimes one side did not put in an appearance in time. This was a case of that description. As long ago as 1910 he moved in this House a resolution which practically embodied these two clauses. Then matters were placed before the House by representatives of the wine growers and by defenders of the shops. He would more particularly remind the members for Perth and Katanning that it was fully three months ago since a very representative deputation waited upon him and brought this matter before him at length. This deputation was reported in detail in the newspapers. A notification, therefore, of these provisions had been given to the public in ample time for those interested to make representations if they had so desired. He had told that deputation he would endeavour to have the provisions put in the Bill. Yet we had heard nothing until this last moment. Notice of the Bill had been given, the second reading gone on with, and now only when we came to deal with the measure in Committee were we asked to postpone the matter until a deputation could come along and put their side of the case. He knew their side of the case. The hon. member had presented it to-day.

Mr. Dwyer: I have not presented it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member had presented the strongest features of it—the defence of the wine trade and those occupied in cultivating vineyards, the desire to have wine substituted for other forms of liquor, and that those men who had undertaken businesses believed they would be continuing their business indefinitely. Those arguments members were familiar with. Sufficient warning had been given to these people of the intention to discontinue these wine licenses in certain shops. He had no doubt some vendors of wine in the City were as respectable, well-meaning men as keepers of hotels or other businesses. He had no doubt about that. Unfortunately one could not suppress an evil of this kind without causing some innocent people to suffer. We had to consider the greatest good for the greatest number and to consider the suppression of an evil of which there was ample testimony to prove that it was carried on in the City and the country to-day. Therefore, he could not see his way to postpone the clause. There were only two weeks to go to Christmas, were we to shut up at Christmas or go on afterwards?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you not bring the Bill down earlier?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Government could not bring all their Bills down at once, some Bill must be last. All the Bills could not be brought down simultaneously and dealt with simultaneously. If the Bill ought to have been brought in earlier that was the greatest argument for going on with it now and not postponing it longer. The people interested had had notification for three months of the intention of the Government to introduce the Bill and if they had been negligent that was their fault. But going on with the measure did not preclude these people from presenting their case. The Bill had to go to another Chamber and if the people interested desired to present their case let them do so to the Minister who would be in charge of the Bill in another place.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There was no idea that the Attorney General intended to introduce a Bill containing two clauses that meant confiscation to some persons.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): If you were interested in the trade you would have known about it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This Bill was only introduced on Friday of last week. What chance had anyone of reading the Bill and knowing whether it was going to injure them or not? The people interested might have seen the account of the deputation which waited on the Attorney General two or three months ago, but they might not. All did not read the newspapers; even if they did see the account of the deputation they might not have seen the necessity of getting up an agitation there and then, before they knew the provisions of the Bill and how they would affect them. Now that the interested persons saw the clauses they went to the member for Perth to ask the Attorney General to postpone the clauses, so that they might have an opportunity of placing their views before him. The Attorney General said, no, that the people had ample opportunity and that they had brought the trouble on themselves by default. He (Mr. Wilson) had read the clauses and it seemed that someone was to be injured, as the clauses took away rights which some people held to-day. Members were asked to pass two clauses that meant that all Australian wine licenses should terminate on the 31st March next. Men had established businesses on these licenses; they had paid for the goodwill. Some people had leases extending over years; they were in the same position as those persons holding publican's licenses. It did not matter how we might wish to curtail the liquor trade, these people had their rights and we should respect them, unless we compensated them, and he supposed the Attorney General did not intend to compensate these people. He (Mr. Wilson) did not hold a brief for these people but he desired fair play. He did not wish to see an increase in the wine shops but he wished to encourage the consumption of

Australian wine against beer and spirits. sired fair play. He did not wish to see to educate the Australian citizen to consume his own Australian wine. Publicans did not make an effort in this direction, but properly regulated places for the sale of Australian wine were to be commended. It was there that people were educated to use these wines. The industry was sufficiently important that we should not endeavour to stifle it. Wine shops were objectionable it was said because women and girls could get wine and drink it under the subterfuge of purchasing sundry articles. When that was proved to be so let members legislate against it, but we should not do away with licenses to sell wine. The wine-growing industry was of importance; it was useful and ought to be encouraged. The manufacture of Australian wine ought to be encouraged and also the drinking of it in moderation. If the sale of wine was being abused by those who held the licenses we ought to be strict and see that the police did their duty. If the legislation was not severe enough then it should be amended in the right direction, by making it an offence and to prevent a man selling any more wine, the cancellation of his license as suggested by the member for Perth, if necessary. But we should not take up the attitude that we should interfere with these businesses. Men had gone into these businesses straightforwardly and had invested their money in the trade, catering for those who wished to consume the wines. He was willing to support any legislation to assist in the direction of temperance but not of confiscation. These people had not had ample time in which to take up their cause and point out where this legislation was against their interests, and even if they had had ample time, it was not too late now to listen to their side of the question and endeavour to deal fairly by them. We must not knowingly injure anyone so long as he was law-abiding and conducted his business in a proper manner. Therefore, if the Attorney General would not delay the consideration of these clauses the Committee ought to hesitate before passing them.

He would sooner see them excluded from the Bill until every party had been heard and until it was proved that it would be in the interest of the public to stop this trade. Even if such was the case we would then have to go into the question of compensation.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was evidently pleading for an encouragement of the production of Australian wine, and if so he must of necessity plead for a greater consumption. That might be legitimate from his point of view, but it had no bearing on the Bill. Wine licenses were granted in respect of premises used for the sale of fruit and sweets which were sought by children. Most of the fruit shops in Perth had wine licenses. If it was undesirable that a child should go into a public-house on account of intoxicants being sold there, it was equally undesirable that a child should go into a fruit shop where wine was sold, even though it was Australian wine.

Mr. George: They go into public houses all the same.

The PREMIER: It was against the law. He had seen drunken women coming out of wine shops in Perth, and it was undesirable that such a spectacle should come under the notice of persons of tender years when they wished to procure fruit and sweets. Hon. members could encourage the drinking of wine if they liked, but they should encourage it in a legitimate way. Would anyone assert that there were not sufficient hotels in Perth to supply Australian wines? If an hotel should not be frequented by women, it should not be permitted to exist. Taking wine shops on the whole they were well conducted, but he was arguing against the wisdom of permitting the sale of wine in premises where fruit and sweets were sold to children. If the leader of the Opposition would increase the consumption of Australian wine and allow it to be consumed on premises frequented by children, and if he at the same time objected to children entering public houses, he was evidently prepared to sacrifice our child life in the interests of Australian wine.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What nonsense.

The PREMIER: That was in effect what the hon. member meant.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are twisting.

The PREMIER: There was nothing to prevent all the Australian wine which could be consumed from being sold even if every Australian wine license was abolished. If it was desirable to encourage the consumption of Australian wine, it could be consumed on premises properly licensed for the sale of intoxicants. There was no reason for further postponement. The holders of Australian wine licenses would obtain notice.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Do you think three months' notice is reasonable?

The PREMIER: Yes, but he would be prepared to make it six months, so long as we could see an end to the present state of affairs. The sooner we could restrict the sale of intoxicants to one license the better it would be for the suppression of sly-grog selling. Personally he would like to see the liquor trade dispensed with altogether, but he realised that others had different tastes and so long as there were no evil effects he did not wish to interfere, but the license in question was one of the abuses of the trade and should be removed. This provision would not prevent Australian wine licenses from being granted. It would only prevent them from being granted in connection with premises where fruit and sweets were sold.

Mr. MULLANY: It was to be regretted that the Attorney General had not seen fit to agree to postpone the consideration of these clauses. His reason for refusing was rather weak. Although his replies to deputations were published in the Press, people should not be called upon to take a great deal of notice of such reports. When a measure of this description was presented to Parliament people could ascertain the intentions of the Government. The time for the consideration of such clauses had been short. The member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) had borne out the statement of the member for Pilbara, that some people on some subjects were entirely unreliable. The statement that he had seen young couples going into these shops,

presumably to drink wine, demonstrated a moral kink, because he might just as fairly have assumed that they went in to get lemon squash or lemonade. But no, the hon. member inferred at once that young men and young women went in solely for the purpose of drinking wine. If this clause was carried, the Australian wine licenses would be confined to the sale of Australian wine only. A license of that kind would not allow a licensee to sell even temperance drinks, and the position would then be that a man and his wife, or a young man and a young woman, might desire refreshment and the man might wish to have Australian wine and the woman might like a drink of lemonade, and as under such conditions it would be impossible for them to get these two kinds of refreshments in the one place, they would be forced to go into a hotel, or do without the refreshment. The temperance advocates had not a very clear view of the injury that was likely to happen to children going into these shops for confectionery. He would be willing to do anything to restrict or prevent the sale of liquor when it was likely to be detrimental to mankind, but the temperance advocates in this case were endeavouring to go too far. The girls in Perth, or in any other Australian city, were well able to look after themselves, and those who favoured the passing of this clause had failed to convince him as to the necessity for it or the justice of it, and he therefore intended to vote against it.

Mr. McDONALD: Glancing at the Licensing Act of 1910, he could see no reason for the inclusion of the clause in the Bill under discussion. Even if it were necessary to bring forward the Bill with this clause, the three months' notice provided would not be sufficient.

The Attorney General: I will agree to six months if you like.

Mr. McDONALD: The member for Subiaco declared that any man of the world walking about the streets would know well what went on inside these wine shops. The hon. member had powers of intuition greater than those of any ordinary man, and he could be imagined

standing outside a church watching maidens of tender years going inside, and declaring that it was probably their intention to steal the church plate. The hon. member might then be imagined introducing a Bill of one clause favouring the abolition of churches, so that these maidens might not be tempted to enter a church for the purpose of stealing the church plate. That was just as logical. As the hon. member for Menzies had pointed out, the member for Subiaco had no reason to suppose that the young people went into these shops to drink wine. There were other liquid refreshments sold which were less harmful than wine, if wine was at all harmful. Wine ought to be the staple drink in Australia, because of our climate. Ordinary alcoholic drinks were unsuitable in a climate like ours, and wine should be the national drink. Of course there was a big distinction to be drawn between ordinary wine and what was known as "pinkie," but if there was any fault to be found in that respect it was due to defective inspection. If we had good wine sold to the people ill effects would not result. It was his intention to vote against the clause.

Mr. ALLEN: Although he was one of the deputation which waited on the Attorney General a few months back to ask him to introduce this legislation, a deputation which was very representative, the Attorney General should now hear the other side.

The Premier: Why did you not bring them along?

Mr. ALLEN: The member for Perth had made a remark about doing away with the drinking of wine on these premises, but he (Mr. Allen) had had a chat with one or two interested people, and they did not seem to think that such a proposal would suit them, but it might get over the difficulty to only allow the sale of wine in bulk. One member of the deputation which waited on the Attorney General stated that an objection which would be raised to this legislation was that of vested interests, and he suggested that it would be better to pay compensation, and that gentleman was

one who was always opposed to compensation being paid. Even now the Attorney General might see his way clear to defer the consideration of this clause until the other side had been heard. Only the other day a business had changed hands for the sum of £1,000. It was a wine, confectionery, and spirit business, and no doubt that amount was paid for stock, good-will and the lease of the premises, and if this legislation was carried, and the privilege of selling wine were taken away from the present holder of the license, a great injury would be done to him. The Attorney General might well stay his hand, because we should not want to do anyone an injury. It was not his intention to change the views he expressed when he accompanied the deputation, but he desired above everything to be fair.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The members of the deputation to which the hon. member referred made an emphatic protest against this kind of license, and he promised there and then that if what was asked could be introduced in the Bill dealing with the sale of liquor illicitly it would be done. That promise had been kept. Was he now to wait because somebody else had something more to say? Three months had passed—there had been ample time for him to be approached—and yet, now that we were on the Committee stage of the Bill, he was to be asked to postpone the further consideration of this particular clause. If we had abundance of time in which to do the work which remained to be done during the few days of the session which were left, there would not be any objection to the request, but it was the desire of members to endeavour to finish up the work before the Christmas holidays, so as not to extend the session over that period. But all avenues were not closed to these people on whose behalf an appeal was being made. There was yet another Chamber before which this Bill had to go, and a member of the Government would be in charge of the Bill there. Let them interview that Minister, and make their representations to him. In the meantime, if hon. members did not like

the clause, they could vote against it. If their minds were made up, as his was, about the evil of this kind of sale, let them support the Government. This proposal did not prevent the sale of wine. There could be wine licenses or wine shops, but they must not be combined with the sale of other goods—fruit, fancy goods, or groceries.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier was not against the selling of wine in wine shops or restaurants, but we should certainly provide that there should be no further issue of licenses of this mixed character. We had licenses now, and they would be continued. He was frequently in these fruit shops licensed for the sale of wine, and he had never yet seen the least inducement offered to customers to drink wine, nor had he seen very much wine consumed in such places. He doubted if it constituted the evil in the metropolitan area which the Premier had declared.

The Premier: I said they were well conducted, but that if it was unwise to allow children to go into licensed premises, it was equally unwise to allow them to go into these wine shops.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier's friends who wanted wine licenses were to have them, but these keepers of fruit shops were to be deprived of them. There was no reason why we should not limit the drinking on the premises to consumers above 21 years of age, but to say that licenses held by certain people should continue while others should cease was inconsistent on the face of it.

The Premier: The licenses are not the same.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They were the same. The Premier's mind was not clear on the point.

The Premier: It is not desirable to allow children to visit licensed premises.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The few sly drinkers who went to these places could go to restaurants instead if they so desired. He would like to see these licenses cease within a reasonable time, and he would not mind if it were provided that there should be no transfer of the licenses in future transactions regarding the pre-

mises or businesses, while he would agree also that the age of consumers should be raised to 21 years. But all the time he would maintain that the people who had these licenses were entitled to some consideration. It would be well, therefore, if the Minister would report progress and confer with those who wished to wait upon him as a deputation.

Mr. MALE: Like others he would support the contention of the member for Perth (Mr. Dwyer), because the passing of the clause was not going to have much effect in the direction which Ministers would have the Committee believe. On the one hand we were wiping out Australian wine licenses altogether, while on the other we were extending the Australian wine license to such places as the Commissioner of Police might certify in writing to be restaurants. There was no definition of "restaurant" in the Act nor in the Bill. We had a general idea of a restaurant as being a place where one could obtain a cup of tea, and even a meal, and where children could buy their lollies; yet the Premier had said that it was not desirable that wine should be sold in a place where children could buy their lollies; we were going to confine the sale of Australian wine to shops set apart for the purpose, would the Attorney General bring in a further clause to prohibit a place like the Moana Café from selling lollies and cakes? Why should we say "This shop is a restaurant," and "This other is a wine shop"? How were we to distinguish between the one and the other? Personally he would like to see the consumption of Australian wines increased, believing as he did that a moderate consumption of wine was good for the people. Moreover, we had already passed legislation bringing these wine shops within the scope of the Local Option Bill, in which a provision was inserted that no vote could be taken on the increase of these licenses, and therefore there was no danger of their being increased. If the evil did exist the fault must to an extent lie in the neglect of the authorities to properly supervise these places. Well conducted restaurants

and wine and fruit shops served a useful purpose, and he would support the member for Perth in the attempt to have this reconsidered.

Mr. ELLIOTT: Although on the one hand we encouraged the cultivation of vineyards, yet the Government came along with a Bill like this and prohibited the sale of Australian wine.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. ELLIOTT: We had here vested interests just as they were to be found in connection with the Licensing Act. The member for West Perth had given an instance of from £800 to £1,000 having been spent on a wine shop opposite His Majesty's theatre. When vested interests of this sort cropped up we should not step in in an irrational manner and destroy those interests. The time allowed by the provision was much too short and should be extended to 12 months at least.

The Attorney General: Will you support 12 months?

Mr. ELLIOTT: Yes.

Mr. TURVEY: It was not to be admitted that because the clause would prevent the sale of Australian wine in fruit shops it was going to interfere with the production of wine. He believed that so far as the sale of good wine was concerned it would be far more encouraged by confining the wine booths to the sale of wine. The leader of the Opposition had implied that the renewal of the licenses would not be granted.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They all expire on the 31st March.

Mr. TURVEY: It was not at all likely the licenses would be refused, and a wine license did not provide for the sale of confectionery, fruit, etc. It was a license for the sale of wine, and unless there was something said by the police against the manner in which the licensee had conducted his premises, the license would not be refused.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not take away the licenses from restaurants?

Mr. TURVEY: If the hon. member would move an amendment to that effect it would receive support. If the sale of wine was conducted openly in wine saloons the evil effect would be much less.

This provision would not interfere with the production of wine, but it would do something to ensure that a good class of wine would be sold. He intended to support the clause, particularly in view of the promise of the Attorney General that those who were interested in these businesses would have an opportunity of placing their views before the Colonial Secretary. Those who were interested in the trade had certain rights which could not be overlooked. He believed that one of the city wine shop businesses had changed hands at £1,000 quite recently. Therefore, he trusted that the Attorney General would place no obstacle in the way of the people interested putting their case before him, but the passage of this clause should not be delayed in consequence.

Mr. DWYER: Admittedly the persons who had approached him in this matter had left their protest until the eleventh hour, but it was for the purpose of seeing justice done, even at the eleventh hour, that he urged the holding over of the clause. After these people had interviewed the Colonial Secretary he took it the Attorney General would consider the evidence put before him, and, if necessary, reconsider his attitude. Another question arose as to the time allowed for the continuation of the license. The clause provided that all these licenses should terminate in March next, subject, of course, to the right of all the licensees to apply for a new license apart from the sale of fruit. These licenses had been granted for a full year, and he saw no reason why they should not be allowed to run out their full term. The only way to allow that was to vote against the clause and to amend Clause 16 so as to make it operative from the 31st December, 1914, instead of from the commencement of the Act.

The Attorney General: I will agree to that.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The license to sell Australian wine in shops used for the sale of other goods had been granted under the law of the land and should

not be taken away arbitrarily without notice.

The Premier: We will continue the existing licenses until they expire.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Although, perhaps, abuses did exist, they were probably exaggerated in the minds of some of the people who were in favour of shutting up all houses for the dispensing of liquor. If the Government were satisfied that abuses did exist they were right in shutting up these premises and restricting the sale of wine to premises specially set apart for the purpose. He was glad that the Minister had agreed to an amendment.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 16—Australian wine licenses:

On motion by Mr. DWYER clause amended by striking out the words "commencement of this Act" in line 1 and inserting "31st day of December, 1914" in lieu.

Mr. DWYER: Did the word "goods" in paragraph (a) include aerated waters, cordials, cigars, and cigarettes?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The paragraph was open to that reading, and it would be amended if necessary in another place.

Mr. MALE: Paragraph (b) referred to a place certified in writing by the Commissioner of Police to be a restaurant. The principal Act gave no definition of "restaurant." What instruction would the Minister give to the Commissioner of Police in regard to the definition of restaurant? Did it include a place where lollies and cakes were sold. It was his desire to have a definition of "restaurant."

The Premier: You have already been recommended to Webster.

Mr. MALE: One would rather take Webster's definition than one from the Premier.

The Premier: That is all you need to do. What do you want to worry about it for?

Mr. MALE: It was his duty to worry about it. One was justified in knowing what definition the Commissioner of Police was to be instructed to put upon

the word "restaurant" before we passed this clause.

Mr. DWYER: The clause seemed a bit indefinite. Many places might be considered a restaurant, but under the Bill it was only what the Commissioner of Police considered was a restaurant. If every place that received an eating house license was to receive a license for the sale of wine the abuse we were trying to abolish would exist in an accentuated form.

Mr. MALE: Under the Licensing Act eating houses, boarding houses, and places of that nature were not allowed to obtain a license. Was the Commissioner of Police to have sufficient power under this measure to grant them licenses? If, so we would be extending the provisions for the sale of wine instead of reducing them. As the Attorney General seemed to be ignoring the matter altogether he moved an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

The PREMIER: The hon. member appeared to be mixing up the different Acts. We were not amending the Licensing Act so far as it governed all licenses for eating houses, boarding and lodging houses. We were only providing that in future when an Australian wine license was being granted to a restaurant the Commissioner of Police should certify it to be a restaurant before the bench granted a license. The bench would then have the provisions of the Licensing Act to guide them, and that Act provided that an eating house or lodging house license did not authorise the licensee to sell or dispose of liquor to any private lodger or other person, but it authorised the licensee to cause the boarders or lodgers and any person taking a meal in such a house to be supplied therein direct from any house licensed for the sale of the kind of liquor required, in the quantity required, with any liquor to be consumed in the licensed eating house or boarding house.

Mr. MALE: The Moana cafe was a restaurant and also sold lollies and cakes.

The Premier: The proprietor cannot sell wine over the counter, but it can be procured for consumption at a meal.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

SELECT COMMITTEE, CAPTAIN HARE'S RETIREMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Legislative Council forwarding copies of the report and evidence in connection with the select committee on the retirement of Captain Hare and asking the concurrence of the Assembly in the resolution, "That the report of the select committee be adopted."

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL — INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th December.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I want to say at the outset that in introducing this measure the Attorney General felt himself to be in charge of a Bill which he thoroughly believed in. His powers of oratory, which we all admit, and his powers of persuasion were never shown to greater advantage than on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill. We are asked to adopt the initiative and referendum. We are asked that representative government shall go by the board, and in its place we are asked to substitute the vote of the people. When we talk of the vote of the people, one naturally would think we referred to the whole of the people; but we must remember that on the most important occasions it is difficult to persuade people to go to

the poll, so in this connection when talking of the vote of the people we refer merely to those people who will vote. Even in the Labour Conference the business is undertaken by delegates representative of the various unions; so they do not expect that every union will exercise the vote on all important questions that come before the conference. We know that even this important measure was dealt with at the last Labour Congress. We had it before that the initiative and referendum was to be accompanied by the recall. We now find that the recall has gone and the initiative and referendum are left. Why was the recall dropped? We object to the introduction of important legislation of this character at this late hour of the session. It is evidence, not only of want of consideration on the part of the Ministry, but evidence also of a want of sincerity on their part. In respect to legislation of this important character we desire that Ministers should give Parliament and the people an opportunity of considering the matter very fully. The Minister in introducing the Bill referred to the method of making laws in the ancient times, and graphically described how the head man of a small centre called out his people and, having gathered them around him, determined on the laws to govern them for the year; determined how the land was to be apportioned and how the work of the year was to proceed. The Minister described how they were called together to settle disputes between individuals. This ancient class of legislation was likened by the Attorney General, very inaptly I think, to the legislation now proposed. It is true that from the early beginnings, the calling together of the people to decide what was good for them, came the legislation which we now enjoy; but I would like to point out to the Attorney General that, following on this rough and ready legislation of the ancient times we had the awful events, recorded in history, which resulted in compulsory work in many industries, particularly in mining—I mention mining because we so often hear about it in this House. Following on the legislation by the people, in a cruder fashion probably

than is now suggested, but much on the same lines, we had what was practically slavery before we got to the present method of government. We must all admit that the method we now enjoy is far the best the world has ever seen, until to-day we are returned to this Chamber on the popular vote, the vote of the people. Every man and woman in the State has a right to send a representative to this Chamber. I would like to ask the Attorney General would he have a broader franchise, if he could by any possible means get a truer expression of the opinion of the people than is possible under our present system? We are asked to deliberately set to work to undo the good work of years. If we take the history of the State since the days when Responsible Government was first introduced, and if we remember how, stage by stage, we have broadened the franchise to its present condition, I think we should hesitate to make any drastic change. The people have on occasions claimed that the franchise should be broadened, and their requests have never been ignored. If in the past the people wanted a drastic change they had it brought about by agitation, by popular clamour, and through their representatives, who every three years have to go back to the people. How important is it that we should satisfy ourselves there has been some popular demand for this legislation which the Minister has introduced. It is quite true the Minister can point out that one small section of the people have determined time and again that the initiative and referendum shall become part of the law of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): All sections.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I think they may claim to be a small section of this great community, the members of the Labour Conference which shaped the platform which includes this measure, and which is responsible for the introduction of the measure to Parliament to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): A very small section exercised their vote last election.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The question was never prominently before the people at the last general election. If the principle had been before the people, and if the people had, to use the Premier's favourite expression, given the Minister a mandate to bring this into law—

Mr. Thomas: It is part of the platform.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not part of the fighting platform, and not only has it never been before the people in anything like an effective way, but the people were not given to understand that this would be part of the legislation which Ministers would bring down.

The Attorney General: Oh, yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If there is any question at all for the consideration of the people it is the question of our Constitution, and if Ministers intended to bring down this Bill they should have made it clear to the people that if they voted for Ministerial supporters they would vote for the initiative and referendum.

The Attorney General: That was done.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: So little was it done that no attempt was made on the part of those opposing Labour candidates to combat the suggestion that legislation of this kind should be brought down. Is there a member sitting on the Ministerial side who made his meetings clearly understand that if the present Government got into power they would bring down a Bill for the violation of the Constitution in this way?

The Attorney General: I do not believe there was any Labour candidate who did not refer to it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Bill is carried into law we shall place our Constitution absolutely in the melting pot. Responsible Government will go by the board. If the people had been asked to consider this question do you not think the whole of the circumstances surrounding the question would have been discussed by Ministers and the members of their party, and by members of the Opposition as well? It was no concern of the candidates to make this matter understood by the people. There was no ques-

tion about this. The great principle even was never discussed. The Attorney General never pointed out to the people that he wanted to introduce a law similar to that in force in Switzerland. He would have been able to tell them that the small area of Switzerland is very different from the enormous area of our State. Did he ever tell them that the vote which is exercised by the people living within an area of 15,000 square miles can be exercised by people living in an area of a million square miles? Did he tell them that the man at Kimberley would be asked to vote with the man in the metropolitan area, with the man at Eucla and with the man on the goldfields—all to vote together on any proposal submitted to the people? Did he tell them that it would be utterly impossible, even if the proposal found warm champions, that those champions could by any possible means reach the whole of the people of the State? Of course not. There has not been a single thought given to the special conditions that obtain in this measure. I do not admit that the proposed law fits in with the Constitution we enjoy. I am endeavouring to show that the very legislation we are now asked to pass is legislation which should have been before the people time and again before it took the shape of a Bill. It is important, and the Attorney General will admit it, to set out what the Constitution is which governs us, and how the people who exercise this right under the initiative and referendum are governed elsewhere. Even when the Minister touched upon America he did not tell us the powers of the States which exercise the initiative and referendum, nor of that one of the Canadian States which is the only State within the British Dominions which does take a vote in this way. What is the law in Canada? What powers have that state? Are they on all fours with the position here? Have they the same powers and members as we have? Do they return their members in exactly the same way? Is their franchise as broad as it is here? Again, we come to Switzerland. Are the people here as well able to exercise the vote as are the people in Switzerland? I am not questioning the intelli-

gence of the people, but merely the practicability of the proposition. Would it be reasonable? Surely hon. members will realise that when we go to a general election the fight there is over principle largely, and we find when we meet the people that often what appears on our programme is the first they have heard of a question. Many people, notwithstanding that they have the right to vote, are not as experienced in politics as the Attorney General would have us believe. They are so scattered, and their opportunities to learn of the proposals of the Government are very limited indeed. All this should have been done before the Bill was brought down. The people should have been educated to think in the way in which the Attorney General asks them to think. The Attorney General stated that we are not leaders of thought; that the people themselves are very much better able to decide what is good for them than we, their representatives, are. I doubt if this is so. I doubt if they know as much about the law as the Attorney General says they do. Not 10 per cent. of the people concern themselves very closely with legislation. It is true that when we bring down a measure like the Factories Act, the small section of the people who will be mightily concerned are interested in it, but immediately the legislation is passed or rejected they become apathetic again. It is the duty of any Government introducing legislation of this nature to be able to assure hon. members and the people that the time is ripe for it. Whilst I admit that we are discussing a great principle, and that that principle is far more important than the detail of this measure, still I must, in a brief fashion, say what it is proposed to do under this legislation, and how the machinery clauses are provided. We are asked to give the people the power to initiate legislation, but we are asked more than that; we are asked to give them the power to prevent legislation even after it has been passed by both Houses of Parliament. We want to know how the Attorney General proposes that the people shall exercise this right. It is provided that people shall band themselves together. They

are to be called the promoters. The promoters having formulated their proposals, decide that legislation shall be submitted. Having decided that, the Ministers are called upon to set the machinery in motion by issuing a warrant and a vote of the people is taken. For a vote of the people a petition is required, and when 15 per cent. of the people have signed a petition to be presented to the Governor, or 10 per cent. have signed a petition to be presented to either House of Parliament, the law must be proposed to Parliament, and if rejected or altered in any material fashion by Parliament, the question is to be referred to the people on a referendum. Just imagine the cumbersomeness of this machinery! After the promoters have induced the people to sign the petition some hon. member is, by resolution of the House, really ordered to submit the legislation. The legislation will not of necessity be introduced by Ministers; anyone can be ordered to submit it. It might happen that the 16 members of the Opposition could be controlled by the promoters, and could be compelled to submit the legislation.

Mr Thomas: You would have a majority behind you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would not be necessary to have more than the percentage mentioned. Notwithstanding that the representatives of the people sitting here and in another place, both decide against them, it is provided that if Parliament does not pass the legislation it may become law without the concurrence of Parliament. If the Bill is rejected the Government must submit it to the people, and on a majority of the people voting, not a majority of the people of the country, the Bill will become law without the sanction of Parliament at all. There are some provisions which safeguard in some small way proposals emanating in this House. If a Bill submitted here is rejected by another place it may be submitted in another place a second time in the same session or during the succeeding session, and if the House rejects the Bill for the second time this House can, without consulting anyone

else, by resolution, direct that the Bill be referred to the people. It is provided that we can originate legislation which has only to be rejected twice, and it may be twice in the same session, by another place, and we can by resolution, which of course would always be carried into law by the majority behind the Government, have it referred to the people. This seems to be an important provision which demands the closest attention. The Attorney General should have made a very clear explanation to the country of the method of getting legislation passed after it has been rejected by another place. If we are going to take away the powers of the Upper House why not do it by constitutional means, instead of by the indirect means suggested by the Attorney General?

The Attorney General: This is constitutional.

Mr. Thomas: Who has a better right to say than the people?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This will not be by means provided in the Constitution, and therefore by no stretch of imagination can it be said that it will be by constitutional means. Our Constitution does not provide for a referendum at all, and if the Attorney General wants to alter the Constitution as it affects either House it must be in the way provided by the decision of both Houses.

The Attorney General: This will be by the decision of both Houses.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General says if this Bill passes another place the machinery will be provided for amending the Constitution. That is right, but we are entitled to say that the Constitution should be left intact unless amended in the orthodox fashion.

The Attorney General: This is the orthodox fashion: a Bill carried by a majority in both Houses.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is nothing of the sort. It is something sprung on the people; something which was not discussed at the last general election.

The Attorney General: I have discussed it and so has every member on the Government side.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have already combated that statement. The people were not made sufficiently well aware of the intentions of the Government in this regard. So little was the question discussed that, so far as I am aware, it was never mentioned at all by any member now sitting on the Opposition side of the House. The Attorney General provides that a vote may be taken on the day of a general election, or on the day of an election for members of another place. This would be right and fair. If a vote is to be taken it should be taken when there is the best chance of getting a fairly large vote. It is also provided that a vote may be taken at any other time that may be deemed advisable. I would like to know if the Attorney General thinks this country can stand the enormous cost of referring questions to the people from time to time. Once in every three years he will have an opportunity at a general election, and every second year he will have an opportunity when members are under election for the Legislative Council. But at other times questions might be submitted, and if great use is to be made of this measure—as I have no doubt it is the intention of the present Government to do—we will be called upon to face an enormous cost, and to face a very unsatisfactory vote. If one were inclined to agree to the measure, one would resent any attempt to submit a question to the people except at the time of a general election. It is surely clearly shown to hon. members by the introductory remarks of the Attorney General that we are asked to strip Parliament of authority.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And not the Council alone but this Assembly also.

The Attorney General: It will not destroy any power we have.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It will take away the privileges that we now enjoy.

The Attorney General: That is not correct.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We are asked to change altogether the method of bringing legislation into existence. It is perfectly true that we reserve to ourselves

the right to deal with money Bills. Such Bills must come up for consideration here, and Bills referring to expenditure cannot be initiated by the people. Such Bills can only be brought into existence by Ministers. That prerogative of the Crown is being very carefully guarded. This is the sole redeeming feature of the Bill. The wonder is that the Attorney General took the precaution to retain that right. If he had given the people the right to initiate legislation authorising expenditure his Bill would have looked ridiculous, and would have received short shrift even from members of his own party. Under such legislation as is proposed the Premier, backed by the trades hall, could become a dictator. He could become absolutely all-powerful. With the 30,000 members who constitute the unions in this country, the Premier will be able to do just as he pleases if this Bill is passed into law. If we take 15 per cent. of the present electors, a little over 22,000 signatures will be required to the petition. I venture to say that if we take a vote on other than an election day we will require very few more than 22,000 to constitute a majority of the people who will interest themselves sufficiently to go to the poll. It seems to me that this Bill will place great power into the hands of people outside of this Chamber. One could imagine the power which street-corner advocates will exercise under this measure. We can understand the power which will be exercised by a big organisation such as the trades hall representing 30,000 people. Notwithstanding that Ministers are perfectly willing to transfer the power we enjoy to that body, they have not shown that any vital question which has interested the people at any time since Responsible Government has not been fully considered by this House. The Minister contented himself by saying that the measure is introduced because it works well elsewhere, not because our form of government has failed. He did not stress a failure even on the part of the present Government to carry legislation into force. He merely contented himself with saying that it had worked well in other parts of the world, and did not show in any way why we should be asked to sub-

stitute our method, which to my mind is very satisfactory, for a method practically untried in any British country. We are asked to substitute that opinion which is kept alive by agitators and often by newspaper writers for the calm judgment of this Chamber; judgment expressed after due consideration and always after for more consideration than Ministers opposite care to have given to their proposals. Can we substitute this proposal of the Minister for the existing methods? We discuss every matter, the newspapers publish our discussions, they publish the intentions of members and Ministers and the public know before our measures become law what we propose. After all, is not this Parliament thoroughly representative of the people? Would we have trial by jury without a judge, without a special pleader, without a responsible advocate and without evidence? That is what we are asked to agree to now. We are asked that questions shall be submitted to the people and if members want to make a question one to be considered at the hands of the people, they must stump the country so as either to oppose or support the proposal. Is it wise that in this country, scattered as it is, with its small population and with its enormous distances, that we should ask that legislation should be framed in this way? If great questions came up for consideration to-morrow and if it were proposed that someone should stump the country from Wyndham to Eucla in opposition to the proposals, would members make it their business to visit every centre and explain to the people what the measures were and what they were asked to cast their votes upon? I venture to say they would not. We know the result of the recent Federal referenda and the trouble and expense which it involved. We know also that unfortunately for us the agreement which this State entered into with the Commonwealth did not become part of the Constitution. We know that if we had succeeded in persuading the people we should have had at least 25 years instead of the ten years we are now enjoying of Federal payments. It is true that leading Labour representatives promised that we should enjoy the 25 years,

but we found that when the agreement passed into law that only ten years were allowed us. If this Parliament had dealt with the matter we should have had nothing less than 25 years. I suppose the Premier was quite honest in his belief that he was doing the best for Australia at the time and so he advised the people. The people on that occasion failed by their vote to pass legislation that could be called wise legislation; it was legislation which was against the best interests of Western Australia. It is now proposed that practically all the legislation is to be framed by the people. It is to be dealt with by the people under this measure which we have before us. It is provided that the Governor may not withhold his consent. Do Ministers think for one moment that we should agree to legislation of that sort? I venture to say that Ministers are not sincere or they would not have gone so far in connection with this Bill. The Bill is not one that we can amend in Committee very much, but I do not think it is worth while troubling to amend it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Pass it out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I should like to do so. The arguments of the Attorney General were without merit at all, in fact, he produced no arguments of any worth in favour of the suggestion; he merely contented himself by asking us to adopt legislation which he claimed worked satisfactorily elsewhere. I hope this House will not agree to the measure. I know it is a vain hope, but still I trust it will be remembered what our Constitution is and the freedom which the people enjoy under it and the absolute power they have to make and unmake legislation. Day after day we are considering here legislation which emanates from Ministers opposite, legislation which is considered to be for the benefit of the people of the State. There is no question about that. We represent the people just as effectively as would be the case if votes were taken on any one of these questions as provided in the Bill. The proposal for the recall has been withdrawn from this measure. I suppose that is because where we have Parliament lasting only three

years the recall is unnecessary. I would say that this Bill is just as unnecessary. If it is sufficient for members to satisfy their electors once in three years, that ought to be quite satisfactory. The people have the opportunity of making a choice every three years and returning men to this House pledged to great principles. The Attorney General merely contents himself by saying that in the future he is going to provide something that will be better than anything we have enjoyed in the past, but I hope the Attorney General will give us more details than he has done when he replies. My fervent wish is that this legislation will not become law, and I sincerely trust it will be rejected by the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I had hoped that the Premier or someone on the Government side of the House would have continued this debate and given us that further information which the member for Northam asked for in connection with this important proposal. I have, however, been able to read the newspaper report of the speech of the Attorney General. There must be a conspiracy of silence on the Government benches, but I am not altogether surprised at it because those are the tactics which have been adopted by the Government right through this session. Whenever important Bills come up for consideration, hon. members on the other side of the House are absent from their places just as on this occasion, or else if they are present they sit silently and allow legislation of this description to be carried, not knowing really the nature of it. Then the whip is applied and members come in and vote. I should like to have heard the Minister for Lands in support of this question.

The Minister for Lands: It is only fair that we should reply.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister surely does not want everyone to reply. The usual course is to put up man for man, and if the Government have a two to one majority they should put up two men for every one man who speaks from the Opposition and so get a full expression of views and come to

a correct decision. I say with the member for Northam that this is not the proper time to introduce a drastic amendment of our Constitution as it is proposed to do in this measure. Here at the fag end of the session we have a Bill of this magnitude brought down. Do the Government expect that the Bill will be passed into law. I am satisfied that in their innermost hearts the Government do not entertain the slightest idea that it will become law.

The Premier: We know something about your tactics.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately the Government have not followed our example. If the Premier who knows so much about fair play and fair tactics would only follow our example, there would be nothing to complain about. Here we have this measure brought down within a few days presumably of the termination of the session.

The Premier: There is plenty of time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no time whatever to consider a Bill of this description with the due consideration which it requires. It has only been introduced for electioneering purposes. It is one of the monkey tricks which my friend opposite is repeatedly playing off on the people. I want to say at once that I am absolutely opposed to legislation of this description. The Attorney General when introducing the measure the other day asked dramatically if the people have the right to vote directly for members of this Assembly, why should they not have the right to vote for the laws? If that is the case, of what good is the Assembly? We might just as well abolish both Houses of Parliament altogether and let the people frame such laws as they think fit under the provisions of this measure, and then let the Governor and the Executive declare what the people suggest to be law. It will be taking away the right of the Government if the Bill be passed. I wish to emphasise that our prosperity, our national existence, depends upon the freedom of our people, but I am sorry to say that during recent years we have

got into the habit of concluding that legislation is the grand panacea for all our ills, and we pass one law on top of another, hampering citizens, in the belief that then all will be happy with us. This seems to me to be erroneous. I never heard of such a suggestion as that we should transfer back to the people in the shape of this referendum the powers that have been conferred upon us.

The Premier: Never heard of it? Where have you been living?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And whereas the Attorney General and the Premier glibly announce that this exists in Switzerland, I ventured the opinion on one occasion that it is very seldom exercised even in that congested country. We have no instance brought forward, but as usual we look across the world and say because there is some system of referendum in existence in some other part of the civilized globe it is a warranty for us to introduce it here.

The Premier: It is part of the constitution of the Commonwealth.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: For certain purposes only. That is like the Premier's replies always. He always twists around a subject, and if somebody is doing something elsewhere in the slightest degree it is sufficient warranty for him to go the whole hog. We have never heard of the class of legislation which is proposed in this Bill being in existence anywhere, and I venture the opinion that it is not in existence under the same conditions.

Mr. Foley: What if it is not, what does that matter?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because before we break up our Constitution, before we do away with the system of representative Government as it exists to-day, and has existed for hundreds of years in the Mother country, we want some guarantee that we have got something better. The hon. member interjects with out any sense of what it means and says it is an easy matter to break up the Constitution and introduce something untried and take the risk. We have had sufficient evidence of the restric-

tive nature of legislation and interference with the liberty of the subject in this State, to pause and think well before consenting to something which must of necessity alter the whole system of Government as it exists to-day. We have had the parliamentary system in existence throughout Australia ever since the introduction of Responsible Government. To-day there are some 700 members of Parliament busily engaged in legislating and endeavouring—and I use the word advisedly—endeavouring to so control the affairs and business of this great continent as will conduce to the best results in the interests of the majority of the people, and it takes us all our time by paying special attention to the work which the people have thrown upon our shoulders to achieve even a small measure of beneficial result. Indeed, in many instances I am bound to acknowledge the result of the labours of the 700 legislators who are busily engaged in the public affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia is detrimental rather than beneficial to the interests of the majority of the people. I appears to me on glancing through the measure that Ministers want themselves as well as other members of Parliament to be mere puppets in the hands of political parties or organisations in this State. We know full well that the ordinary citizen would never dream of availing himself of the opportunities provided in the Bill for initiating legislation. It would fall to the lot naturally of those highly trained political bodies which lead or control public opinion throughout the State, and I am of opinion that the results of the Bill will be either that it will fail to achieve its object and become to a great extent a dead letter, or else it will be an instrument for agitators and extremists to work their sweet will in the way of legislation. It is a dangerous power that the Attorney General with his great eloquence wishes to place in the hands of the public. It would be mob rule and a mob vote as against representative Government, if this were passed. The hon. member knows full well the dangers that exist in the suggestion. Petitions have to be signed before legislation can

be introduced, petitions in one instance by 10 per cent. of the electors and in another instance by 15 per cent. We know full well that these petitions are open, and in the past we have been subject to threats of boycott, and the term "scab" has been freely applied to those of the opposite party who would not vote for the representatives selected for them. And the same thing is going to apply here. Certain legislation in the interests of a section of the community must of necessity be formulated and brought forward if this Bill is passed, and it is natural that the organisations representing different interests throughout the State, having this power conferred on them, will set to work to obtain their objects by the means provided in the Bill. The result will be, unless the measure becomes a dead letter, we will have petitions being fathered by promoters who are interested, and who are leaders of the different organisations in the State, and it will not be a question as to the individual who signs the petition knowing anything about the proposed legislation, but simply a question of signing or becoming a "scab" to the party of which he is a member—signing or subjecting himself to boycott, a boycott which has been threatened more than once in this State, and has been successfully in operation in some instances, I am sorry to say. Intimidation will become rife, and I am satisfied that the secrecy we now profess to honour so much in connection with the ballot will become a thing of the past, so far as proposed legislation is concerned. The petitions are to be open, and what is to prevent anyone exerting undue influence? And do we not know how easy it is to get signatures to a petition of any kind? It is only a question of money—and the organisations to which hon. members belong have plenty of money under their control—and they can get all the signatures they require, more especially when they have in addition the benefit of the threat which has been used on many occasions. Bills are never perfect when introduced into this Assembly. I have seldom, if ever, known a Bill of any magnitude which has been near perfection, even though it had been through the hands of the Parliament-

ary draftsman, and had received the attention of heads of departments and the Ministers themselves, and I am satisfied that the people as a whole would never give the requisite time, or the close study and attention which is necessary to grasp measures such as we have to handle in this Assembly in all their detail, in order that they might give a proper decision when sending a petition to be presented. We cannot expect it. Members of this Chamber and another place are paid to do this very work, and for the Government to shelter themselves behind the people, to have the people asked to do the work which hon. members are paid to carry out, is to my mind a retrograde step, and one which will not conduce to the best interests of our State as a whole. It means undoubtedly the destruction of representative Government, and it means the substitution of mob vote and mob rule. We cannot get away from that fact. It also does away to a large extent with the prerogative of the Crown, and it is rather amusing to notice that the Governor is to be the prime mover in many instances in this measure, although the abolition of his office is the one desire of members opposite. I do not think the present Government want to abolish the position of the Governor altogether. I believe in the representatives of the people exercising the full powers which have been conferred upon them by the electors. I think that members of both Chambers ought to be selected for their fitness to handle affairs of State and legislate fairly as between all people. I think members ought not to shirk their responsibilities, but ought to be content to carry out to the fullest possible extent and to the best of their ability the responsible duties which have been placed on their shoulders by the electors whom they represent, and to pass a measure of this kind, which practically returns to the people the work which members are paid to perform, is doing something which the people as a whole will not appreciate, although perhaps one section of the community will. A measure of this description should have been the result of no uncertain demand from the public; it should have been the result of a popular demand

asking for a change in our Constitution, rather than be a plank of the platform of any political organisation, and, I do not care whether Labour or Liberal, my view would hold just as strongly. It is for the people themselves, if they want to alter the Constitution in such a drastic way, to make that demand through public meeting and requisition, and not for the leaders of one party to introduce it, as it has been done on this occasion, to hoodwink the electors.

The Premier: It is to be submitted to the electors before it is made law.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I see that; but it is in advance of popular demand, and we know the fell purpose of the Premier and the Trades Hall, and the influence they will exercise if this Bill becomes law.

Mr. Lander: They are a powerful body.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They are a powerful body. I do not know a more powerful body in the State than the Trades Hall. They have their members so disciplined that they would vote for a Chinaman if he were put up with the Labour ticket on him. I have heard that statement made on many occasions, and that being so that is an argument against the submission of this measure to them.

The Premier: There are no Chinamen on this side, and the members compare favourably with your side.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not say there were any Chinamen. I said Labour members and members of the Trades Hall had been heard to state that they would vote for a Chinaman if he had the Labour ticket on him, and the Premier knows that is true.

The Premier: There are no Chinamen here, and the members compare favourably with your side.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know about that. I was not comparing them. If the Premier wants comparisons, I daresay I could favour him in that direction, but comparisons are odious, and I do not want to be personal in my application of them. I am pointing this out, that if the Premier gets this Bill through

Parliament he says it will go to the people. So it will, with the power of intimidation and threat of the Labour party behind it. They are bound to vote for it, and if they do not vote for it there will be a demand to know the reason why, and there will be a number of "scabs" in the community, who will probably be turned out of their jobs or boycotted.

The Premier: You cannot give a single instance of such happenings.

Mr. Thomas: He is floundering badly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I venture to state that the old method of representation on the very short Parliaments which we have now, a three years' term, is equally as effective and is more in keeping with representative Government as we should have it. You can pledge your candidates, place their policy before the country, and get a direction upon it at any general election that you wish.

The Premier: That does not end it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It ends it to this extent, that if the party who make these pledges come back into power and if they fail to carry out their pledges, then the electors will deal with them when they go before them for re-election.

The Premier: Supposing they are unable to carry out their pledges.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is for the electors to consider. If the electors are satisfied with the Premier's explanation that he has not been able to carry out his pledges, I suppose he will get their votes once more, but if they are not satisfied, and I venture to think a great majority of the people are not satisfied, they will pass him into oblivion once more, or at any rate on to the Opposition benches.

The Premier: Take care of yourself.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is a sinister threat. I wonder what is at the back of the Premier's brain.

The Premier: I have been around your district recently.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I heard rumours down there of underground engineering and underground work to prepare for the next general elections.

The Premier: We can beat you above board every time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So far as underground engineering is concerned, the Premier—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know it has nothing to do with the subject, Mr. Speaker, but in reply to the Premier, I wish to say that so far as my electors are concerned, I am prepared to go before them with him at any time. This Bill has no merit, in my opinion, at all. I have not had time to read it through, but I have glanced through it, and have read the Attorney General's speech. I see it gives very wide powers indeed to initiate legislation, to have legislation repealed, and also to have it amended, and I again state that if we are to accept the provisions of this measure, which practically transfers all our responsibilities back on to the shoulders of the people, we are certainly not true to our principles, and we are shirking our responsibilities. This is a Bill of shirkers who want to get rid of their responsibilities, who are afraid of the position they have created for themselves, and know if they go back to the country very shortly they will be called to account and made to answer for their misdeeds. That being so, I do not intend to take up any further time of the House in connection with this measure. I agree with the hon. member for Northam that it is a measure which we cannot amend in Committee. I intend to challenge it on the second reading, and will vote against it. I will vote against it on every opportunity I have here, and if it be bludgeoned through with the small numbers I see opposite to me, with the assistance of those who do not care twopence about it and who are outside in the corridors, then I hope greater wisdom will prevail and that another place will give it short shrift there.

The Premier: There is something that stands between the people and their wishes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The people never asked you for a thing like this. It is not worth the paper it is written upon.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): It is very evident from the criticism of the measure by the leader of the Opposition that he has not read it. From his own admission he knows nothing about the initiative and referendum as in operation in other parts of the civilised world. The hon. member stated he never heard of it before as being in operation in any part of the civilised world.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has already forgotten what he did say on the matter. The hon. member has evidently not used the time he has had at his disposal since he has been a representative of the people in following democratic government as existing in other parts of the world. After all, the hon. member seems to forget just what the initiative and referendum mean.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I heard something about the recall once. Where is it?

The PREMIER: The hon. member would have something to complain about from a personal political point of view if we had included the recall. It would have meant that a great number of his members would have long since been recalled by the electors, and rightly so. Under the conditions we propose in the measure of introducing the initiative and referendum we are not affecting the hon. member personally except as the leader of a great party. The underlying principle of the initiative and referendum is to give back to the people that which they were robbed of by monarchs in the past.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, Lord!

The PREMIER: The hon. member says "Oh, Lord," but evidently he has not read much about the history even of the British Empire or he would have known that among the primitive Saxons all their legislation and government, such as it was, was provided by direct legislation—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Under a tree.

The PREMIER: Where all the adults of the tribe gathered together and decided all matters affecting their civil and military welfare.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They had no Parliament.

The PREMIER: Certainly they had no Parliament, and if the hon. member will take the trouble to read the English history he will see that a great deal of English blood was spilled to obtain Parliament. I want to show the hon. member his argument, or attempted argument, that we were attempting to shirk our responsibilities to the people by introducing a measure of this kind, is positively absurd. In the early government of the Saxons they provided that all the adults of the tribe should meet regularly and all matters affecting their civil and military welfare were decided without even an executive body to alter or modify them in any respect. Eventually what happened? In those countries where despots ruled, some of them were what we might even term lenient and ruling in the interests of the people, but others with the one end in view to become great without any regard for their subjects, and eventually it was found that they were so tyrannical in their actions and robbed their people of the right of legislation in their own interests, that the people had to behead some of their kings, and I believe it is to the interests of the people of to-day that our forefathers had the courage sometimes to take their kings and behead them.

Mr. George: That is going a long way back.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the memory is written in good sound working men's blood, and it is not likely to be forgotten by those who are enjoying the privilege of representative government. The hon. member knows the Magna Charta very well, and some of the revolutions which took place in old England itself, to take back from the monarchs what they had robbed from the people, and eventually they established Parliament, and if the hon. member will take the trouble for a few minutes to read the constitutional history of England he will discover that not so very long after Parliament was first established again the King came in and robbed the people of their rights and governed them just as he chose. Of course

some of our friends opposite may desire that such a condition of things might exist even in sunny Australia, but we are not prepared to accept any such retrogressive step. Fortunately we have arrived at that stage where Parliament is supposed to represent and give effect to the will of the people. The leader of the Opposition made a great deal of the point that by the initiative and referendum we were shirking our responsibilities to the electors and handing back to them what they had given to us at the general election to accomplish for them, but under such conditions as prevail in Western Australia the majority of the people have as little hope of obtaining what they desire as they have of making a trip to the moon. In 1911, by an overwhelming majority, a majority which I suppose had never previously been excelled in any part of Australia, the present Government with their supporters were returned to Parliament with a definite programme, to which every member on this side of the House was duly pledged to his electors, and which his electors expected to be put into operation by amending our laws and introducing fresh legislation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What was it?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not so forgetful as not to remember what took place at the election, and the platforms on which the two parties respectively succeeded and were defeated.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Was this Bill part of your programme?

The PREMIER: Yes, it was.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where is the recall?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will surely not say that because the recall does not find a place in this Bill that we are not adherents of that principle. We want first of all to give the people the right of initiating legislation when Parliament refuses to give effect to their will, and Parliament has undoubtedly during the last two or three years refused to give effect to the will of a majority of the people of this State. Time after time we have introduced measures in this Chamber in accordance with the principles approved

by the great bulk of the people in this State, and just as often have been flouted by another Chamber. I know that members opposite depend at this time on another place and sit contentedly in the belief that none of these proposals will find a place on the statute-book. I can assure the leader of the Opposition that, notwithstanding that it might be put off once or twice, the people are not always going to submit to their will being thwarted in the way it has been during the last two or three years. And whether or not the initiative and referendum becomes a part of the law, the people will take it into their hands eventually and compel Parliament to give them that which to-day they only have by way of a Constitution, but never by way of actual legislation, that is, the giving effect to their will. The hon. member would attempt to make members believe that the initiative and referendum were something new, something unheard of in any part of the civilized world, much less in Australia itself. But we have had it in operation already in Australia. How did the Federal Parliament come into being, except by means of the initiative and referendum? Did not the people demand that a convention should be called of two representatives of each State, at which the Constitution was drawn up and submitted by way of a referendum to the people? When that referendum was accepted by the people it brought into being the Federal Parliament and Constitution, and part of the provisions of that Constitution is that, notwithstanding what Government may be in power for the time being, it shall not be amended except by amendments submitted to the people by way of referendum. Even in Western Australia, under the system of local government we provide that certain questions, although carried by an absolute majority of a municipal council, shall not be operative until submitted by means of referendum to the ratepayers. But, of course, it is a totally different matter when it is likely to interfere with the interests of a privileged few in the community.

Mr. George: Leave that out.

The PREMIER: I shall not leave it out. It is the crux of the question. The member for Murray-Wellington may pose as a democrat as frequently as he likes, but at the same time, underlying the question of initiative and referendum is the fear that the people may eventually abolish the second Chamber, which to-day is the only protection the Liberals have in the State.

Mr. Elliott: The Federal referendum turned down your party's proposals.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Elliott: And will do it again.

The PREMIER: And they turned down the proposal of the hon. member's party on one occasion as well.

Hon. Frank Wilson: On misrepresentations.

The PREMIER: That is a way the hon. member has when his party is defeated—it can only have been on misrepresentation. Anyone who does not vote Liberal has not the slightest knowledge of their political welfare. He assumes that they would vote for a Chinaman who would vote for a Labour representative, and that all such are ignorant of what makes for the best interests of the State. I have heard the same old story by others who have said that they would vote for a Chinaman so long as he was of the Labour brand. The hon. member knows very well that never yet has a Chinaman been elected as a representative of this party in any part of Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Because our Constitution does not permit it.

The PREMIER: However, it is only a figure of speech and, judging by the experience of the workers in any part of Australia, I think their judgment is sound if they say they prefer to vote for a Chinaman rather than for an ultra-Liberal, who is really a Tory reactionist. They have had experience of those who term themselves Liberal. Our friend opposite, the leader of the Liberal party, who represents all the Conservative interests in the State, holds that everybody who desires progress votes for the hon. member and his party, that all those in the State who are Conservative, vote

for the great Liberal party. But what is his attitude when seeking to obtain possession of the Treasury benches? He then, in his usual manner, attempts to persuade the people that he is out in the interests of the working class, or the mass of the community.

Mr. George: This is not the initiative.

The PREMIER: No, but the initiative has some bearing on the point, because it will not permit the hon. member, although he may assume the cloak of a Liberal, to secure the confidence of the people, reach the Treasury bench, and from there flout the wishes of the people. The initiative and referendum will remedy that state of affairs by providing that the electors having spoken and expressed their desire that certain measures should be placed on the statute-book, or that those already there should be amended, shall have their say. Surely the electors were in earnest when they arrived at such a decision in 1911. Had they the right of the initiative and referendum some of these Bills which have been rejected by another place and so strenuously opposed by our opponents in this Chamber, always with an eye to the final result on the measure when it reaches another place, would be on the statute-book; because they would demand that, having been rejected by another Chamber representative of a privileged few, the measure should be submitted to them by way of referendum. And when it was submitted the majority would again speak as they did at the last election, and this policy would be in operation.

Mr. Elliott: That is what you are out for.

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not remain in possession of the Treasury bench just because it is a nice soft seat. I am here pledged to a definite platform, and the hon. member can take my assurance that I am not prepared, nor are my colleagues, to continually sit in possession of the Treasury bench unable to accomplish anything effective from the point of view of the people who sent us here. The people will be given an opportunity at no distant date of again expressing an opinion on this question, and I anticipate that when they do they will be even more emphatic

than they were on the last occasion. The desire of the party sitting on the Treasury bench at present is to effect legislation that will have administrative force. We have been able to effect administrative reforms of great moment, but of course we are not able to accomplish much from a legislative point of view, because our friends have discussed these matters in the corridor with their friends from another place, who have continued to reject these measures. When the people spoke in no uncertain voice, endorsing our policy, our friends said they were going to put the policy into operation. But they have not kept faith with their statements, for they have declined on every occasion to permit any of our proposals becoming law, because they fully recognise, as the majority of the people recognise, that our proposals are in the interests of the many, as against the interests of the privileged few. I do not think the leader of the Opposition was happy in his reference to "scabs." I am not aware of anyone who has been termed a "scab" because he claimed the right to vote against a selected Labour candidate. I am not aware that the people of any electorate have been boycotted because they voted against a Labour candidate; but I know, of my own knowledge, that not only in Western Australia, but in other parts of Australia men have been deprived of their livelihood, have been victimised, because they dared to vote for Labour candidates. It is not so very long ago that the managers of the mines on the Bendigo field issued a definite instruction to the men that if any of them dared to vote for certain candidates they need not return to their work next morning. I am doubtful if the hon. member himself did not introduce a similar system when in charge of some of our timber mills. We only require to go back to the last election, when three members who were subsequently elected to this House—

Mr. Elliott: What about the *Geraldton Express*? They sacked their editor and the sub-editor both.

The PREMIER: We are not dealing with railways. The *Geraldton express* is not due till Thursday night.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where is your Whip?

The PREMIER: I am not dealing with Whips. It is not very pleasing, of course, to the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, it is tyranny.

The PREMIER: It is tyranny, indeed. We had three representatives, two of whom are sitting in this Chamber, who had decided, while in Government employ, to seek the suffrages of the people. They evidently did not consider it wise to go to the then Premier, who is now the leader of the Opposition, and on bended knees ask his permission to contest the election. The facts are well known. He, with the rest of his Cabinet, declined to permit them to nominate unless they resigned from the Government service. There is evidence of the tyranny of which the hon. member attempts to convict those who support this side. I venture to say that never in history have a Labour Government in any part of Australia ever attempted to thwart the will of the people by refusing to allow a man in their service to contest an election without his resigning. It is only the so-called Liberals, such as our friend, who is an arch-Tory and Conservative in his heart, who will practise such tyranny. It has been quite a frequent happening, even in Western Australia during recent years, for employers to threaten their men with a view to inducing them to vote in a certain way at election time.

Mr. George: I would like to see you prove that.

The PREMIER: The proof can be obtained easily enough.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They used the public funds to bribe the member for Swan. They gave him £75.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the remark that the Premier used public funds to bribe the member for Swan.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, I withdraw the word "bribe."

The PREMIER: I think I have disposed of the statement of the leader of the Opposition that in the deciding of political questions at general elections, the tyranny is all on one side.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you give the member for Swan a retiring allowance when you will not give it to others?

The PREMIER: I do not know what bearing it has on the initiative and referendum. The hon. member may be able to make some connection between a retiring allowance and the initiative and referendum, but I cannot.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You were talking about the other two members. You rewarded them with public funds.

The Attorney General: That is untrue, and you know it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You paid the man £75.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Attorney General must withdraw that remark.

The Attorney General: I corrected it immediately I had said it.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Premier will discuss the Bill there will be fewer interjections.

The PREMIER: The question I was trying to deal with was that of the assertion made by the leader of the Opposition that the object of the Bill was to introduce mob rule and mob voting. It is a statement the leader of the Opposition should be proud of. It shows his political character. Mob rule and mob voting. That is his opinion of the people, which I have appreciated for some time past. But when we assert it against the hon. member he denies it. He has never had a kind word to say for the people when they differed from him in political opinions, and in view of the fact that the people would have an opportunity to differ from him on political questions he refers to the proposal as mob rule and mob vote. The hon. member asserts that this is to destroy representative government. It will remedy misrepresentative government. Experience in other parts of the world shows that it rather strengthens representative government. It makes representative government, the Government of the day, and Parliament too, being always aware of this outstanding feature that if they attempt to flout the will of the people, the people have the means to over-ride their decision. It is from that point of view that the hon.

member can see the strongest objection to this measure. As I stated before it remedies misrepresentative government and makes it that which we desire. I think there is little else to which I need refer in regard to the statements of the leader of the Opposition as he did not discuss the measure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have not discussed it very much.

The PREMIER: The hon. member will find if he reads the measure that it will not be enacted until the people by means of a vote of the majority favour its enactment. In that respect it is introducing the principle that underlies the measure itself; before it can become law a majority of the people in this State shall assent to it. It also provides what is an answer to the argument of the leader of the Opposition, that even Bills presented to Parliament are not always perfect, and are very seldom passed without being amended, unless it happens to be a Redistribution of Seats Bill introduced by the Liberal party. The answer is that we make a provision that if the people should by the initiative introduce a Bill and ask that it be submitted to a referendum—

Hon. Frank Wilson: There were 50 amendments to our Redistribution of Seats Bill.

The PREMIER: That was a part of the gerrymandering. In the event of the people submitting a Bill to Parliament and Parliament not agreeing with its contents, Parliament may in turn submit both the measure which it is correcting and the one which the people have considered to a referendum, and the people shall decide which of the two, or they may decide that neither, shall become law. It is only giving to the people what all democrats assert should belong to the people, and that is the right to compel legislation which a majority consider is in their interest or to prevent legislation which the majority consider is detrimental to their interests. Unless we believe in that principle we are not democrats. While we have made considerable progress in Australia there is to-day one bar which is preventing representative government and which is preventing the will of the people as expressed

at a general election from being given effect to, but the barrier will eventually be removed. By means of the initiative and referendum we will get a truer expression of the people's opinion than we can obtain at a general election. After all a certain number of electors vote on personal grounds. This cannot be avoided. Again electors vote for a candidate on the general principles contained in his policy. Although an elector may favour the policy enunciated by one of the candidates with one exception and may vote for him, yet on that one point the elector may be directly opposed to the views of the candidate, but he cannot express that in his vote; he can merely declare that he is in favour of the policy which the candidate has enunciated in its entirety. He cannot make any exception to the effect that he voted for Brown subject to Brown not putting into operation a certain part of his policy, but under the initiative and referendum, while he may, out of personal consideration vote for a particular candidate, the elector will always have in his hands the right to reject any part of the candidate's policy with which he disagrees. The initiative and referendum represents democracy in a complete form, and without it we have no democracy because on a general election we cannot obtain a true expression of opinion on all matters affecting the people. What are we attempting to do under this measure? Merely to continue the existing conditions, so far as our Constitution is concerned except to provide that if Parliament fails to enact what the people desire and have instructed their representatives to enact, they may initiate the measure and call on Parliament to pass it. On the other hand having been returned on a certain policy and Parliament having changed its opinion against the wish of the people and attempted to enact something against the wish of the majority, the people may ask for it to be submitted to them on a referendum. We are providing the true means for obtaining representative government in the interests of the people and everyone knows that in the past, and I could give instances, there have been hon. members who shortly after they have been

elected have decided that they will not again seek the suffrages of the people in the same constituency and while sitting in Parliament and presumably representing a certain part of the State, have deliberately flouted the wishes of the people. They cannot be displaced and while it is assumed that they are representing a certain part of the State they are really playing to some other electorate.

Mr. George: Did not your late Whip do that?

The PREMIER: No, but I can tell the hon. member some of his friends who are doing it.

Mr. George: Who are they?

The PREMIER: I could mention the gentlemen representing the North-East province who has announced his intention to stand for another province.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not refer to an hon. member of another place.

The PREMIER: The hon. member asked for an example and I gave it. I am sure this Chamber will show its desire to give effect to the wishes of the people as expressed in October, 1911. In Massachusetts, this system was adopted in 1878, and it has never been repealed, and wherever it has been put into operation it has been continued. It has been extending from State to State throughout America since that time. We in Australia to-day have it in part in regard to the Federal Constitution, so far as Federal constitutional matters are concerned. Why should not it be introduced in regard to all matters which affect the people and more than anything else on those matters which in the past led the people to spill their blood in order to obtain representation, namely, the question of taxation? Why not give them the right to express their opinion by the only means which is effective, namely, the initiative and referendum? This Bill is the most democratic measure which has yet been submitted to the Parliament and I trust it will be enacted in accordance with the wishes of the people as expressed in October, 1911.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I should have been better pleased with

the Premier's speech if he had given a little more explanation of what the Bill really is rather than that he should have indulged in so much back talk, so far as the Liberal party and more particularly the leader of the Opposition, are concerned. He said this Bill proposed to give back to the people that which they were robbed of by the monarchs of the past. He went so far back into ancient history as to try to give us some sort of idea of what obtained in England 1,500 or 1,600 years ago, forgetting, if it had come under his notice, that the true start of English liberty came in the thirteenth century in the time of King John when the Magna Charta was signed. He also forgot that there has been no great reform, so far as the present liberties of the people of Great Britain are concerned, but what has been started, fostered, and carried out by what he is pleased to term the privileged class. The barons at Runnymede when they forced King John to sign the Magna Charta surely could not be considered to belong to the class to which the hon. member referred with so much unction. They were fighting principles for the members of their particular class, and the hon. member may think that they had little concern for those who served under them, but barring the residuum in all classes and all countries history tells us that the people were not so badly looked after by their territorial lords. Coming further down the scale of English history to 1832 to the passing of the great Reform Bill, no reform would have been possible but for those to whom the hon. member referred as the privileged class.

The Attorney General: What about Cromwell?

Mr. GEORGE: Cromwell was a country gentleman with a strong will and a man of whom Englishmen are proud, whose mind rebelled against the excesses of what the hon. gentleman might term the monarch and sycophants of his court. There has been no reform—

The Attorney General interjected.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. gentleman is speaking of others of that time. I will not pit my knowledge of English history

against the Attorney General's, but I have sufficient knowledge of the history of England and of the people to say there has been no great reform from the time of the Magna Charta to the 1832 Reform Bill, which has not been led and carried out by the high-minded men of the privileged class.

The Attorney General: What about Wat Tyler?

Mr. GEORGE: The argument of the Premier if it is carried to its full conclusion is that there can be no sense of justice and no sense of right except in the class to whom he refers as democrats. I get rather tired of this sort of talk. We are not living in times which are prehistoric, but we are living in the present day when throughout Australia we have men, never mind what their position in society may be, who are permeated with one big feeling of patriotism for their country and a desire that their country shall prosper and that its people shall prosper too. There may be differences of opinion on some things, but in the main all classes of people are permeated with a love for their flag and for their nation, and to try to bring justification for this Bill by going back to the time of the Druids and leading us up to the present day is begging the question. It has no particular application to the subject at all.

The Attorney General: You have gone back to King John.

Mr. GEORGE: I had to do so because the Premier did not know where to take his starting point from, and I wished to show that the starting point was at Runnymede when the barons forced King John to sign the Magna Charta.

Mr. Underwood: When are you coming to the Bill?

Mr. GEORGE: Now; the hon. gentleman is too impetuous. The Premier tried to draw some sort of analogy between the referendum in regard to Federation and the present Bill. At that time there had been Federation in the air for many years and it was desirable that the whole of the people who were going to embark upon a tremendous change in the Constitution should have a proper opportu-

nity of expressing their opinion. Whether they expressed it rightly or wrongly is more than we can say now, because Federation is with us and we have to carry it through. The Premier also spoke frequently about the privileged classes. Who are they in Western Australia? I do not know, except they are the people who probably have made money in Western Australia. If they are, surely they do not get any further privileges than others. I know this, though, that they have the privilege, as described by the Attorney General some time back, of being bled.

The Attorney General: That is ungenerous.

Mr. GEORGE: No, I would not be ungenerous. The Premier was frank when he stated that one object he and his party have in view is the abolition of the Legislative Council, and that the Liberal party were against it. That is perfectly true, and it is a point we can thoroughly understand. We believe that the Legislative Council acts as a safeguard, and as a House of review against hasty measures which this House may pass, either in mistaken enthusiasm or a mistaken duty which hon. members opposite consider they owe to their masters the Trades Hall. Let me draw attention to the curious situation which exists in the Federal Parliament to-day. We have in the Lower House a small majority of Liberals but we find that the Senate is composed practically of Labour partisans who have taken up the position so strongly of not merely casting out measures but they have gone so far as to absolutely attempt to interfere with the privileges and the rights of the House of Representatives by refusing to do work for which they are paid until a certain vote of censure has been disposed of by the Lower House. I am simply instancing this to show that the arguments of the Premier cut both ways. The Legislative Council of Western Australia are carrying out what they consider to be their duty. I am not so ungenerous as to say that the members of the Senate are carrying out what they do not believe to be their duty. It is however, one of the

peculiar ironies of politics, which one very seldom finds. The Premier when referring to the Liberals might just as well have said that they had been guilty of the damnable crime of punishing men for having political views. That is to say that if the Liberals were in power and they had the opportunity, they would do all they could to smash up those who voted Labour. To my mind that is a very ungenerous statement to make and it cannot be supported.

Mr. Carpenter : I can support it with actual facts.

Mr. GEORGE : I shall be glad if, when I have finished speaking, the hon. gentleman will let us have those facts. I can hardly credit that anything of the sort has taken place. Whether it be Liberal or Labour, any Government that dares to interfere with a man because he has voted on one side or the other is false to true liberty and should be shunned by all honest men. The Premier also referred to a remark by the leader of the Opposition with regard to mob rule, but I will refer to that a little later on. The object of this Bill is to pile election after election upon the people of the State. We are not to be satisfied with having the opportunity of voting every third year for members of this Assembly, and in connection with the Federal elections, but we must have more. The proposals in this Bill in regard to referendum elections will interfere considerably with the time and means of the livelihood of the people. It is proposed that if 15 per cent. of the electors sign a petition to the Governor, or 10 per cent. of the members of either Houses of Parliament do so, certain matters will have to be submitted to the people and then there is to be an election. The principle of representative Government so far as I understand it, and I think I understand it correctly, is that the policy of either party is placed before the electors. The principles of the parties are placed before the electors for their decision. The Premier said that it was personality that frequently told at an election. I hope that personality will always tell. If it is personality that tells

it can only tell when the electors have some respect for the candidate. It can only be when they know his character as a public man, and perchance his character as a private man, and it is then only that they can pin their faith in him, and when they return him to Parliament they are doing what they consider to be in the best interests of the State, and endorsing with confidence the policy of the party to which he belongs. As has been pointed out, if the leader of the Opposition has been untrue to his pledges there will be an opportunity for the people to deal with him at the next elections. What are we supposed to have in the place of what we have been accustomed to? We are supposed to have members selected by some particular outside body not directly responsible to the people, swayed by all manner of things of which the people themselves know nothing. We are to have people sent here as automatons to register and carry out measures and endorse views already made for them, and we are asked to say that if a certain percentage of the people outside disagree with a Bill which may be before the House, the whole of the country can be turned into the turmoil of an election, in order to learn whether this particular law can be carried into force. The signatures of 15 per cent. will ensure a petition to the Governor and the whole of the electoral machinery must be put into force to get the electors to vote upon a Bill, in regard to which there are no proper means of placing before them a full understanding of that measure, and they are to be asked to vote upon it practically on party or prejudiced lines. The Premier will say that we shall have 10 or 15 per cent. of the signatures on the petition, which makes this request. It will then be within the power of any of the large centres of this State to get up a petition on any subject, practically without reference to the rest of the electors, and compel action to be taken on the lines proposed in this Bill. It will be possible to do in connection with these particular matters what we have seen done in Perth dozens of times during the past 20 years. We shall see tables at street

corners and passers by will be asked to sign some petition or other, or perhaps to fill in claims for enrolment. This is the way in which signatures are obtained and invariably they are affixed to petitions in this fashion without either thought or care.

Mr. Underwood : The Bill provides against that.

Mr. GEORGE : I have been through the Bill but I have not seen any provision in it against that kind of thing. That will be one of the possibilities of mob rule and that is the view I take upon the matter. I have seen this kind of thing at street corners frequently and perhaps hon. members opposite have participated in it. I have seen people badgered to come along and sign these petitions, people who neither knew nor cared what they were signing. The Premier spoke as if there had been a great call in the State for this Bill. I do not know what has been the position in the other electorates, but so far as my electorate is concerned and so far as the Bunbury electorate is concerned, and in that electorate I played a little part at the last election, and I hope to do more in the next, nothing of this sort was brought forward by the people. There was some reference made by Labour candidates to the initiative and referendum, but so far as I was able to gather there was no strong plea put before the people. It was a fetish only which was alluded to in the hope that the ignorant would fall down and worship it. We have been told that if there are two Bills dealing with one matter, they can be submitted to the people, who will have the opportunity of deciding which of the two they will accept, or if they will have neither one nor the other. If that is the conception of the Government of what the position of a member of Parliament should be, they are welcome to it, so far as I am concerned, and I am sure also so far as any self-respecting member of this House is concerned. If we are to come to this Chamber and be automatons putting forward views which have been manufactured for us, so far as I am concerned I shall not submit to it. If we are sent here by a

majority vote it is for us to justify the confidence which has been reposed in us and show to the people who return us that we understand our duty and that we are not afraid to carry it out. But to do as is proposed by the Bill, and let the people decide for us, and to tell the people that we are too cowardly to take up the responsibility of the positions to which we aspired, is not a proposal that should be endorsed by any one. We shall have measures placed before us and instead of entering into a discussion on these measures and bringing to bear the whole of the experience we may have, and threshing them out with the single object in view of the best interests of the people, we are to go back to those who have sent us here and say that we are incompetent for our work, that we are too cowardly to carry it out, that we are afraid to face the music, and that therefore we go to them, our masters, and ask them to arrive at a decision, so that at the next election it will be possible for us to say that we left the matter to them and they rejected it, and therefore they cannot blame us. Such a conception of a member of Parliament is an insult to all the glorious examples of public men the Parliaments of the British nation have produced. Whenever we have had great men in the British and the Australian Parliaments they have always been prepared to face their responsibilities, and to mark out a course. This they will always do, and if the people do not agree with what they have done they are prepared to take the consequences. Then again the hon. member tells us that such a referendum as this would give a better idea of the people's wants than a general election. I beg to differ from him very strongly, because I know, and the hon. member knows, perfectly well that not ten per cent. of the people who would be likely to sign the petition, and probably not ten per cent. of the people who would vote for it, would take the trouble to read the Bill, to weigh its provisions, and see what its ultimate aim was. What would happen would be simply this: The politicians from the different parties and their outside friends would be touring the country far and wide and giving their

opinions and pleading for either one side or the other according as their constitutional infirmities would allow, and there would be an attempt to get exactly the same thing as occurs now in connection with the election of members—there would be the attempt to carry out the idea of the party in connection with the Bill, and above all, they would have the knowledge that they would be throwing upon the people the responsibility they themselves were too cowardly to take. If this Bill is to pass and become law I would prefer to see something stronger than this carried out. There is no necessity for Parliament at all, if the people want this Bill. It would be far better if the people of the State were to elect half a dozen men, who, they felt, could carry on the business of the State as managers until their conduct proved that they were unable to do it.

Mr. Monger called attention to the state of the House; bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. GEORGE: I was saying that if this Bill was carried it would be far better to abolish Parliament altogether, and let the people elect men in whom they could have confidence to carry on the administration—either six, ten, or a dozen men—and let them carry on in a managerial capacity until they had proved themselves unfit to occupy the position. I have sometimes wondered how long the people of a State like this, with a sparse population of 300,000, including only about 90,000 men who are the real wage-earners, can stand the enormous expenditure which a Parliament like this entails. But I consoled myself with the idea that in a pioneer State like Western Australia it is necessary that there should be men gathered together as men are in this Assembly, representative of the different portions of the State, well acquainted with the needs of each particular division, and enabled, by that intimate knowledge, to put forward the requirements necessary for the progress of their respective districts and the State generally. But this Bill carries in itself so much that is revolutionary, and so much that is in

antagonism to all the traditions of the British race, that I am astonished that it has been possible to get a Minister of the Crown to bring forward such a proposal. On referring to some of the clauses I find that no matter what Act has been passed in days gone by, it is only necessary for someone to start an agitation outside and work up a referendum, and any Act, even the very Constitution itself, can be cast into the melting pot and reformed exactly as the outside public, or those who guide them, think fit. The Constitution of this State, like the Constitution of the Federal Parliament, was not moulded by one man, but represents the ideas of a number of the big men that Australia produced, and we are asked in a measure of this sort to allow this Constitution, which regulates our daily living and our relations of trade and commerce, to be cast into the melting pot and made scrap metal if the leaders of a certain party desire to do so. The Bill not only says that that can be done, but it says that anything which may be desired by any section of the people, fanatical as they may be, if they can manage to get the requisite number of electors to sign the petition, can become law, and Parliament thus would be entirely ignored. In Committee I suppose we shall fight some of these clauses. I hope that every clause in the Bill will be fought to the bitter end by the party which rallies round the leader of the Opposition. In the face of the big majority which the Government have, we cannot hope to influence them much, but we can hope to let public opinion throughout the State know, through the newspapers and other means, exactly what the present party in power are arriving at, and then we shall see what public opinion will have to say on the subject. Of course I throw myself open to the retort that public opinion has asked for this Bill. I say that public opinion has not asked for it and knows very little about it. Beyond certain circles connected with the party in power very little is known or cared about this measure, and it is purely for purposes of party domination, in order to continue

the party Government of the present day, that the Government have brought this Bill forward under the parrot cry of democracy. The Premier spoke about two kinds of democracy—true democracy and mock democracy. There can be only one democracy—the Government of the people by the people for the people, and that is for all the people and not for any particular class. When the hon. gentleman speaks as he has done about a privileged few in this State, does he forget that they also belong to the people, that they also have their rights, that they also have a claim to the same fair play and justice which any other party can claim? And when the hon. gentleman, in what he considers the interests of true democracy, rose to put forward a Bill like this with specious arguments, he failed in his conception both of the dignity of his position and the immense responsibility placed upon him.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury): I think one might be pardoned for expressing some regret that members of the Opposition have not carried the subject of this debate to a higher level than we have been permitted to listen to this evening. I have been almost inclined to think that the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) was correct when he said that in certain circumstances it would be desirable to do away with Parliamentary Government, when we find that a great question, involving fundamental alterations, involving such vast principles and fraught with such possibilities for good or evil, a question which has been taken up by some of the world's greatest thinkers, is treated in such a careless, slipshod fashion as it has been treated this evening by members of the Opposition. The members of the Opposition may be totally opposed to this reform, but surely it is a matter worthy of their earnest consideration. I do not care to say anything unkind of the member for Northam, but he really impressed me that he was simply beating the wind when he was speaking this evening. He gave me the impression that though he had read the Bill, he had no knowledge whatever of the

fundamental principles which are sought to be carried into effect.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Fire away, but do not attack the Attorney General on any account.

Mr. THOMAS: I have no intention of attacking the Attorney General; I desire to compliment him on having made probably one of the finest speeches delivered in this House. He proved that he had given this question profound consideration, and he touched on the real essence of the matter before the House. I can hardly say that has been done by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not know that you listened.

Mr. THOMAS: I always listen to the hon. member, although I do not profess to have a capacity that would enable me to sit throughout his speeches. The hon. member said that the present form of Government was the best.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not mean just this form we have to-day.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member means the same form of Government with another party in power. I can understand the hon. member believing that, but I beg leave to differ from him. The existing form of Parliamentary Government in my opinion is fast outliving its usefulness. I think the time is not far distant when the people will tire of the fierce party strife that is continually carried on under the present system. Day in and day out in this Chamber and in every other legislative chamber in Australia we hear nothing but the clash of arms between party and party, the bitterness, fierceness and jealousy of one party against another. I cannot speak as an old Parliamentarian, but I must say that during my short experience it has been a very great disappointment to me. I find that instead of attacking these questions on high and lofty grounds, viewed only from the standpoint of the benefit to Western Australia, the chief point of view is the party advantage of one over another.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You are pretty good at it yourself.

Mr. THOMAS: I do not claim to be one whit better than any other member in that respect, but I do claim that the spirit of conflict, this bitterness and strife of one with another on party lines, is much to the detriment of any country, and the time is not far distant when the people will rise up and say "Have done with your petty, paltry, party strife, and do something that is for the benefit of Western Australia."

Hon. J. Mitchell: And they will smite you.

Mr. THOMAS: If they smite me I hope they will get a better man.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I mean smite all of us.

Mr. THOMAS: Well, I hope if they do, they will put better men in our places. I am trying now if I possibly can to consider what is best for Western Australia. I claim that the initiative and referendum will have the effect of modifying the bitterness of party conflict. For this particular reason I feel sure that hon. members will realise the futility of carrying on the present methods when they know that the people will have the power to say to them, "Cease your petty clamouring, cease your paltry little personal disputes. We, the people of Western Australia, want to have a word in this matter, we want to decide the question on its merits."

Hon. J. Mitchell: We are the people.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member always did have an exalted opinion of himself, and in the speech he delivered to-night would have us understand he knows better how to govern Western Australia than the people themselves know. I differ. I have a very great respect for my hon. friend and I appreciate his talents, particularly his capacity for making long addresses, his nebulous idea of things in general, his prolixity. I admire all these things because in that respect the hon. member for Northam is absolutely a master of the art, and any man who has achieved success in any walk always has my admiration.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You have not distinguished yourself yet. But, cannot you get somewhere near to the question?

Mr. THOMAS: I think my remarks up to the present have been leading up to the measure.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Personalities.

Mr. THOMAS: That is absolutely unjust, I have not made one unkind remark about any member in the Chamber. The fundamental principle of the whole Bill lies in the fact that we propose to hand back to the people some of the power that they have given to Parliament. I am quite satisfied that the 50 members who sit here, speaking for the majority, are able and conscientious men, conscientious probably all of them, but I claim that they do not possess all the wisdom of Western Australia, and that in this Bill we have the very essence, the very spirit of democracy itself. We promise to hand back to the people some of the power they have given to this Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why do not you wait until they ask for it?

Mr. THOMAS: What reason have we to fear trusting the people themselves to vote in their own interests? We say we can trust them to send members to Parliament, but members of Parliament do not know the inmost wishes of the people, and many questions may arise that have not been touched upon on the hustings, and consequently the people will by this measure have the power to approach Parliament and insist upon these questions being submitted to them. Let us take for instance one of the most iniquitous measures that was ever placed before Parliament: I refer to the famous Redistribution of Seats Bill in 1911. Had the initiative and referendum been in existence that measure would never have found itself on the statute-book of this country. There can be no question about that. It was claimed by one of the speakers that the Ministers would be mere puppets in the hands of a party.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Trades Hall.

Mr. THOMAS: I fail to see where that argument applies at all. We have had some innuendoes about the Trades Hall, Labour domination, and Chinamen brought before the Assembly to-night, but I fail to see what they have to do

with the matter. Ministers would reign here under the initiative and referendum the same as they reign here to-day, but if there is any part of our policy the people object to the people have it in their power to take it in their own hands to say they will amend it to meet their own wishes. They may agree with the Ministry on 99 points, and disagree with them on one, and surely the people know best what they want for themselves. One hon. member said it was wrong to take power from another place. I claim that there is only one great wrong, and that is to take power from the people. The possibilities of Parliament may be great, the possibilities for good or evil may be great, but there is one power that does and should rule over all Parliaments, and that is the sovereign will of the people. There can be no question but what, if this Bill were passed through Parliament, the people would take into their hands the right to deal with certain institutions. There can be no question but what the system of Government in some very vital matters would be considerably altered from what it is to-day. Whatever is said, in my opinion the old adage that "You can fool some people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time," will prove true in regard to this measure. It only needs the advance of political knowledge for the people to understand more and more what their own views are and what their own position entitles them to, to make them ultimately demand that they should have the right to speak on these great questions to suit themselves. In addition to doing away largely with the spirit of party conflict, which I deeply regret—I believe the best efforts and the best intelligence of members of Parliament are lost in fighting one another instead of fighting the battles of the country—in addition to destroying that bitterness which exists to-day, I believe that it will have a further advantage, and that is a politically educating influence on the people, that will be vastly valuable in itself. Power brings

with it a sense of responsibility, and with a sense of responsibility people fit themselves to fill their positions. When they know that many of these great questions will come before them, when they themselves demand that these questions shall be submitted to them, the probabilities are that they will take the trouble to make themselves familiar with the rights and the wrongs, the pros and cons of the questions, and ultimately, in my opinion, will give a verdict irrespective of what party it may affect. To-day a man very often votes for a party whether he agrees with all its principles or not, because he is aware of the fact that if he does not take the party which has most of the principles of which he approves, he must take another party. But under these circumstances he can vote for the party he prefers, and if there are any fundamental faults in their programme, the people have the right to alter them. It should bring about the purest system of Government that is possible. It should bring about a highly educated people, fully conversant with the laws of the country, well educated upon public questions. I have read that in Switzerland the people march up and record their votes, at times when a referendum is being taken, calmly and deliberately and without any evidence of party strife whatever.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How many times has it been done within the last 29 years?

Mr. THOMAS: A stern parent might be the father of a family of boys and have a cat-o'-nine tails ready for use, and the boys know he possesses this instrument of torture and that if they err they will get a good flogging. The knowledge that the power to do this thing exists will rarely give rise to the need to carry it into effect.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How does that apply.

Mr. THOMAS: Because I say that the fact that the people possess the power to control legislation will have such an influence that the Legislature will be an instrument more in accordance with the wishes of the people. I did not vote for the initiative and referendum because I

wanted to see the power frequently availed of by the people, but I wanted to give the people the power to initiate certain legislation at certain times and I think it will prevent certain politicians from getting off the straight and narrow path.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : Do you think they should have a vote on all great questions ?

Mr. THOMAS : I honestly think they should have.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : Without a time limit, what about local option ?

Mr. THOMAS : The other night I said they should have a vote on local option and no time limit. The Attorney General, speaking on this Bill, quoted a number of States in America where they have introduced it in various forms, and in reading articles by eminent writers in a number of the leading American journals, I find it is continuously asserted that the effect of this measure in America is that it has killed the Tammany Hall system, where introduced, and killed the American system of graft, because when you have an opportunity of appealing to the people as a whole they will generally stand up for what is clean and pure. You may get a system of graft among a few people and have money enough to buy a body of legislators, but you will never have money enough, or influence enough, to corrupt the whole people, not while a moderate amount of the spirit of democracy reigns among them. If I were asked what I would most desire from a political standpoint, and any one had the power to make me this one gift, I would say give me the initiative and referendum in preference to any other plank of the Labour party's platform. Give to Western Australia in its freest operation that one enactment, and I defy all the influence of conservatism and the reactionaries and the Tories of Western Australia for all time to come. Give the people the power unfettered to express their will and you can have all your seats in Parliament, all your petty fogging little debates, all these things; but give me the one power to appeal to the hearts and intelligences of the people themselves, and I have no fear

whatever. I have implicit faith and trust in the will of the people. We have the example of that great man who at present presides over the destinies of the United States, President Woodrow Wilson, who said that for many years he had opposed this proposal, but to-day he is satisfied it is a measure that should commend itself to the people in any democratic country. What fairer thing can there be? Who sends us here? The people themselves. If they are capable of judging who shall come to Parliament surely they are capable of judging of the very important things that should be material to their own welfare. We have had some absurd statements to the effect that this would lead to mob rule, to the domination of the Trades Hall. If the Trades Hall could dominate the initiative and referendum it could dominate Parliament, because while 10 per cent. of the people could demand a referendum it requires a majority of the people before a measure can be carried into effect.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : If they could dominate the initiative and referendum, they could have carried the Federal referendum.

Mr. THOMAS : Of course, if the Trades Hall could dominate this particular question they could dominate Parliament for all time. There is one thing about the whole debate from the Opposition standpoint which I do regret; that is the many insults that have been thrown at the intelligence of the people. Many members have referred in anything but generous terms to the capacity of the people to judge for themselves. The people are our masters; they sent us here; and I do not claim for members of Parliament that they have so much more intelligence than the average person. They are the taxpayers, the people who are making Western Australia, and they have a right to at any rate express their view, to be the last court of appeal in the matters that are of vital importance to the welfare of the country. I do not anticipate that this measure will find itself on the statute-book just now. I know that hon. members are entrenched behind a barrier. I know that we cannot storm the heights

just at present. But I know this: that time fights on our side. I know that as the knowledge of this question progresses and as the demand from the public becomes more insistent than it is to-day, neither your Parliaments, nor your princes nor any other power the world has known can resist beyond a certain time the well sustained demands of the people. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) said he opposed this measure but believed in the old democratic principle of government of the people by the people for the people. Fancy an hon. member saying he opposed the initiative and referendum and believed in government of the people by the people for the people! What is this measure but the very embodiment of the phrase he used? It is absolutely carrying into effect that soundest of all democratic principles, government by the method he mentioned. I have not entered into this discussion because I believe I am going to produce any effect or carry conviction to my friends opposite, but merely in the hope that possibly something will be said by some hon. member, not necessarily by myself, which will lead to more thought and consideration of this question; that gradually its immense possibilities, the magnificent results it may achieve, will become patent to the people of Western Australia. I sincerely trust that this question will be taken up. It is one of the proposals that I hold as nearest to my heart. I am absolutely convinced of the results that would be derived from it. I think if it were carried out in Western Australia we would have probably the most democratic people on the face of the earth. We would be able to carry legislation in Western Australia which would be not only the glory of this country but an example to the world; because I am satisfied we have here the democratic spirit in its very highest form of development, but are hampered and retarded by certain constitutional restrictions. If this one grand measure were carried, all those restrictions and barriers would be swept away and democracy would be the power that would govern Western Australia for all future time.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): The hon. member has informed the House that members on this side have brought the debate to a very low level. For my part I can scarcely see that because hon. members on this side object to principles that are dear to hon. members on the other side, therefore they should be charged with having brought the debate to a low level. The member for Bunbury has doubtless endeavoured to raise the level of the debate on this question, and I can assure hon. members that it is not my desire to in any way lower the height to which the hon. member has endeavoured to take the debate. The hon. member has informed the House that we on this side doubt the intelligence of the electors. Hon. members on this side, I am quite certain, consider there are many electors outside the House who have much more intelligence and a wider knowledge than those who represent them in the House. We are speaking for ourselves, and not for members on the other side. We know that it is but few of the people of Western Australia who will take upon themselves the positions of members of Parliament. The people of Western Australia are all busy with their own affairs, and we know that it is difficult to get those who can give their time to the representation of people in Parliament, or who will give that time to consider in detail all the questions before the country. But I will say that the people of Western Australia are perhaps the most politically active people in the world. All the people in the State are discussing politics wherever we go. No matter where it is, political questions always create discussion, and, I am pleased to think, create contentious discussion. We on this side do not wish for a moment to cast any slur on the intelligence of the electors, but we may be excused at any rate if there are principles which we object to in the Bill. The hon. member has informed the House of the evils of party government and of party conflict. We are living under a system of party government, and, strange to say, the greatest intellects of the British race have not been able up to the present to devise any

better system of government. It does not appear to me that in a Bill such as this, under provisions such as the Bill contains, we are going to do away with the evils and conflict of party government. Not only will we be engaged in party conflict here, but we will also draw the people of the country continually into this party conflict. As it is, unless something extraordinary happens, it is only once in three years that the people of the State are brought into this party conflict. The hon. member has told the House that he would be prepared to go to the country every week; for my part I am quite satisfied to go to the country once in three years, and country members know the great physical effort entailed in going through an election in this State. I do not concern myself with the details of the Bill. We have many Bills before the House the principles of which we are opposed to, but here is a Bill which we, as representing a party, object to in principle although not in detail. Hon. members no doubt will say that the principle of referendum has been already applied in Australia. Well, the principle of the referendum can be again applied in Australia; but let Parliament apply it as necessity arises. To make it a provision such as this that the people shall be able to petition Parliament at any time to introduce certain measures, or that when certain measures are passed the people shall be able to petition Parliament to have those measures submitted to the people is to my mind unnecessary under our Constitution. It appears to me there is absolutely no necessity for a measure such as this. The country has not asked for it, and from my point of view there is no need for it at the present time, although if there should be any need for it in years to come, possibly when I have shuffled off this mortal coil, and when party government shall have altogether outlived its usefulness, it is possible that something of this sort may be necessary in order to carry on the government. To compare a country like this, with our small population and vast territory, with a little place like Switzerland, is trying to compare two cases which are not

analogous. The position there is entirely different; the community is contained in a nutshell, whilst here in Western Australia we are ruling over one of the largest countries in the world, and we have a small and widely scattered population. I think the people of the country are quite prepared to leave the matter of legislation in the hands of those sent here to represent them. We are sent here to represent the people on certain lines of policy. If our conduct in the House does not meet with the approval of those who returned us, they can, every three years, put somebody else in to represent them in our places. For my own part I think that is what the people of this country desire should be done. The people are not anxious that this continual warfare of party politics should be carried on in this House to the extent it is carried on, but at the same time there seems almost to be a necessity for it and apparently it cannot be prevented. Hon. members on this side of the House are twitted upon their opposition to the Bill, but we were returned as representing certain principles and returned by a majority of those in our electorates, and we are here to support not our own views merely but those of the people who returned us to this House, just as members on the other side are here to support the views of those who returned them. I do not think it is fair and reasonable for anyone to contend that this side of the House are opposing the Bill merely for obstructive reasons, as we are opposing it on principle and on principle alone, because we consider, and those whom we are representing consider, that there is no need for a measure such as this in Western Australia at the present time. If it were put to the vote as to whether the people required it or not, I feel confident they would reject the proposal. I am quite sure the principles of this measure are inimical to the interests of Western Australia at the present time and unnecessary at this stage of our political history.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker. in reply): I must compliment the hon. member who has just re-

sumed his seat on the fairness of his criticism. One could feel that what he said was his honest conviction; it was an expression of the thoughts that he has matured, of the experience he has had in political life. But that does not remove the necessity for complaining of the tactics adopted by the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Northam. They have deliberately accused the Labour party of bringing in this measure for the purpose of clap-trap, of exciting the outside people, knowing that it would not be passed. In other words the Government have been accused of dishonourable tactics, unworthy and unmanly tactics, in bringing in this measure. The insinuation has been that the measure is not honest and that the purpose of the Government was not honest in bringing it in. The leader of the Opposition insinuated more than once that this measure was only used in the form of a political trick. He did not use that language, but no other sense was gatherable from what he said. This measure has long been the desire of the Labour party in this State. It is the outcome of not one conference, not one meeting of the Labour party, but of many. It has been the result of many discussions on the platform, discussions in the Press, at public meetings and gatherings wherever two or three of the reformers of modern times could be got together. It is not a strange ideal sprung on the Chamber for political purposes, and if it has not been introduced earlier it has been because pressure of more immediately practical and necessary business has taken up the time of the House, but on every platform at the last elections where a Labour candidate spoke, there was a distinct pledge that the initiative and referendum would be part of the Government programme if Labour attained the ascendancy, and this is nothing more or less than a fulfilment of that pledge. It has been debated in the Press, it has been debated in every part of the State, it has been debated by everyone elected to this Chamber on this side of the House. It was one of the principal features in the pre-election speech of the present Premier, and I myself have advocated it since

I can scarcely say when—before I entered this Parliament at all, and I am proud to take a humble part to-night in furthering a measure of this vast importance. What serious arguments have been used against the measure? In a general rhetorical statement it has been said that this measure puts into the melting pot the whole of representative government, and that it destroys representative government. Against that stands the criticism, the comment upon the experiment as introduced in Canada, the report of 1912-13 relating to the self-governing Dominions prepared in the Dominions Department of the Colonial Office. There was no charge of that nature levelled against this experiment when it was introduced into the Canadian province. The report on it is here perpetuated by the British Government itself. What justification then for the fear of putting representative government in the melting pot when there is no word of warning of that kind from the Imperial Government itself. The experiments that have been tried in the States of America, not one, but several, fairly demonstrate that it strengthens and corrects representative government, brings it more to the sticking point, puts it in tune with the outside world, in unison, in harmony with the movement of political thought and aspirations of the people themselves. But, forsooth, because we are a greater country in area we must not compare ourselves with Switzerland! Of course, comparing ourselves in extent we are much bigger, much broader in territory. We have indeed an enormous area, but the area is not the thinking part of the State. The acres of land, the rocks, the salt lakes, the bush, the forest, are not the elements that go to the constitution of government. It is the people, and the thinker out back, the prospector away beyond the beaten tracks of human commerce, the man in the far North-West who tends his flock or drives his herd, has the same potency for thought, the same capacity to reason, the same stimulus to political aspiration as the man right in the heart of this city, as the men who have addressed this Chamber to-night from the Opposition benches. And we here in this State to-

day are better off than the Swiss were when they first introduced the principle of the initiative and referendum. We should consider that their enormous mountains, the difficulties of transit, lack of facilities for communication one section with another, one canton with another made those living in almost close proximity to one another, as far distant as the people of Broome and Perth, or the people of Esperance and Fremantle, in this State. Though our territory is wide, the means of locomotion, the means of communication, our excellent postal system and our better system of telegraphy, and our still more up-to-date telephonic communication, one part with another, almost link up the whole of the population of this State in one, although in distance they are scattered far and wide apart. So that we have all the facilities for knowing the will of the people and receiving communication as to their intents and purposes, their aims political, within a very brief time. We are what the Swiss are in other respects, capable of thinking, capable of expressing our thoughts. What is the terrible crime we propose to bring about? The abolition of representative government? Not in one iota. All the representative and thinking capacity of every hon. member is to remain the same as now. We are not depriving one single member of his privileges. We are not depriving one single member of his rights. We are not putting in fetters the brains or hearts or relationships with his fellows of any member of this House, but what we are doing is to enable the people directly to say what they wish us to do. They do it in a dozen ways now. They do it in the Farmers and Settlers' Association, they do it in the various petitions lodged in this House, they do it in the daily Press, in the leading columns, in the letters written in the other columns of our daily papers; they do it from the platforms, they do it from every spot where there is vantage for speech or resting place for political advocacy. We will not move, we will not step ahead until the voice gets so loud outside that it causes us to tremble. That is the position now. We want to come

into more friendly relationship with that great body, of which, as I have already said, we are only a part. We are not severed from it, we are one part of it. Therefore we want to establish that by law. Here we have a spectacle in many of the States where the will of the people has been spoken loudly, where it has torrential force, and has swept out from the legislature the old representatives who could not be moved, who were as marble in their mobility, and brought in those to replace them who were formed of flesh and blood, and who could be swayed and touched by the moving forces that are beyond the walls of this Chamber. Yet though we may have had a clean sweep, almost, of those who resisted the will of the people, and others have come here with the mandate to do the people's will, yet there remains a section of the Legislature which advises the people and says "You shall not have what you authorised your representatives to procure; you shall not obtain the laws that were foreshadowed or endorsed no longer ago than two years." Now the people, in the person of their representatives, are being given the opportunity of saying, we shall speak more directly to you. If one branch of the Legislature will not move responsive to the people's demands we will speak ourselves, we trust you; we, the people, have faith in you, but if you have not faith in us, if you will not carry out our will we want the means of carrying it out ourselves, and then they come to us as their representatives to do it for them. The people initiate a Bill and put their signatures to it. It is sent to us by every channel of Constitutional Government, it is sent to the Governor, it is transmitted to the Speaker of the Assembly, it is transmitted to the President of the Legislative Council, then it is submitted to this Chamber to debate and to the other Chamber to debate, to adopt it, or reject it, or to amend it. All the machinery of representative Government is placed at the disposal of those who are acting or will act if we pass this Bill into law. There are those who will tell us that we must not trust the

people more, that we must build a wall between us and the people over which the people must never encroach, and if they desire to be heard and take part in legislation we are to call them mobs. I say there is not one single argument which has been adduced to-night that will support a view in opposition to this proposal. The fact is there is only one argument which has been used, and it is that the people at large are only a mob and are not to be trusted. I have no such idea of the people. I believe that the people are a living body called the nation, with hopes and aims and ambitions, who know their wants and who know how to express their views, and when they express them it will be our duty to do as the Bill provides. The time is now when the people are all-powerful and have the right to rule, and when the body of the people speak as one family, when the good of one is the good of all, and the good of all, the blessing of each and every one.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	28
Noes	..	..	..	15
—				
Majority for	..	..	..	13
—				

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Bolton	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Price
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Holman	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lander	Mr. Underwood

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. Broun	Mr. Moore
Mr. Elliott	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Harper	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

Mr. SPEAKER: This Bill, being an amendment of the Constitution, requires a

statutory majority. That majority is evidenced by the division.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Bill passed through Committee without debate.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do now report to the House.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	28
Noes	..	..	..	13
—				

Majority for 15

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Price
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Swan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Gill	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lander	(Teller.)
Mr. Lewis	

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. Broun	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Elliott	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Harper	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading, Postponed.

Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate, from the 28th November, on the second reading read.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I protest. The Attorney General stated that we

would adjourn after passing the other Bill. On that understanding we did not debate it in Committee.

The PREMIER: I understand such a statement was made, but without authority. However, in the circumstances we will adjourn.

Order of the Day postponed.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th December, 1913.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH asked the Colonial Secretary (without notice): Is the Minister yet in a position to make any statement with regard to the method to be followed in connection with the preparation of electoral rolls, in accordance with his statement a few days ago?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: No.

PAPERS — POWELLISED SLEEPERS, CONTRACTS FOR CARRIAGE.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS (Metropolitan) moved—

That there be laid on the Table of the House all papers in connection with the contracts or agreements entered into between the State Government and Messrs. P. McArdell and James Bell & Co. for the carriage of powellised sleepers, including all tenders received for the same.

He said: I have tabled this motion following upon the answers I received to certain questions asked in this Chamber a few days ago. Those answers appear on the minutes of the proceedings of the 4th December. It appears, so far as I can gather, that quite recently a contract or an agreement, involving a huge sum of money, between £50,000 and £60,000, has been let by the State Government for the conveyance of powellised sleepers, and tenders were not publicly advertised or called for, but the method followed seems to have been simply that some officer of the department went around to a few shipping firms and other people and asked them to quote prices. One would have thought, in regard to a contract of this magnitude, which I understand would take about three years to complete, and involving such a large sum of money, the Government would have advertised not only in this State in as public a manner as possible, but I should almost think throughout the whole of the Commonwealth, so that everybody desirous of tendering for that contract should have an opportunity of doing so. I am informed that when this officer went around he got quotations from certain people and the result was, apparently, that a person who, so far as I can ascertain, is quite unknown in the shipping world, and has never been heard of either as a shipping agent or the owner of steamships, or in any way as connected with shipping companies, has obtained this very large contract. I am further informed—I do not know whether it is right or wrong—that on these tenders being asked for, four