

Government railways, the price then placed upon them was £4 12s., and they were sold at this price delivered at the stations where stacked. The sleepers were condemned ones, and were sold at 10d. each. 4. The arrangement was made with the concurrence of the Commissioner of Railways, owing to the urgent need the Department was in for water, and to the fact that had the water at the 42-Mile Dam not been made available by means of the construction of this Tramway, the traffic would have been stopped between Southern Cross and Kalgoorlie.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I notice that the Colonial Secretary has taken no notice of question No. 5.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (after explaining): The answer to No. 5 question is, No.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 4.40 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 5th June, 1900.

Paper presented—Question: Toast, "The Pope and the Queen"—Question: Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme, Mundaring Weir—Question: Harbour at Albany, to Dredge—Motions: Leave of Absence—Federation Enabling Bill, in Committee, Clause 10, Amendments (2), division; Recommittal, division; reported; Standing Orders Suspension—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Rottnest Native Prison Rules and Regulations.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—TOAST, "THE POPE AND THE QUEEN."

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): By leave of the House, and without notice, I desire to ask the Premier: First, Whether it is true that on Sunday last, at Fremantle, on the occasion of the opening of St. Patrick's Cathedral, he (the Premier) gave his countenance to and drank a toast proposed by Bishop Gibney, naming "the Pope and the Queen"? Second, Is it consistent with his position as one of the Privy Councillors of Her Majesty, to give his countenance to such a toast?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—No doubt the hon. member thinks he has done a fine thing, in asking this question. I might, if I thought necessary, ask him to defer it till to-morrow; but I wish to say that on Sunday I did attend a service on the opening of the Roman Catholic Cathedral Church at Fremantle; that after the service we adjourned to a banquet, or to what I may term some refreshments rather than a banquet; and that Bishop Gibney, in a somewhat jocular vein, said he intended to propose two toasts in one. He proposed the toast of "the Pope and the Queen," and "the Queen and the Pope"; and he repeated that several times. The toast was put. I rose where I was sitting, and drank the health of Her Majesty the Queen, and I then said "and His Holiness the Pope."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You coupled them, did you?

THE PREMIER: I said, "His Holiness the Pope," and I put "Her Majesty the Queen" first.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have not answered the second part of the question: Is it consistent with his position as one of the Privy Councillors of Her Majesty, to give his countenance to such a toast?

THE PREMIER: In reply, I do not think the hon. member has any right to ask me that question. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I do not think Her Majesty the Queen would complain of anything I did on Sunday, if she were acquainted of it.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME, MUNDARING WEIR.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Director of Public Works: 1, The ori-

ginal estimated cost of the Mundaring weir. 2, The total amount expended upon same up to date. 3, The quantity of cement used thereon up to date. 4, The estimated quantity still required to complete. 5, The brand or brands of cement used, with price thereof per cask. 6, The estimated catchment area, in square miles, and basis of such estimate. 7, The estimated percentage of rainfall expected to be conserved from watershed area. 8, Cost per cubic yard of concrete now being used. 9, Had the department made provision for supplies of cement sufficient to keep up continuous working, and so prevent horizontal cleavages.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied:—1, £200,000. 2, £133,875 12s. 7d. This includes cost of railway from Mundaring station to weir site (£21,687), which is for permanent use in other ways as well as for the construction of the weir, and also includes a large quantity of plant and machinery to the value of about £12,000, which will be available for other works when weir is completed. 3, 9,995 casks. 4, 60,800 casks. 5, "Hercules" and "Alsen"; 12s. 11½d. per cask delivered in railway goods sheds at Fremantle. This includes 2s. per cask for customs duty. 6, The catchment area has been ascertained by actual survey to be 569 square miles. 7, About three per cent. The actual results up to date are very variable, being dependent, not alone on the character of the catchment area and the annual rainfall, but also largely on the nature of the rainfall, whether in light showers extending over long periods, or in heavy downpours within short periods, and the gaugings of the river have not as yet extended over a sufficient period to enable an accurate estimate to be made of the probable results under the varying conditions of rainfall. 8, £1 15s. 3d. 9, Provision has been made for a continuous and ample supply of cement of the very best class from England, the deliveries here commencing about six weeks hence, the requirements up to that time being obtained locally.

QUESTION—HARBOUR AT ALBANY, TO DREDGE.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier: 1, Whether the Government was aware that steamers

of the White Star line were unable to enter Princess Royal Harbour, owing to the shallowness of the passage, and whether it was proposed to dredge the passage deeper. 2, When could a dredge be spared to do the necessary work?

THE PREMIER replied:—1, The Government have heard that some steamers of heavy draught have not entered Princess Royal Harbour. The entrance channel is 30 feet deep, and the inner harbour is 27 feet deep, and no advantage would, therefore, be gained in deepening the entrance channel, unless the inner harbour were also deepened. 2, It is hoped that a dredge will be available for this service about the end of the year.

MOTIONS—LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by the PREMIER, leave of absence for the remainder of the session was granted to the member for Dundas (Mr. Connolly), on the ground of military service in South Africa; also to the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), to the member for East Kimberley (Mr. F. Connor), and to the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), on the ground of urgent private business.

FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Debate resumed from previous sitting, at postponed clause.

Clause 10—Majority of votes to decide:

MR. MONGER moved that the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:

Unless the total number of electors recording their votes in favour of the Constitution shall exceed 51 per cent. of the electors who shall have taken out electors' rights, and no person not having taken out an elector's right shall be entitled to vote.

It was necessary, in dealing with such an important question, to traverse to a certain extent the history of other portions of Australia, in order to show that we in this colony had not had those advantages under responsible government which the sister colonies had received. To go back to the early fifties when the first gold discoveries were made in the great colony of New South Wales, shortly after those discoveries were made known the influx of population to New South Wales was almost on a par with the influx of population to Western Aus-

tralia during the past few years. But New South Wales had then had 50 years of responsible government to foster its industries, which were now of the most permanent and prominent kind. What was the result? The people who went to New South Wales with the first rush after the gold discoveries had an opportunity subsequently of living in more settled centres, and reaping a reward from the industries which had grown up in those settled districts. New South Wales took advantage of its goldfields population to build up every manufacturing industry possible; and it was by building up the manufacturing industries that the colony absorbed the surplus goldfields population. Almost a similar argument applied to Victoria. Both these colonies for nearly half a century, if not longer, had the manipulation of their own business, and the natural result was that the people of New South Wales and Victoria were in a far better way, and were better able to deal with their affairs, than were the people of Western Australia at the present time. Queensland was in the zenith of her gold industry when the first big rush took place to the Palmer goldfield, the biggest alluvial goldfield Australia had known. It was thought in those days, as perhaps it was thought in Western Australia now, that there was no limit to the gold resources of that portion of the colony; but what was the result? The gold industry of Queensland had been gradually dwindling down, and now it had reached a settled condition. The goldfields population of Queensland had in later days been absorbed by the manufacturing and other industries for which Queensland was so well adapted. South Australia, the poorest and perhaps the best governed colony of Australia, was settled by a worthy class of settlers in the old days; and when the goldfields of the sister colonies broke out, South Australia derived benefit from its agricultural resources. But South Australia was a very different country from what Western Australia was now: the soil was easily tilled, and the land in South Australia could be brought under subjection at a comparatively low price. South Australia from the early fifties had reaped a splendid harvest by exporting wheat and flour to the great goldfields of Australia.

Western Australia was not in a position to do that. In each of the four colonies to which he had referred, he admitted the referendum might with justice have been left in the hands of the permanent and settled population. Coming to the case of this colony, he recognised the delicacy of his position; but any remarks he might make he trusted would not be considered unfriendly towards the goldfields population. It had been his pleasure to travel almost from one end of Western Australia to the other, and to have been associated in his travels with people on nearly every goldfield in Western Australia. He had had many pleasures on the different goldfields where he had been compelled to stay from time to time from a day to a week. Whilst admitting this and whilst knowing he had many friends amongst the goldfields population, he would not like the people on the goldfields to think that in bringing forward this important question it was with any desire to cast the slightest reflection on the people who resided on the Eastern or other goldfields. These people had only resided in this colony in many instances for very short periods, and they could not have the same interests at heart as those whose all was wrapped up in the colony. The people residing on our Eastern and other goldfields, whose wives and families resided in the Eastern colonies, could not have the same kindly feeling towards Western Australia as those people whose whole interests were wrapped up in the welfare of the country. That was an admitted fact; and how many of these people to whom the Reform League and others were desirous of giving the referendum had any legitimate and *bona fide* stake in the welfare or otherwise of Western Australia? He left it to the consideration of members whether those who were here to-day, and might be away to-morrow, had the best interests of this colony at heart. He was particularly anxious to point out, with regard to our gold industry, that practically we had only scratched the surface of our goldfields at present. We were absolutely in our infancy, because we were only a few years old. Permanent prosperity to our goldfields dated from the time when Arthur Bayley first discovered Coolgardie. That was only a few weeks ago, compared

with the time which the other colonies had to make arrangements to settle their surplus goldfields population. He would ask any member, and more particularly members residing on the goldfields, whether Western Australia had reached the zenith of its gold-producing capabilities. Everyone in this colony would admit that our goldfields were in their infancy, and at all events the goldfields members would confirm that idea. The difference between the goldfields and goldfields population of this colony, and the goldfields of the other colonies, constituted one of the reasons which gave rise to his idea that Western Australia was in an entirely different position from the other colonies which had agreed to join the federation. Was the request he asked the Legislature to support an unreasonable one? He simply asked that half the adult population of Western Australia should support the great change which many were desirous of seeing effected. He was not asking that only the old residents of this colony should be permitted to vote upon the question; because, if he were doing that, he would suggest that we should adhere strenuously to the electoral rolls now in existence. In 1891 the population of this colony was, as everyone knew, only 50,000, whereas now it was three-and-a-half times greater; so it stood to reason that the bulk of the increase was due to the arrival of friends from the other colonies. The increase was undoubtedly due to the gold discoveries in the Eastern and other portions of Western Australia. Let us assume that 90,000 of our present population were fairly permanent, he would even go so far as to put it at 100,000; but according to the manifesto of the Goldfields Reform League, of which body we heard a good deal a few weeks back, but which seemed rather to have died a natural death of late, there were 80,000 on the Eastern goldfields, and, if in order, he would add 8,000 for the other goldfields. In other words, one-half of the population of the colony were on the goldfields.

MR. GREGORY: The Premier had said that was not true.

MR. MORAN: That was probably according to the figures of the Goldfields Reform League.

MR. MONGER: The figures quoted were those of the Reform League on the goldfields.

MR. GREGORY: The hon. member ought to give the figures of the Premier. He (Mr. Monger) believed in those.

MR. MORAN: Oh, no. The hon. member (Mr. Gregory) swore to the figures of the Goldfields Reform League.

MR. MONGER: Of course one must always take as correct the figures emanating from such an important body.

MR. GREGORY: The goldfields have brought the colony to federation, anyhow.

MR. MONGER: The figures of the Goldfields Reform League were accepted by him, and he (Mr. Monger) tried to give them in the best interests of the goldfields, more particularly the Eastern goldfields. Even supposing there were 100,000 people away from the goldfields and 77,000 on the goldfields, the goldfields electors could outnumber the settled portions of the colony, owing to the fact that the bulk of the people on the goldfields consisted of adults, whereas the bulk of the children and minors were residing in the more settled parts of the colony. Therefore, from a federalist standpoint, the goldfields alone and unaided could carry federation, if they were as sincere as people were led to understand on a recent occasion when so many signatures were obtained to that noted separation document. He must refer to figures quoted recently in a morning paper, which gave the number of those now on the rolls as 45,000, and after making deductions for plural votes and adding the probable additional adult vote, which would apply under the present Bill, the estimated number was 60,000. He appealed to the leader of the Federal League. If the hon. member's party could get 28,000 and odd signatures to that document, which they obtained a few months back, surely they could get a similar number to record their votes in favour of federation, because it would cost them nothing to do so. If there were on the Eastern goldfields alone 28,000 eligible to sign a document like that—

A MEMBER: There was Albany.

MR. MONGER: Albany was separate. If there were 28,000 on the goldfields, and if there were, according to the statistics of this paper, only 60,000 adults who could vote, surely the federal party could make

their arrangements so as to get the odd one over 30,000. He only said, "If these figures are correct." As far as he could judge from the several interviews which the Press had with the leader of the Federal League, the only objections the hon. member had to this amendment were that dead men could vote—

MR. MORAN: Against. Hear, hear.

MR. MONGER: And that the colony was pledged to support the Premier's promise at some Conference of Premiers in Melbourne. That was the only argument the hon. gentleman was able to give to the Press when interviewed, and one presumed that those interviews took place in the calmest, coolest and most collected moments of the hon. member. In the amendment he (Mr. Monger) had suggested, he said: "Do away for the time being with these Parliamentary rolls; do away with them, if you like, for ever. As far as this referendum roll is concerned, let every person who is desirous of recording his vote come forward and make his application in person, and let all the restrictions possible be taken." He certainly failed to see how, under those circumstances, any dead man could record his vote. Probably the noble brain of the leader of the Opposition would agree to the amendment now suggested. As regarded the Premier's action at that conference, when dealing with this great non-party question, the right hon. gentleman occupied the same position as any other member. This question had never been made a party one, and he (Mr. Monger) hoped it never would be, because this would be one of those few occasions on which it would be his misfortune to have to vote on the opposite side from that on which the Premier would vote. The Premier occupied the position of a private member in dealing with this question, and by what authority could he pledge the colony? If he pledged the federal portion of the colony against their wishes—and the federal portion objected to certain phases of the question—he should know it. The leader of the Federal League was in Melbourne during the whole of the conference.

MR. LEAKE: What was the hon. member talking about?

MR. MONGER: About the trip to Melbourne.

MR. DOHERTY: The holiday.

THE PREMIER: This colony was not pledged by him at all on this question. He simply said that federation was desirable.

MR. MONGER: This Parliament was in no way pledged to support any private action that the Premier thought fit to take during his various trips to the Eastern colonies. Whilst we would desire to carry out any recommendation made by the Premier, it was only right to say that Parliament was not pledged; and would anyone venture to say the people were pledged by the actions of our federal representatives? Who appointed those representatives? Certainly the representatives of the people, but not the people themselves. Therefore, what had Parliament, or the people of the colony, to do with the private actions of the Premier during his visits to the other colonies? Finally, the Bill involved the amendment of the Constitution Act, and it was well recognised, especially in this House, that to make an alteration in this Act, there must be an absolute majority in each House of Parliament. Therefore, when it was desired to embark on such a great change as was now being attempted, it was only fair that those most interested should have most to say in carrying out that change. Having briefly placed the position before hon. members, he trusted that when the question went to a division there would at least be found a majority in favour of his amendment.

THE PREMIER: While always glad to assist the hon. member as far as possible, he was not prepared to support this amendment. He said this with regret. Hon. members opposite were very fond, when it suited them, of trying to bind down him or others to pledges which they said he had made; yet the Opposition would, if they desired to do so, be the first to repudiate their alleged obligation to follow the Premier in his pledges. Therefore hon. members on both sides of the House might rid their minds of any significance which might be sought to be attached to pledges he had given at the Premiers' Conference. These he himself might consider, but they were not binding on anyone else, seeing that no Premier in that conference, with the exception of the Prime Minister of New

South Wales, had pledged the Government or the Parliament of his colony to the resolutions agreed to at that conference. Of course when the Premiers went home to discuss the matter with their Parliaments, the colonial Governments, with the exception he believed of Queensland, pledged themselves to accept the resolutions in question. In regard to the matter now before the Committee, the wording of the resolution of the Premiers' Conference was about as mild as could be imagined. It read that the Premiers "consider it desirable that a majority vote should decide this question." The word "desirable" was put in on his recommendation, for he was unwilling to pledge his colleagues or this Parliament further than he had authority to pledge them; and feeling he had no authority at all, he suggested the word "desirable." Being a West Australian, and one who looked on this colony as his permanent home, he could well understand the feelings of the member for York (Mr. Monger) and other hon. members, who realised that such an important question, involving the interests of the colony for ever, was to be decided by the votes of persons some of whom had been here but a short time, and who were not bound by any ties such as bound the older inhabitants of the colony, or those who had thrown in their lot with us and made their homes here permanently. In fact to him (the Premier) the position now taken up on this question of the referendum seemed somewhat unfair and unreasonable, in regard to allowing persons who had been here only a little while to decide the question. But those who thought with him must not forget, whatever their feelings might be, to look on this matter from a practical point of view; and they might rest assured that those who had been in the colony for a short time only, though they might not have any great regard for the colony at the present time, and might have come here with the intention of going away very soon, would in many cases not go away, but a great part would remain for the rest of their lives. This he had said before, but it was worthy of repetition. The old inhabitants of the colony knew their fathers came here with similar ideas, came from the old country intending to stay a year

or two only and then go back; but how many did go back? Of the goldfields people who intended to stay here but a year or two, many would make their permanent homes in the country. (SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.) A realisation of this fact ought surely to soften our apprehensions, notwithstanding that it was revolting to him, looking at the question only on the surface, that people here to-day and gone to-morrow should take any very important part in deciding the colony's destiny. When we looked deeper into the subject, and realised that, after all, such people did not come from a foreign country, but were of the same race as ourselves and had come from other colonies, then the ideas perhaps uppermost in one's mind when considering the question superficially would be abandoned. Beyond doubt, one reason why the member for York and those who thought with him had in their minds such feelings as had been expressed by the hon. member was not because of the people who had recently come to the colony, but on account of the leaders of public opinion on the goldfields, the newspaper writers who had done and were now doing everything in their power with a view of dividing the people on the goldfields from those living in the older parts of the colony; trying to raise up, and having succeeded in raising up, a barrier to divide those two sets of people, to make the goldfields people believe the older settlers were out of sympathy with them, and were only desirous of oppressing them and doing them as much injury as possible for the advantage of the older settled districts. This process was going on at the present day to an extent that had seldom been witnessed in any other British colony, certainly in none of which he had any knowledge. On this very matter he had recently been speaking to a South Australian visitor, and had referred to the bitter antagonistic feeling with which it was sought to inspire the goldfields people against those on the coast; and he (the Premier) remarked that he thought this colony was in a unique position in this regard. His friend replied: "Oh! there are worse places than this, worse newspapers than you have in this colony. You have only to go to Broken Hill and read the *Barrier Times*, or the other papers there which

run on the same lines." He (the Premier) had been glad to hear it. That gentleman, however, a prominent man in his own colony, paid a visit to the goldfields, and after some time returned to Perth; and on being asked again whether the Broken Hill papers were similar to those on our goldfields, he said they were not, that our goldfields papers were altogether worse, and that he (the Premier) had been right in saying the state of affairs existing in this colony was worse than could be found elsewhere. There was a Press, the sole object of which, as far as could be judged, was to try to embitter the goldfields people against the people in the coastal districts, and to cause secession, strife, and division between the two. Such a state of affairs had seldom been witnessed in any other Australian colony, for the circumstances required for it had not existed elsewhere. The two sets of people were divided by hundreds of miles of inhospitable country, and each class was to a great extent isolated. Some hon. members might ask why he said these things, and might think his remarks might not tend to any good. Probably not; but he was not afraid to utter his opinion on the matter, whether it did or did not suit the people on the goldfields, and whether or not it was unpleasant to the goldfields Press. He did not care twopence whether it was liked or not, so long as the truth were told.

MR. GREGORY: Why did not the Premier tell this to the goldfields people when visiting them?

THE PREMIER said he was not now speaking against the people on the goldfields; nor was he finding fault with them, but with the newspaper proprietors and journalists, those who led public opinion through the Press, and whose object for years past, as now, was to mislead the goldfields people in every conceivable way, and to separate and divide them from those of the settled districts. If that statement were false, he would appeal to members representing the goldfields constituencies to say so, and to give reasons for their statements. Was there ever before seen in Australia such misrepresentation and abuse heaped on people who had lived honourably all their lives in this country, as was poured forth by the Press of the goldfields? He was not

speaking of every paper on the fields, for there were some which took a high tone: he knew of one such, at all events, and perhaps there were more. However, he was speaking more particularly of the Kalgoorlie Press, of which the object had been, and now was, what he stated. That Press, he regretted to say, had great influence, and had done immense harm in trying to make its subscribers believe the old settlers were no friends of theirs, and had no sympathy with them; whereas he, speaking for the people of Western Australia, whom he ought to know, seeing that he was one of them, could say that the natives of the colony had the kindest feelings towards them, and desired to work for the common good with those who had come here recently, as well as with those who had lived in the colony for a long time. Petitions had been concocted on the goldfields, and had been sent even to the foot of the throne, containing nothing but falsehood and calumny, and signed by men of repute, men holding responsible positions; and when those petitions had been replied to by him as representing the Government of the colony, what was the result? The very newspapers which had concocted those mendacious statements, and which had used their power to obtain signatures to the petitions, would not even publish the replies.

A MEMBER: Perhaps they thought the replies not worth publishing.

MR. VOSPER: They followed the example of the *West Australian*.

THE PREMIER said he did not think so.

MR. GREGORY: Was this a time to bring forward such matters, when discussing federation? Whether or not, the arguments would be answered.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member would have plenty of time to talk by and by. His own remarks were quite in order.

MR. GREGORY: All right.

THE PREMIER: One newspaper on the goldfields did publish the replies; at any rate, he was informed so, though he did not see the publication. He was glad there was one newspaper not afraid to publish to the world the truth, and show that the people of the goldfields had been misled and placed in a wrong position when they were asked to sign statements

which were untrue; and it rested with the people to show how they should mete out their judgment in regard to those who had misled them. Having said these few words as to why many people inside the House and outside did not seem to have that confidence in the vote they would have under ordinary circumstances, he was quite certain no one would object to take the people's vote on this or any other question, if they had not a feeling within them that there was intolerance and bias engendered, not by fair-play or by fair means, but by misrepresentation and by falsehood. But for this feeling, there was no person in the colony, he believed, who would not be only too glad to refer this momentous question to the vote of the electors. Notwithstanding all these disadvantageous conditions and circumstances, and after giving the matter careful consideration, he had not found it desirable or necessary and did not think it would be right to take a different course in this colony from that which had been taken in the other colonies. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] If a different course were taken, the action of the Government would be misrepresented; and there were other reasons to which he would presently refer which convinced him that the best thing to do in regard to the matter, now we had got so far and had almost finished the legislation for referring the matter to the people, was to have a straight-out vote and accept the verdict of the electors. [MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.] He did not believe that those who led public opinion on the goldfields—he would not call them his friends—would accept the vote if it were given against them. Everything that could be said by them would be said to show that the vote was not taken fairly, that something or other was or was not done; in fact, even if the result were as these people anticipated, he did not believe they would be satisfied. Agitation, dissension, and discord were what they desired, and were the very breath and food that kept them alive.

MR. GREGORY: They earned the food, anyhow.

THE PREMIER: One of the great objections to the amendment was the general desire to see everyone taking a lively interest in the question and dealing with it as a vital matter requiring not

only their judgment, but also their energy; and that would not be brought about if a fixed majority were necessary in order to carry the measure. Those who were opposed to the measure would only have to sit down and do nothing, and advise their friends to do the same, while the work of getting the people to the poll would fall on those who desired to record their votes in favour of federation. That would be a real calamity for the colony, destroying, as it would, all interest in the question, because we would see perhaps half the population of Perth at their homes amusing themselves, and taking no interest in the proceedings, while the other half would have to be energetic in rushing to the poll, and those who abstained from voting would have the satisfaction of knowing they were doing quite as much as those who were working hard. Such a condition of affairs would be neither desirable nor advisable. The great question we had to decide was: Should we "cross the rubicon" or not? On this question every man in the colony ought to make up his mind, and should vote as he thought right, influencing as many others as he fairly and honestly could to vote in the same direction. Those who desired to "cross the rubicon" must vote for the Bill, and those who did not want to take that step which would have so important an influence and effect on the colony, must vote against it. What was wanted was a straight-out vote on the question. It was desired that every man and every woman in the colony should feel that never before in their lives had such a vital question been placed before them; and if the people felt in that way in regard to the question, whatever might be the verdict, the defeated side, seeing they had had a good straight-out political or rather patriotic vote, would be more satisfied. Such a condition of affairs would certainly be more satisfactory than a referendum in which one side did all the work, the other only looking on. It must not be forgotten that although this referendum would practically decide the question, it did not make an actual law, because Parliament was supreme after all, the referendum being only an intimation to Parliament as to the wishes of the majority of electors. If the voting were very close—if there were 50,001 in favour

and 50,000 against—it would be for Parliament to say, as it had the constitutional and proper right to say, whether the expression of opinion was sufficient to justify the adoption of federation by law. He hoped such a close vote would not result, but that the decision, whatever it was, would be so pronounced that Parliament would have no difficulty in determining the matter. But it was certain that Parliament had the power to determine the question, and would be justified in doing so, if it thought proper, especially if the majority were very narrow. It was not necessary, he considered, to say much more in regard to this matter, which he hoped would not be discussed at any great length, because it was a simple question, easily understood, namely: Were we to have a simple majority vote, or were we to have a vote of a set majority? In New South Wales it was originally provided that 60,000 electors should vote, but afterwards the number was altered to 80,000, and the latter figure, as would be remembered, was not reached. That, however, was considered very unsatisfactory at the time to the people of that colony, because while there was a majority of people in favour of the Bill of something like 70,000 to 50,000, still the measure was not carried. It would be remembered that it was not very long before the Bill was dealt with again by Parliament, and referred to the people with a majority vote only.

MR. MORAN: Not the same Bill.

THE PREMIER: The Bill was altered a little.

MR. MORAN: It was altered a great deal.

THE PREMIER: And it was altered for the worse.

MR. MORAN: Hear, hear!

THE PREMIER: It was to be wished the measure had not been altered at all. In connection with the Western Australian Bill in 1896, there were not many electors on the roll, about 20,000, and it was provided that at least 6,000 should vote in favour of the measure. Since then, however, we had had the experience of all the other colonies, and had heard a great deal about the disability under which we suffered in not electing our representatives in the same way as in the other colonies. Looking back, he felt sure he would, under similar circum-

stances, do what every hon. member now seemed to recommend. It was, however, all very well to be wise after the event; and why did those hon. members not recommend the course at the time?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We did.

THE PREMIER: Not many hon. members did, because they were too glad to have a chance of election under the tribunal set up, as an easy way to get quickly appointed without trouble, and at a great saving of expense. However that might be, this colony in that matter followed the example of Queensland, the Parliament of which had intended to do the same, if they had carried their Bill at the time; but as the Bill was not carried, Western Australia was left alone with a measure really framed by Queensland. That mode of election he did not regard as a very great success; in fact, it was not a success. But it was a mistake to jump to the conclusion that if members had been elected otherwise, they would have been better than those who were sent to the Convention. Of course that might, or might not, have been the case; but as a matter of fact, at that time there were very few persons in this colony who were qualified for the position, or were authorities on the question.

MR. MOORHEAD: But the matter would have been discussed.

THE PREMIER: No doubt, and that might have done some good.

MR. VOSPER: A nice lot of authorities were appointed!

THE PREMIER: At any rate, the representatives appointed in this colony were eminently respectable: men were not sent who would be a discredit to the colony. Looking back to the time, he admitted the colony had not done as well as it ought to have done in regard to the Commonwealth Bill, and if there happened to be another Convention, he thought a better fight would have to be made for Western Australia, and a better Bill obtained. He regretted very much he could not support the amendment, because it was rather too late for us to do what was desired. Under other conditions, such a proposal would not have been unreasonable; but the whole of Australia was now looking to Western Australia, expecting us to take a referendum, and it ought to be our desire, as it certainly was his, to do all that was

possible to prove to those who had recently come to the colony that West Australians had goodwill towards them, and did not want to treat them other than in the most generous manner. Although those who, with the Press, represented the people from the other colonies, did evil to Western Australians, the people of this colony were not going to return evil for evil. All that was desired by himself, at any rate, was to return good for evil, and show a good example, namely that it was not only desired to do what would please West Australians, but that which would please the whole people of the colony.

MR. GREGORY: As a member of the House, and also as a member of the executive of the Reform League on the goldfields, he wished to reply to some charges made by the Premier. He had no intention of raising any contentious matter in this debate; but after the remarks that the statements made by the league were "lying and mendacious, and a tissue of misrepresentations," it was necessary that someone should reply.

THE PREMIER: Did he (the Premier) mention "lying"?

MR. GREGORY: When the right hon. gentleman made statements charging the Press of the goldfields with such conduct, then some reply should be made. He was not going to reply for the newspaper on the fields which always said what the Government did was correct, but for those newspapers which had been attacked by the Premier. The Reform League must congratulate themselves for starting the agitation on the goldfields. It was separation for federation; and only for the action of the Reform League the Enabling Bill would not be before the Committee now.

THE PREMIER: The league could have done it, and told the truth at the same time.

MR. GREGORY: Only for the great support the separation movement was receiving, the Bill would not have been before hon. members. That was the general impression. It had been said that the statements in the Reform League manifesto were untruthful. If they were so, who was to blame? There was a statement that the Government had expended during the four past years the sum of £1,415,372. Where were those

figures obtained? A member in the other House moved for a return showing the money expended on the goldfields during the past four years; and if this amount was incorrectly given, then the Government were issuing a lying statement; they were issuing figures which were not correct. Not only was the statement made by the Government incorrect, but the statement made by the League was also incorrect; and not only was the statement which was made in reply to Mr. Dempster incorrect, but the Actuary's return was also incorrect.

MR. MORAN: Was the hon. member in order in stating that the Government had furnished a return containing a lying statement?

THE CHAIRMAN: It was not a proper word to use.

MR. MORAN: Then the hon. member should withdraw it.

MR. GREGORY: It was a word which had been used on the Government side of the House. This was not a proper place to go into the figures supplied by the Government Actuary. He did not think this question should have been raised, and he had no intention of doing so had it not been for what the Premier had stated. But when the Premier attacked the Reform League, it was time that somebody should reply.

THE PREMIER: The Reform League was never mentioned at all by him.

MR. GREGORY: The Premier mentioned that action had been taken by certain agitators on the goldfields. That action had to be taken because the Premier was afraid to trust the people on the goldfields. If the Premier had only given the people on the goldfields fair representation, a fair expenditure of the funds, and fair electoral reform, then the people of the goldfields would have looked on the Premier in the light they did five years ago. He did not say the Government had not done good for the goldfields. The Government had done a lot of good in the past, but the Premier was now afraid to trust the people: that was why the Premier was now so opposed on the goldfields. The member for York (Mr. Monger) had said a majority of one-half should be obtained in favour of federation. That was hardly fair, when we considered how the people on the

goldfields were living, far away from centres.

MR. A. FORREST: How did the Reform League get the 28,000 signatures?

MR. GREGORY: By a great deal of work, sending petitions around and getting them signed.

MR. MORAN: The petitions were permanent: the people travelled round. One man wore out a pair of boots, walking round signing the petitions.

MR. GREGORY: We should be satisfied with a majority vote, and he hoped members would refuse to pass the amendment. The first time the people of New South Wales were asked to accept the Commonwealth Bill a majority was stipulated, but on a second occasion a simple majority vote was satisfactory to the Government. Members on the Opposition side were satisfied with the way in which the Enabling Bill had been brought before the House, and with the amendments proposed by the Premier. He did not think any person who had not resided in the colony for twelve months should vote on the Bill. People who had only resided here for six months had little knowledge of the country, and if it had been moved that the qualification should be six months' residence, then the amendment would not have been supported by him. Persons after having been here twelve months got a grasp of the politics of the country, and were enabled to vote intelligently. As to the statement made that the people who came here desired to get away as quickly as possible when they had made money, that was not correct, because after people had remained here a little while they decided to become permanent settlers, and in time brought their wives and families, and made their homes in Western Australia.

MR. MOORHEAD, in supporting the amendment, said the Premier's objection to the amendment might be summed up in the fact that the Premier found in the Press a tendency to attack him, no matter what his actions might be; therefore to give the Press on the goldfields no excuse on this occasion, and no matter what the Premier's views might be, the right hon. gentleman was prepared to vote against the amendment. The Premier's second argument was that we had no precedent, but that, on the contrary, in all the other colonies the vote was accepted by a

bare majority. The first argument did not carry sufficient weight to obtain his (Mr. Moorhead's) vote; and as to the second argument, in regard to the precedent, he was little influenced by that. If we cared to view the circumstances of the other colonies, and how their interests were affected by federation, we found no parallel instance: the other colonies did not afford an analogous instance. New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland might lose a little by federation, yet were amply compensated by the benefits which they would derive in another direction. But Western Australia had no probability of compensation for what it was admitted the colony must lose, our circumstances being so different; and although the other colonies might have adopted federation by a bare majority vote, that in the circumstances should not be a satisfactory and overwhelming guide for us to follow in this instance. Western Australia was giving over practically all her Treasury; we were losing in every direction; and the little gain we might obtain was that we would retain our own Parliament without all the powers we at present enjoyed. The member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) had referred to the efforts and success of the Reform League on the goldfields, and the hon. member's own opinion was that if it had not been for the efforts of the League, Parliament would not be dealing with the Enabling Bill to-night. But the same efforts brought to bear so successfully in obtaining the signatures to the petition might be brought to bear on a future occasion when the Bill was taken before the people. If the Reform League was in favour of federation the onus lay on them of bringing about such a state of affairs and of showing that the people desired it. It had been pointed out that our gain was problematical in the extreme; and when a change affecting our condition so materially was to be brought about, the onus lay on those anxious to bring about the change to show that they had the voice of the country with them. The recent elections showed that there was a great apathy in regard to the question of federation. Take the election which had recently occurred in Perth for the Upper House; not half the electors on the roll polled. And that was the

tendency in the country. If there was so much indifference, then the interests of the country ought not to be committed without the onus of proof being thrown on those who were anxious to see federation brought about. Only 51 per cent., or half of the electors on the roll, was asked for. The Premier thought that was unfair because it would produce the apathy complained of in so far that no inducement would be offered for people who were opposed to federation to vote. He (Mr. Moorhead) was against federation, but he was in favour of the Bill going to the people. But the people ought to come forward and vote, and the members of the Reform League ought to come forward when a change of so momentous a character was suggested, and show that the country was in favour of this change. If the Reform League put their shoulders to the wheel, the same vote that they obtained on a previous occasion would be forthcoming when we approached the polls. Therefore he said the argument was hardly applicable here as to producing apathy. A stimulus could be produced by providing for a minimum vote. He did not propose to enter into the loss that would be brought about by federation: that was a matter for the platform. Although supporting the amendment, he unfortunately thought it would not be successful. He did not intend to give a silent vote.

MR. LEAKE: Certainly it was not his intention to support the amendment, but to attempt to preserve Clause 10 of the Bill as it was drawn. It was a curious coincidence that, throughout the discussion, those against federation had never declared their intention of fixing a minority vote; nor did they ever intimate a desire that anything should be taken but the Premier's proposal that a majority vote should prevail. It was a circumstance, and perhaps only a circumstance, that the member for York (Mr. Monger) had changed his front since he gave notice of his proposed amendment on Thursday last, because then the hon. member proposed that unless the number of electors recording their votes in favour of the federal constitution should exceed 51 per cent. of the electors on the roll, the constitution should be deemed to be rejected. It was pointed out in the Press that to carry an amendment like that

would be manifestly and obviously unfair, as giving the anti-federalists the advantage, if not actually of having recorded in their favour, yet of having counted in their favour all plural votes, the votes of dead persons, of absentees who were upon the roll, and of persons who were indifferent to the result of this question. No one would deny there were many ardent supporters and many ardent opponents of federation, but there were also persons who were indifferent, and the proposal which had been made would throw upon the federalists the unfair onus—as was pointed out by the Premier—of practically driving to the poll all those who were in favour of federation. He was pleased to find that the desire which the Premier expressed at the Premiers' Conference, to the effect that the decision of the majority of the electors should prevail, was still adhered to by the right hon. gentleman, and it was the duty of every federalist to render to the Premier loyal and honest support in securing the passage of this measure. He (Mr. Leake) certainly intended to support the right hon. gentleman in opposing this amendment. One great disadvantage in the amendment was that there was not sufficient notice given by the hon. member of this very drastic change. We must remember that the idea of issuing voters' certificates was not mentioned in the original draft of the Bill, but was practically acted upon by the leader of the Government on the suggestion of certain people. Now the member for York threw over the rolls altogether and suggested that the decision should rest with a bare majority of the holders of voters' certificates. The same objection did not hold good to the present proposal as held good in regard to the proposal made on Thursday last; but he did not see the necessity for going beyond the proposals made by the Government in the Bill itself. If the voters' certificates were to prevail, and every roll was to be wiped out, surely it was only fair that those who up to this moment thought that by reason of their names appearing on the rolls they would have a right to vote, should have an opportunity up to the very last moment—not only on the day of election, but at the time of election—of securing voters' certificates; otherwise, we might possibly find a great number of persons

who were entitled to vote not applying for voters' certificates, relying on the original assurance that at any rate, as far as they were concerned, the rolls would be available. A very great objection seemed to be this—and he was trying to place himself for the moment in the position of the right hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill—that the whole measure would have to be re-cast and reconsidered, and he did not think it was the desire of any hon. member that this question should be really further delayed. He was glad to think the member for York agreed with the federalists at any rate on one point, this being that the subject never had been a party question. Members on that (Opposition) side of the House had always declared that the question never had been a party one.

MR. HIGHAM: There had been an attempt on the Opposition side of the House to make it so.

MR. LEAKE: Perhaps the hon. member might desire to trim and to recall those words which he uttered just now, but he (Mr. Leake) trusted the hon. member was sincere when he said this was not, and never had been, and ought not to be, a party question. The federalists had always declared this was not a party question, but it was a curious circumstance that all the anti-federalists had sat on the Government side of the House.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

MR. HIGHAM: There were the members for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) and East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes).

MR. DOHERTY: And Perth (Mr. Hall). Let them not be put away by the hon. member.

THE PREMIER: There was the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Venn).

MR. LEAKE: The leader of the Government was concerned to a great extent in excusing himself for several actions which he had taken, but he (Mr. Leake) did not propose to go into the discussion which had taken place in the goldfields Press, and into the attacks which had been made. It had been asserted that sometimes the goldfields Press had gone to the last extremity so far as public criticism was concerned. He really could not help saying we owed the present position to a very great extent to the

goldfields Press, and the very consistent agitation brought about on the goldfields. The federalists on the goldfields and the federalists in the coastal districts joined hand to hand, and urged with as much force as possible that at any rate this great matter should be discussed and that the Bill should be sent to the people. Both those sections of the people had throughout maintained that the undertaking, or, if the House did not like that term, the desire expressed by the Premier at the Conference of Premiers last year should be given effect to, namely, that the Bill when approved of by the people of New South Wales should be sent to the people of this colony, and that a majority vote should prevail. The member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) very candidly admitted that he was against federation, and, of course, that hon. member promptly advanced anti-federal arguments.

MR. MOORHEAD: The arguments against federation had been reserved by him.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member introduced one or two. He (Mr. Leake) would not call them arguments, as the hon. member did not like that expression, but assertions. The hon. member said we had much to lose, that the gains were problematical, and so forth. He agreed with the hon. member that the advantages or disadvantages of federation were at the present moment not for this Chamber, but should be urged with all the force possible on the public platform when the Bill was referred to the people. That had always been urged by those in favour of federation. It was a pleasure to meet an opponent like the member for North Murchison, because we knew where we were in dealing with him; and when the hon. member said he was against federation, we knew perfectly that it was an honest expression of opinion, and federalists knew that when they met him they had to fight him and put their best leg forward to maintain their cause. It was not opposition of that nature which federalists objected to, but the opposition of those who would not come forth and say straight-forwardly they were going to vote against federation, and who resorted to all sorts of measures to prevent the great subject from being referred to the people. Another gentleman to whom he would also apply the same remark was the member for East

Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), who had been a consistent opponent of federation, and who attacked the federalists in an open, straightforward manner. He was glad to say the hon. member always received the attacks made by the federalists upon him or his arguments in the same way. When the time arrived for it to be necessary to argue this question, doubtless he (Mr. Leake) and his friends would be on the one side, whilst on the other side would be the two hon. gentlemen to whom he had referred. He appealed to members to allow this big question to be determined on the general principles which were recognised not only under our constitution, but in nearly every walk of life. We knew that whenever there was a society or gathering of people the majority vote prevailed, and federalists asked for no more than that. He would go so far to say that if, out of 50,000 voting there was a bare majority of only a few hundreds, he would really, out of respect to the views of the minority, hesitate before he accepted the address praying that we might be admitted to the federation. All he desired was that no obstacle should be thrown in the way of every voter in the colony expressing his view, aye or nay upon the question. Only by that course being pursued could we find out the relative positions of the federalists and anti-federalists in the country, and he therefore intended to support the clause as originally drafted. He would urge federalists, and also anti-federalists, if they were consistent, to support the proposal of the Premier.

MR. VOSPER: The Premier had led the House somewhat astray from the consideration of the amendment to the clause itself, by indulging in a long diatribe against the goldfields Press, the Reform League, and the framers of the separation petition. Without traversing such remarks, he would remind the Premier and others who appeared so fond of girding at that much-abused institution, the Press, that after all, newspapers were purely commercial productions, and so long as the demand existed for articles denouncing the Government, so long and no longer would such articles be supplied; consequently the fact, if it was a fact, that the goldfields Press misrepresented and occasionally abused the Premier was not an indication of their wish to capsize

the right hon. gentleman from his position, but an indication of an effect which resulted from certain causes for which we must look nearer home than the office of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. The cause was to be found in the attitude of the Government towards the goldfields; and the newspapers, if they carried their opposition to excess, simply reflected the opinions of their readers. A great many statements in the separation petitions could be defended, and there had been as much misrepresentation on the part of the Government as on that of the petitioners. The report of the Government Actuary was an absolute tissue of misrepresentations, and a more flagrant example of juggling with figures had never been presented. In fact, the whole foundation on which Mr. Owen was asked to work was of such a character as could not fail to produce results which were contrary to fact and grossly misleading.

MR. GEORGE: That would be difficult to prove.

MR. VOSPER: The matter had been thoroughly canvassed and discussed, and the Government were asked to appoint a committee or commission to inquire into the report, but the request was refused.

THE PREMIER: Such request had never come to his knowledge.

MR. VOSPER: A public challenge had been thrown out, which had not been taken up.

MR. GEORGE: By Dr. Ellis?

MR. VOSPER: Was not Dr. Ellis worthy of attention in such a matter? The little conversations of the member for the Murray (Mr. George) with other hon. members, such as the hon. member who was now carrying on, always tended to elevate the tone of debate and to enlighten the House so much on subjects under discussion, that he (Mr. Vosper) was always prepared to defer to them.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member was referring to a private conversation which he (Mr. George) had been holding with another member. The hon. member could bring all manner of private subjects into a debate.

MR. VOSPER said his reference was to the peculiarly unmannerly habit the hon. member possessed of interrupting debate by irrelevant interjections, or by holding conversations with other members across the floor of the Chamber.

MR. GEORGE asked whether his conduct was before the Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN said he understood the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) was referring to some private conversation the hon. member (Mr. George) had been holding.

MR. VOSPER: Why should any speaker be continually subjected to such unmannerly interruptions? He would not be silenced or turned aside from his subject by such tactics. He had not been referring to the hon. member. For several minutes past he had been prevented from making a single remark having anything to do with the subject, because of these interruptions; and it appeared there was little respect for the dignity of the Chair, or of the Committee, when such were allowed.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member (Mr. George) had been making some remarks in a very low tone, which he (the Chairman) did not think would interrupt anybody, and the hon. member's (Mr. Vosper's) speech need not have been stopped from that cause.

MR. VOSPER said he had listened to the hon. member for some time, and as the remarks were not discontinued he had called attention to them. Whatever might be said about separation, two petitions were brought up from two different portions of the colony, filled, it was alleged, with all kinds of misrepresentations; and the organisers of these petitions, it was said, did not stop at any kind of calumny, their end being to get separation at any cost and by any means. All this did not indicate that those who signed the petitions were at all in favour of living any longer under the Forrest Government. Moreover, the presentation of such petitions to the Queen was anything but a compliment to the Premier, and anything but a testimonial to the efficiency or the justice of his Government. The argument of the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) was practically that the federal party in the colony were the stronger, and therefore because they were the stronger they should be handicapped. Surely that principle had never been attempted to be introduced into politics, however convenient it might be in sport. True, it might be applied to this House, where those representing the majority of the people were numerically weaker than

the Government, and were severely handicapped in this Chamber. But the whole question was whether the majority or the minority in the colony was to rule. If majority rule were interfered with, minority rule was at once established. If the amendment were carried, minority rule would inevitably result if the majority were not an absolute majority. For instance, at one referendum taken in New South Wales, there were only between 30,000 and 40,000 votes recorded against federation; but the effect of the limit imposed by that colony's Parliament was that this minority vote dominated the federal policy of the colony.

MR. MORAN: Such was the rule with regard to the franchise of hon. members in Parliament, voting on a question involving a change in the constitution. An absolute majority was required to secure any alteration. The referendum franchise was of course wider.

MR. VOSPER: But this question of federation was submitted to the whole people because it concerned them very closely; and if, while submitting the matter to them, provision were also made to allow the minority to rule, the whole position became a farce. Carry the amendment, and the result would be that every absentee, every person who was dead or was indifferent, would be counted as giving an anti-federal vote.

THE PREMIER: No. That was not the objection to the amendment.

MR. MORAN: The amendment was to abolish the rolls altogether, and to enable every living adult to apply for a vote.

MR. VOSPER: Suppose the amendment were carried and the minority allowed to dominate the policy of the country what would become of the majority? We had already seen what the majority could do in the way of propagating bitterness and bad feeling throughout the colony. Supposing the majority found itself balked at the very moment they thought they had the prize of the referendum within their grasp?

MR. MORAN: Certainly, that was the great objection to the amendment.

MR. VOSPER: Undoubtedly. The amendment would bring this colony to a state of agitation, discord, and trouble from which it would take years to recover.

MR. MOORHEAD: The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had said he was in favour of a substantial majority of votes being required; that he would not support the address to the Throne, if the question were carried in the affirmative by a few hundreds of votes only.

MR. LEAKE: No, no. He had been expressing an opinion merely.

MR. VOSPER: The hon. member (Mr. Leake) had simply announced that at present he had not quite made up his mind on that point. If the Bill were carried by a majority on the referendum, he (Mr. Vosper) would offer no opposition to the address to the Throne, because he held that in all cases the majority must govern, for the moment a limitation was put on the power of the majority, that meant minority rule. Seeing it was a question as to which side should govern, the greater or the smaller number, he was distinctly in favour of the Enabling Bill as it stood, and against the amendment.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. JAMES: It was undesirable the debate should be extended. The majority of members in the House, and of the people in the country, thought it desirable the question should be referred to the electors, and once that stage was arrived at the onus rested on those who wanted us to depart from the usual custom to show why the vote should be carried by more than an ordinary majority. Whatever might be hon. members' individual opinions, they should, above all things, desire to have peace in the colony, and have this question settled quietly. If those who thought there should be some fixed majority vote were of opinion they could fix a majority which could secure peace—that is, a majority so large and important that the minority would accept the position of being over-ruled—well and good; he could follow exactly the position of those who took up that stand. But did hon. members think the exceeding discontent, which was too prevalent in this colony, would be satisfied if there were a departure from the ordinary procedure of allowing a simple majority to rule? Whatever their own opinion might be of

the merits and demerits of federation, the question ought to be decided by a simple majority; and so far he had not expressed an opinion, because he had been anxious above all things to have the question referred to the people for determination, believing that otherwise discontent would be caused. He appealed to hon. members to loyally accept the position, and to abide by the decision of the referendum, whether it were vote for or against federation; and he could not agree with the suggestion that the Committee should enter into the consideration of an extended majority.

MR. HIGHAM: Nothing would satisfy the hon. member.

MR. JAMES: If a majority of one were against federation, then so far as the House was concerned, hon. members had discharged their duty; and if a majority of one were in favour of federation, then the decision of the electors ought to be carried into effect. A minority could not be prevented from being converted into a majority.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member had been trying to do that for many years.

MR. JAMES: Whether right or wrong, the conversion of a minority into a majority could not be prevented, because every majority sprung from a minority, and was the ordinary course of politics.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did that apply to changes in the constitution?

MR. JAMES: Undoubtedly the fact applied to changes in the constitution. The tribunal to determine the question of a change in the constitution was the members of the House, and the onus rested on the electors to return representatives of a majority. Members were often returned to Parliament while on particular questions they held views in opposition to the majority of the electors, other influences and issues having arisen, and general elections were always open to the objection that a straight-out vote could never be got on any one question.

MR. HIGHAM: The electors were only atoms, while members of Parliament were the representative body.

MR. JAMES: That was recognised by all. But when a question arose in connection with a change in the constitution, as such questions had arisen in all Parliaments under responsible government

the people were not told they must elect their representatives in favour of the change by a certain majority. It was the ordinary rule that the majority determine a question; but in this there was a contradiction in terms, because a man might be returned on other issues and other questions; and it was because of the difficulty in getting a straight-out vote that the expedient of the referendum had been adopted. It had been suggested there was no precedent for the referendum, or that the precedent of the sister colonies was not applicable; but if he understood aright, the only reason for the suggestion was that while other colonies had compensation we in this colony had no compensation, and that federation was bad for us. But that was not the question before the House now. The point for decision was that of a tribunal to determine the question; and if in the sister colonies it was thought a referendum was desirable, and it was agreed here that was a proper course, we ought not to do anything so inconsistent as to refer the question to the electors, and then turn round and say the decision must be by a certain majority. He disagreed with those who insisted on such a course on the ground that federation was wrong, because that was deciding the very question which the electors ought to determine. He could not agree with the argument that members of this or the other House were free to do exactly what they liked on this question; and he took that attitude not only because they had certain responsibilities to their constituents and the people, but because, say what they would, they could not hide from themselves the fact that in every country a majority would not submit to be ruled by a minority. And in the special circumstances of this colony, this question must be settled in such a manner as would at all events secure some peace and some opportunity for carrying on the ordinary government of the community, free from discord and strife.

THE PREMIER: Who would bring that about?

MR. JAMES: As far as possible, that ought to be the desire, and peace would certainly never be obtained if a departure were made from the ordinary rule, and it was decided that a minority might rule a majority. He hoped hon. members would

realise that fact, and sink their own personal views, because their first and paramount duty was to the people and the interests of the colony; and those interests could best be served by letting this question be determined by a majority, even a majority of one. The present position ought to be accepted, and any future questions left to those who would follow the present Parliament.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): It was impossible for him to assent to the views expressed by the member for East Perth in regard to the change of our constitution. In such a change as that, a majority of one should not be responsible for enacting a new constitution. This was the first application of the referendum, not only in this colony but in any of the other colonies, and in these circumstances there was a great deal to be said against the use of the referendum. Although he had had to fall into line because the majority were against him, still he was not convinced. This would lead to greater questions being discussed, not by this deliberative Chamber, but on the hustings. In the constitution of this House, under the Standing Orders an absolute majority was necessary for an amendment: that was because the Legislature had thought fit to hedge round the rights of the minority when the constitution was to be interfered with by a measure of this character. A substantial majority ought to be in favour of the Bill in order to make it law. As regards the referendum, he took it that an absolute majority should be necessary in order to carry the Bill into law. Then came the question, what was an absolute majority? Under these conditions would it be a mere unit or a mere hundred of the electors, and would they take upon themselves the responsibility of introducing this new system of legislation to which such a large number of people in the colony were averse? Although he could not indorse the amendment, because he thought it was open to too many objections, still if an amendment were moved that the measure should not be deemed to have been carried unless by a majority of one-third of the persons voting, then the one-third majority might be regarded as a substantial one in favour of the Bill. If the amendment were put on these lines

he would see his way to support it, but at present he could not support the amendment. It had been said the rule of the majority should always prevail, and in most legislation that was so—in legislation of the character that you might repeal to-morrow what had been passed to-day. But the measure we had before us was one which, once passed, was irrevocable: therein lay the reason why it should be passed by a substantial majority. And that being the case, a substantial majority ought to be recorded before the Bill became law. There were various reasons as to why in this colony it was necessary we should do something to preserve the rights of the people who were permanently abiding amongst us. There were a large number of men in this colony waiting to make a sum of money, and then return to their families in the East. This Bill would give these people a right to pass the Federation Bill here as if they intended to make this colony their home. We had men of that class in this community; he thought there were a number of them, and they had a double object in view. They wanted to vote for federation because the federation of this colony would be to the detriment of this colony and to the advancement of the other colonies. That was the reason why a substantial majority should be insisted on. He reserved to himself the right, at a later stage of the debate, or after the referendum had been passed, and before it had finally left this Chamber, when the address was under discussion, if the Bill was only passed by a bare majority, to object to it.

MR. HIGHAM: Before the amendment was put, he desired to move an amendment to the clause which would meet with greater favour amongst hon. members than the amendment now before the Committee. He moved that after "given," in line 2 of Clause 10, the following words be added: "Which shall be only such voters as shall be registered under electors' rights." It was his desire to do away with all possibility of personation, to do away with dead men's votes, the votes of lunatics and criminals, which had been referred to by members on the Opposition side, absentees and plural voting, and which would give to the electors an opportunity of acquiring

electors' rights that were to be given to them under the Bill. He understood that one or two prior clauses of the Bill would have to be recommitted in order to amend them to make them agree with his amendment; but the Premier was going to recommit the Bill in any case. The object of his amendment was to give the electors of the colony every opportunity of securing electors' rights, and the time afforded would give that opportunity. As far as he could judge by the Press and the telegrams which had been laid on the table, the Premiers of the other colonies thought too much time was to be given to the electors to enable them to secure their rights. In doing away with the present electoral rolls and giving every elector the responsibility of securing his elector's right, we were throwing the responsibility on the right shoulders. In doing away with the plural voting an obligation would be conferred on members of the Opposition.

MR. GREGORY: Did not the hon. member support plural voting in the last session?

MR. HIGHAM: Yes; and he would do it again if an opportunity were given him, as he thought it was necessary in a colony like this. We were carrying into effect the Electoral Act passed last session by which the franchise was conferred on the women of the colony, giving them an equal opportunity with men to record their votes. He (Mr. Higham) was an anti-federalist, but while he was prepared to argue that Western Australia had a great deal to lose by federation, he also contended that those federalists who had stood on the public platform or in this House had not produced a single argument to prove what advantage was going to accrue to this colony by joining federation.

MR. GREGORY: We had not heard any of the anti-federalists outside yet.

MR. HIGHAM: The anti-federalists had been heard inside the House, and there had never been any refutation of their arguments. We had heard a great deal of sentiment and bathos and a great deal of what the member for East Perth called "skite," but no real argument had been brought forward to prove that a single benefit would accrue to Western Australia by federation.

MR. JAMES: The hon. member was not to be convinced.

MR. HIGHAM said he was prepared to be convinced.

MR. MORAN: To make the member for East Perth a Senator would be one of the advantages.

MR. HIGHAM: When the Bill went to the people, as he desired it to go just as much as any member on the Opposition side, or any federalist on the Government side, his desire was to see it go on fair lines, and the only fair way he could see was that we should afford to every man and woman of mature age in this colony, who was entitled to vote on the subject, an opportunity of securing an electoral right during the next two months, and let those who showed their interest in the matter decide the question. He did not want any 51 per cent. majority. He wanted nothing more than a bare majority, although he did not altogether agree with the member for East Perth (Mr. James) when the hon. member said a majority of one should decide the question. If, however, the matter was put before the electors of the colony under the present franchise, and it was decided by a majority of one, he would be satisfied to abide by that decision and make the best of it.

MR. VOSPER: Must not the amendment of the member for York be disposed of before that of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) was dealt with?

THE CHAIRMAN: The two amendments could be dealt with simultaneously.

MR. VOSPER: The amendment of the member for Fremantle was to the effect that there should be one adult one vote in connection with this Bill.

MR. MONGER: The proposal by him was exactly the same.

THE PREMIER: The principle of one adult one vote was already provided for in the Bill.

MR. VOSPER: That was what he was going to point out. The principle was provided for in Sub-clause 5 of Clause 3.

MR. MORAN: The intention of the amendment by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) was that everybody who desired to vote on the question of federation should come forward and procure his bit of scrip in the citizenship of Western Australia, his bank-note, which would be presented on the day of election and

marked off, whereupon he would receive the value of it, which would be the right to vote. That proposal was introduced in order to surmount the objection made so much of by the federal leader as to the blind seeing, the lame walking, and the deaf hearing, on referendum day. The object of the hon. member (Mr. Higham) was to make the referendum a thing apart altogether from the ordinary Parliamentary roll, because it was admitted that the ordinary Parliamentary roll was not a perfect one, but was objectionable inasmuch as it would allow impersonation. But one wanted members, and especially representatives of country electorates, to see what this would mean. It would mean disfranchising the scattered population in the agricultural districts, and casting upon them the onus of coming forward to receive new rights. That effect would not be experienced in the towns, because the contending parties in the large centres of population would work their audiences up to a pitch of enthusiasm, and the banks for the issues of those notes would be scattered in convenient places throughout all cities and large centres of population. Was it wise to disfranchise at one blow the whole of the permanent settlers of the colony, and cast upon them the onus of having to come long distances to get their electoral scrip? He was more anxious that the farming population of the colony should vote than that any other section of the community should do so. In fact, he was not at all interested as to whether federalists could vote, and, indeed, he would rather that federalists kept away, for that matter. He was not going out of his way in order to meet what after all was only rather a lame objection to the rolls. To pass the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) would simply be playing into the hands of those who desired to see the agricultural section of the country disfranchised. If we were to go to the country on this question, let us do all we could to purify the rolls. Anti-federalists did not wish to win by unfair means, but the anti-federalists had a majority in the House, and let not members be led away to play into the hands of the federalists. Let anti-federalists protect their own people as well as give the federalists a fair chance. He asked us

to respect the present rolls as well as do all we could to purify them, and let us afford additional convenience by adopting the principle of granting voters' certificates. If that were done, everything necessary would be accomplished, and he did not think anyone would object to the granting of voters' certificates. The best objects of the Bill would be carried out by respecting the present rolls and purifying them, and particularly should those on the goldfields be purified. There were stacks of dead men voting, or having the power to vote at the present time, in Kalgoorlie or Kanowna—especially in Kanowna. There were a few thousand political corpses in Kanowna, whose names still appeared on the political roll. The federalists were not going to gain much by purification of the rolls. There were two points to be remembered, one being that we should refrain from taking unfair advantage, whilst the other was that purification of the rolls would probably hit the federalists harder than the anti-federalists.

THE PREMIER: For bringing this point so clearly under the notice of hon. members, he was very much obliged to the member who had just spoken. He (the Premier) had it in his mind to make similar remarks, and he was sure the member for York (Mr. Monger) and the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) would, if they considered for a moment, see that it would never do, in the interests of the permanent population of this colony, to destroy all the rolls at present in existence. It was supposed there were about forty thousand people on the rolls; perhaps more.

MR. HIGHAM: The amendment did not alter that.

THE PREMIER: It did, for he understood the hon. member's amendment to be that no person who had not taken out a voter's certificate should be entitled to vote.

MR. HIGHAM rose to explain that, as far as his amendment was concerned, it was only to the effect that the present rolls should not be used for the purpose of the referendum. He (Mr. Higham) was not destroying the rolls in the slightest degree.

MR. MORAN: Members did not want the Parliamentary rolls to be destroyed in regard to the referendum.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member (Mr. Higham) wished people to be able to obtain voting certificates, that was what was proposed in the Bill.

MR. MORAN: The member for Fremantle wanted to destroy the rolls, and objection was taken to that.

THE PREMIER: Roughly speaking, there were on the rolls 40,000 people who already had the right of voting, and any proposal which would cause those people to make two journeys—first, when they went to the registrar to get a certificate, and afterwards when they exercised the vote—seemed to him to be undesirable. Why disturb those whose names were already on the electoral rolls of the colony? Their rights ought to be preserved. There were on the roll many who had gone away. Some had died, or had left the district. Those who had left the district would be able to send their votes, if they were anywhere else in the colony, and that was quite right, because the voting on this question would not be district voting, for the whole colony would be one electorate. That would be a simple matter, the same as in the case of persons who were allowed under the present electoral law to send votes if absent from their districts. In his opinion, it did not matter very much, therefore, whether the people were in the district or not. We knew well that the rolls were very much inflated in some cases.

MR. GEORGE: Rotten.

THE PREMIER: In the North-East Coolgardie district there were between three and four thousand people on the roll, and he heard six months ago, when there had been an inspection by the registrar, that only 1,700 of those people were now in that electorate—now perhaps only 1,200. Therefore, the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) sailed under colours which were not quite right. He (the Premier) supposed that he himself represented more people than did the hon. member. The hon. member stood in this House as the representative of three or four thousand, but he did not represent anything like that number. The same held good in regard to lots of others in the House. We knew that on the goldfields people had been put on the rolls wholesale, and then had left the place. But, even if they had gone away, they would be able to vote under this Bill, wherever they were,

and, if not on the roll, they could obtain voters' certificates.

MR. GEORGE: That was not the people voting, anyhow.

THE PREMIER: It would be the people voting, in his opinion.

MR. GEORGE: No.

THE PREMIER: The desire the Government had was that everyone should vote on this occasion, and a person who voted should know what he was voting for.

MR. GEORGE: A person would have trouble before he got a voting certificate.

THE PREMIER: No trouble whatever.

MR. GEORGE: Yes; a person had to obtain an elector's certificate, which ought not to be the case.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) would, he thought, let everyone have a vote at the referendum.

MR. GEORGE: Yes.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member would like people to go early and vote often.

MR. GEORGE: No.

THE PREMIER: Then a voter would have to be branded, because certainly one could not tell each voter a second time. A voter would go to different places.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A person could vote more than once, if he possessed a voter's certificate.

THE PREMIER: No. The hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) had not read the Bill. If a person had a voter's right and was on the rolls he might vote twice, but perhaps he would get seven years for perjury.

MR. GEORGE: Then let not the Premier vote too often.

THE PREMIER: The reason he rose was to show hon. members that it would never do to destroy the present rolls, and that such procedure would not be in the interests of the colony.

MR. GEORGE: Two or three arguments with regard to this matter had been heard by him, but he need hardly say he did not agree with those arguments. He rose for the purpose of saying the cry in this colony for the last few months had been "The Bill to the people." Who were the people of Western Australia? Not the people on

the rolls. We all knew, and had been told by the Premier himself, that some of the rolls were inflated. Those who had anything to do with an election lately knew better than the Premier that the rolls were inflated, and were unreliable. The Bill was to go to the people. Why should it not go? All the people of the colony contributed through the customs to the taxation, therefore all had a right to vote. The provision for voters' certificates was playing with the question, and was not really sending the Bill to the people. The Premier had said that people might vote early and vote often. That had recently been done in the colony, but surely the bulk of the people would do nothing of the sort, and the number of those who did would be inconsiderable. The Premier asked, were we simply to allow the people to go to the booths and vote? That was exactly what he (Mr. George) would like them to do. What was said of the scattered population of agricultural constituencies applied with equal force to the goldfields. The Premier had no idea of the staff which would be required to register voters' certificates. Why should not the taking out of the certificates and the voting be made one operation?

MR. HIGHAM: It was said the bulk of the people even now would have to register.

MR. GEORGE: Undoubtedly the rolls were rotten. For this, not Mr. Daly, but the inadequate machinery, was to blame.

MR. MORAN: How would the hon. member keep a record of the ballot papers?

MR. GEORGE: Undoubtedly there were difficulties in the way, but if there was to be a vote of the whole of the people, let us disregard these smaller difficulties and run the risk.

THE PREMIER: What about the twelve months' residence?

MR. GEORGE: How many colonists had not been here 12 months? Very few.

MR. MORAN: Four or five thousand.

MR. GEORGE: Even so, as many of these would vote for as would vote against federation. It was a great farce throwing any obstacle in the way to prevent people from voting.

MR. MORAN agreed with the last speaker that the people should vote; but

how, without previous registration, could a record of the ballot-papers be kept? Would the hon. member take a show of hands? How identify the voters? How prevent a mob of men from voting at one polling booth after another?

MR. VOSPER: They would have to be photographed after voting.

MR. MORAN: Or branded. There must be a check on the voters, and also on the returning officer, who, without such check, might stuff the ballot-box with informal or bogus papers.

MR. GEORGE: Impossible.

MR. MORAN: The Bill provided the easiest method of securing the right to vote, for a voter was identified by his certificate.

MR. GEORGE: And wasted time in taking it out.

MR. MORAN: Surely it was not a waste of time to go to get a vote.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member had pointed out that difficulty in the case of scattered communities.

MR. MORAN: But those already on the roll were provided for. Surely the new arrivals might be asked to take out certificates.

THE PREMIER: And they had weeks in which to do so.

MR. MORAN: They had two months. He hoped expense would not be spared, and that voters even in remote corners of the colony might be enabled to register.

MR. KINGSMILL supported the amendment of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham), which, coming from a Government supporter, was very acceptable, should fulfil every requirement, and suit even those dwelling in remote places who within the next two months could surely visit a registrar's office once, and visit it again on the 7th August, which was to be proclaimed a holiday. People who would not do this were scarcely worth considering. There was grave risk in preserving the ordinary rolls for the referendum. How could plural voting be prevented if it were possible to send voting papers by post?

MR. MORAN: Would a man sign his name three times?

MR. KINGSMILL: He might run the risk.

MR. MORAN: A man with a plural vote had, as a rule, common sense attached to it.

MR. KINGSMILL: Not necessarily. One could point, for instance, to hon. members such as the member who has just spoken, who had plural votes.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Of the three schemes before the Committee, the first asked for a vote of 51 per cent. of all the electors on the rolls, to carry the Bill. He was on six different rolls; he could only vote once on the Bill; consequently his other five votes would, under the suggestion, be counted as given again in federation. By the second suggestion, 51 per cent. of those who took out certificates would carry the Bill. But nowhere the colonies had 51 per cent. of the voters on the roll been cast.

MR. MORAN: Was the hon. member speaking of single electorates or of the whole colony?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It had never been possible to get a 50 per cent. vote.

MR. MORAN: Several times he had seen a much higher percentage polled in an electorate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: To the mind of most people, federation was an abstract question; consequently it seemed unreasonable to suppose 50 per cent. of the electors would vote. If it were claimed there must be a clear majority to carry the Bill, the whole referendum would fall to the ground. Thirdly, it was proposed that only those who took out electors' rights should vote. But already people had taken the trouble to get on the rolls to the number of between 45,000 and 50,000, a good many of them being, of course, on several rolls; but probably at least 35,000 to 40,000 had registered their names. Was it reasonable to ask such people to take out electors' rights when they were already on the roll?

MR. HIGHAM: They could easily do so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Imagine the Government starting out to-morrow to issue 60,000 electors' rights in two months! The thing was impossible.

MR. HIGHAM: Where did the Federation League come in?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No matter how many booths were open, it would be impossible in that time to get the whole of the people on the rolls; for the reason amongst others, that everybody procrastinated and would want to get on the roll on the last day. There might

a few anxious people who would begin early, but imagine having to face the herculean task of issuing 60,000 electors' rights in the time at our disposal, and for no purpose whatever, so far as those now on the roll were concerned. He hoped the Committee would see their way to support the Premier, and start with the people who had taken the trouble to get on the roll. If the position were taken up that only one vote was to be cast by each elector, the roll could be dealt with, because it was an established thing, and if a man voted twice, he could easily be found out. As to dual voting under an elector's right, that was quite possible, but in his opinion people would not trouble themselves to vote twice. It was possible, for instance, that a man might go to the Perth booth and say his name was "John Brown," and then go to James street booth and say his name was "John Smith," and vote again, and so on at all the booths in the city; but there was not sufficient inducement in the question of federation for anybody to take the risk of being found out; and, taking humanity as a whole, people were not so dishonest as to desire to cast a dual vote when they knew their privilege was to cast only one. In the excitement of an ordinary election where there were two parties, and issues were at stake, it was possible for men to forget themselves, and take advantage of the opportunities for dual voting.

MR. HIGHAM: Are there no issues at stake in this question?

A MEMBER: No beer?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There would be no beer in the question at all. The federalists at any rate were not going to spend any money in beer, nor did he think the anti-federalists would do anything of the kind. This was a vote of the people themselves, and he took it that not half of the people who had the privilege would even vote at all; and there was great force in what the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) had said. If the people in the settled districts, who were on the rolls by virtue of being taxpayers, were asked to take out an elector's right, a large number of them would never hear of the request until after the vote was over. Persons engaged in work in the back country and on the goldfields, and even people down on the coast, would

not hear about the matter; and the present idea amongst the people was that all who were on the roll now would be entitled to vote. The Bill provided that an elector's right must be taken out not later than the preceding Saturday, and it was possible that an elector now on the roll might present himself, only to find he was unable to record his opinion. That was a very unsatisfactory state of things. Then it was suggested that if there were electors' rights only, a very small portion of the people would vote at all; and that would be equally unsatisfactory. Supposing 20,000 people took out rights—and that would be a large number, in the next two months—and that 19,000 of these voted "aye" for the Bill, that would not be a satisfactory result. What we wanted was a decision by just as many of the people as it was possible to get on the roll; and that was why it was proposed to start with the present electors, and then give everybody else, who were not on the roll, an opportunity of exercising a vote. The electoral registrars would be busy enough before the polling day, and all the forces the Government could spare, and all the booths they could possibly open out, would be required to issue these rights. Depend on it, people would wait until the end of the time, and there would then be such a rush that it would not be possible to place them on the roll. Looking at the three suggestions made, everyone seemed to him entirely impracticable and unworkable, and the wiser course would be to pass the Bill as it stood, with the conditions the Premier had proposed. It was to be hoped the Committee would see their way to pass Clause 10 as drafted.

MR. WILSON: The amendment of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) certainly appealed to his judgment, and if he could see it could be acted on, he would be inclined to support it. But the only way in which that amendment could be given effect to would be to allow the electors to apply for their rights up to the very day of polling. That, of course, would necessitate a lengthy poll of five to eight days, so that electors on going to claim their right could cast their vote at the same time. If that could be done, it would mean the re-casting of the whole Bill, and he for one would be much

inclined, under such circumstances, to support that amendment. The other amendment, proposed by the member for York (Mr. Monger), would not hold water. The mover himself had admitted it was not worthy of consideration, for he had proposed to modify it, because those electors who were dead and gone would, by their very absence, be practically voting against the measure. Even if amended, the same argument would apply as applied to the amendment of the member for Fremantle. If, on the other hand, only those who claimed electors' rights voted, and there could be a lengthy poll, he for one would be prepared to accept the 51 per cent. condition, because he would be satisfied that every man and woman who claimed a vote would vote at the time of making the claim. If there were 51 per cent. in favour, the Bill would be carried rightly enough; and if there were under 51 per cent. he would be satisfied that the majority of the people who had claimed votes were against federation; and Parliament would then be justified in accepting the decision. Dual voting would always have to be guarded against, so far as possible, because there would always be opportunities for people to do wrong in voting, no matter what system were adopted. If the safeguards now applicable to voting under the present rolls were not sufficient to deter people from voting twice, then the same safeguards would not deter them under any one of the proposals now before the Committee. The penalties provided in the Bill for those who broke the law ought to be sufficient to deter anyone from attempting to exercise a dual vote; and if these penalties were not sufficient, it would not matter what system were adopted, there would be dual voting to some extent. That in the referendum would be neutralised by the fact that on one side or the other mistakes would occur, and those who did not wish to do what was right in the matter would probably register two or three times, and this would cut both ways, so that the matter need not be taken into consideration. In discussing the proposal of the 51 per cent. majority, the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) laid great stress on the fact that federalists, who had been able to get a petition so largely signed in favour of federation and

separation, could also get people to poll at the referendum. That was hardly fair, because it was a different thing taking a petition to the people to sign, and bringing people to the petition, or, in other words, bringing the people to the polling booth. The same argument might well be used on the other side, because those who were against federation could just as easily be asked to roll up and record their votes.

MR. GEORGE: Those against the Bill would be asked; there need be no fear about that.

MR. WILSON: The member for North Murchison thought it just that federalists should be forced to bring up their supporters to vote, while anti-federalists ought to secure the votes of all who stayed away. He (Mr. Wilson) was with the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth), and thought that now the Bill had gone this far, and there were before hon. members several proposals which were very complicated, and would require going through and re-casting, it would be the best thing, under the circumstances, to accept Clause 10 in the Bill, pass it, and send it on to the Legislative Council, and have the measure made law as early as possible.

MR. MITCHELL pleaded guilty to being an anti-federalist, and yet he could not support any of the amendments which were something like Lord Robert would describe as a "flank movement."

MR. HIGHAM: A very good movement sometimes.

MR. MITCHELL: If the Bill had to be sent to the people, let it be sent to the people without any restrictions as to whether there had to be a majority or not. If any one wanted a fixed majority, let it be a majority obtained fairly and squarely. Let it be said that there must be a majority in favour of the Bill, say 60 per cent. of those who recorded their votes.

A MEMBER: "Fairly and squarely?"

MR. MITCHELL: Yes. What one of the amendments asked for was a percentage of those on the roll, and not of those who recorded their votes, which was a very different thing. Supposing the Bill were sent to the people on the terms proposed by the amendment, and the Bill were defeated, it would be said there had not been a fair poll, and there would follow discontent, and probably an agitation

tion more serious than we had had before. Let the Bill by all means be sent to the people, as had been promised, and let federalists and anti-federalists alike do all they could to educate the people to give a proper vote on this great measure, which meant so much to the colony of Western Australia. During the debate it had been suggested the present roll should be discarded, but that would create a great deal of trouble and be more than the people would tolerate. What trouble was it for those who were not on the roll to come in and ask for electors' rights? Those who would not take the trouble to do that were not fit to be called citizens of the colony. He for one would do all he possibly could to explain the Commonwealth Bill to his constituents, and to persuade his friends, and also those who were not his friends, to vote against it.

MR. SOLOMON said he could not support the amendment. He suggested that the names of the voters should be kept on the rolls, and the rolls be exhibited in every available place throughout the colony in the manner in which municipal rolls were exhibited at the present time, a month or six weeks before the election, so that all persons within reach could see whether their names were on the roll or not. This would facilitate the electors, if they were not already on the rolls, in applying for voters' certificates.

MR. HIGHAM said he desired to alter the last two words of his amendment; instead of "electors' rights," to insert "voters' certificates according to Schedule 2 of the Bill." He was as sincere as anyone in wishing to see the Bill go to the people on fair and equitable lines, but he could not conceive the sending of the Bill to the people on the present electoral rolls, as under them personation could be carried on in many ways. Dead men could be voted for; also absentees, lunatics, criminals, and persons labouring under other disabilities. He was a little afraid there would be as much unscrupulousness in the future as there had been in the past in the matter of voting. We had been told there were at present on the North-East Coolgardie roll 4,000 names, whereas the population of that district was 1,600 or 1,700 at present; yet it would not surprise him to learn that 4,000 people voted in North-East Cool-

gardie. The most fair and equitable way of voting would be for all adults to vote under voters' certificates. There was ample time to grant these certificates, and if people did not take the trouble to secure certificates they should go without the right to vote.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They would not have time, as all would rush to secure their certificates on the last few days.

MR. HIGHAM: There were two months in which certificates could be obtained, therefore he could not see much difficulty about the matter. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) had spoken about the difficulty in outlying places of persons getting voters' certificates. If the Federal League on the one hand and the National League on the other used as much vigour in the future as they had used in the past, all people would have a fair opportunity of securing certificates. If it was possible for the Federal League to obtain 28,000 signatures to a petition in a short period, it would be just as easy for that League to see that persons received electors' rights. Still there would be just as much opportunity of obtaining dual certificates as there was of obtaining dual signatures to the petition. Mr. Illingworth had said, in referring to the present roll which comprised 35,000 or 40,000 names, that it was a great hardship to put people to the trouble, and a great expense, of obtaining voters' certificates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They would never hear about it; that was what he had said.

MR. HIGHAM: The Federal League would take good care that they would hear about it. They took good care that people signed the separation petition. As to the peculiar circumstance of the colony, he could not see why we should send the original Bill to the people to be accepted by a bare majority even with the voters' certificates. The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) in speaking to his (Mr. Higham's) amendment said that if the electors could register their votes on the day of the poll and vote straight off he would support the amendment, but he (Mr. Higham) did not think that would be applicable, and therefore could not accept the suggestion. If we submitted the Bill to the people we wanted a fair vote, free from evasions, free from dual voting and personation of any kind, and

the only way to secure that was to vote on voters' certificates. Under the present system, he (Mr. Higham) might vote in ten electorates, and with the present scrutiny the rolls received, he did not think he would be convicted.

MR. KINGSMILL, in explanation, said it was only due to the member for Fremantle to tell him that when he (Mr. Kingsmill) spoke about supporting his (Mr. Higham's) amendment he was choosing the lesser of two evils. He was looking at the member for Fremantle's amendment as against that proposed by the member for York. He intended all along to support the clause as it stood if it could get through; if not he would support the amendment of the member for Fremantle.

Amendment (Mr. Higham's, as altered) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	5
Noes	...	...	...	23

Majority against ... 18

Ayes.
Mr. Higham
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Locke
Mr. Monger
Mr. Hubble (Teller).

Noes.
Mr. Doherty
Sir John Forrest
Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. George
Mr. Hall
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. James
Mr. Leake
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Motan
Mr. Oats
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Rason
Mr. Robson
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Wood
Mr. Gregory (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question—that Clause 10 be struck out with a view of inserting other words—put, and negatived on the voices. Mr. Monger's amendment thus indirectly negatived.

Clause as printed put and passed.

Schedule 1—agreed to.

Schedules 2, etc.:

On motions by the PREMIER, resolved that Schedules 2 and 3, as on the Notice Paper, do stand as Schedule 2 and 3 in the Bill; also that Schedule 2 of the Bill do stand as Schedule 4. Agreed also that Schedule 3 be numbered 5.

Preamble:

THE PREMIER moved that the word "if any," in line 20, be struck out.

Put and passed, and the preamble as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the PREMIER, Bill recommitted for amendments.

THE PREMIER: The further amendments he proposed to make were not many, nor were they very important, but he would move them in order to make the Bill more complete.

Clause 2—Interpretation of terms:

THE PREMIER moved that after the interpretation of "Assembly," line 4 there be inserted:

"Assistant Registrar"—a person appointed as such for the purposes of this Act under the powers conferred by the Electoral Act 1899, Section 158.

He was advised it would perhaps be better to make this amendment, which was drawn attention to the other night. There could be no objection to it. It was merely a definition of an assistant registrar.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause 3—Submission to the electors:

THE PREMIER moved that the word "seventh day of August," in line 1, be struck out, and "twenty-fourth day of July" inserted in lieu. He desired to ask the opinion of the House with regard to the date of holding the referendum. He had received a communication from the Premier of Victoria, who was the only Premier who had addressed him on the subject, in regard to the inconvenience which would be caused to Victoria by having the date of the referendum so far ahead, and he promised to look into the matter. He had looked into it, and it seemed to him we might very well curtail the time by a fortnight without doing injury to anyone. For the most part those who would wish to vote were in the larger centres, and he thought there would be no difficulty in getting those in the smaller communities to apply for their electoral rights, if they were not already on the roll. The only difficulty he saw would be away up at Wyndham and Hall's Creek, but he did not think there were many persons who were not on the roll in those cases.

A MEMBER: Oh! Were there not?

MR. D. FORREST: What about Ashburton?

THE PREMIER: Ashburton could be reached; but steamers did not go to Wyndham. At any rate, we would not be able to get a steamer to Wyndham by the 7th August, so we had to leave the electors there out of the question. We could not get everywhere. It was impossible to go to such places as he referred to.

MR. GEORGE: There were printers up there.

THE PREMIER: We would not be able to reach the people there; but, at any rate, we might see what we could do. With regard to all the other places, we could do what was wanted easily enough by the 24th of July; and even looking at it from the local point of view, our own convenience, he was sure we did not want this question to be hanging about too long. He would be glad to get the referendum over. He, therefore, moved his amendment. If the amendment were carried, the day of the week for the referendum to be taken would be the same, namely Tuesday.

MR. GEORGE: Why not have the referendum next week?

THE PREMIER: There would not be time.

MR. GEORGE: Plenty of time.

MR. MONGER: How long would it take to prepare the forms?

THE PREMIER: A lot of time.

MR. MORAN: The House would not, he hoped, support the amendment of the Premier. He did not know what this colony owed to Victoria or any of the other colonies that we should oblige them in this matter. Those colonies had not been particularly obliging to Western Australia, and he would be sorry to interfere with one electorate in Western Australia to suit the convenience of Victoria. The longer he could keep Victoria waiting the more pleased he would be. There was another and greater reason which appealed to him and to the House. We had been told on both sides of the House that the question had not been before the country.

THE PREMIER: If the amendment were carried, nearly eight weeks would elapse before the referendum.

MR. MORAN: The Premier was a long time at the conference, and when he came

back he did not know the Bill, nor did he know it for some time afterwards.

MR. GEORGE: The Premier did not know it now.

MR. MORAN: In his opinion the time between now and the 7th of August would not be too long for the question to be before the people of Western Australia. He would suggest that we leave the Bill as it stood in this respect, and that we should study the interests and convenience of the electors of Western Australia. He did not hold that we should sacrifice a little of the time in which we had to deal with this question for the convenience of Victoria in her frantic haste to get into federation.

MR. MONGER: There was no desire on his part to support the amendment of the Premier, more particularly after the remarks just made, in which the right hon. gentleman said that practically a certain portion of the colony would be disfranchised if we carried out his wishes. Better defer the date of the referendum until it could be taken even in the remotest parts of the colony.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was unlikely that any portion of the colony would be disfranchised, for the substance of the forms could be conveyed by telegraph to the returning officers, who could prepare the forms for their own districts.

MR. LEAKE: The amendment was unobjectionable.

MR. MONGER: Make the date next week, or leave it as in the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: That would be inconsistent. There was evidently no intention of disfranchising anybody. The question was, could we, by fixing the 24th July, be assured that the referendum would be taken in as complete a form as possible? An early date would meet the wishes of the Secretary of State, who had conveyed to the Premier the views of the Imperial authorities.

MR. MORAN: It appeared by the morning papers that Mr. Philp, the Premier of Queensland, had warned the Premier of Victoria (Mr. McLean) that if the original alterations proposed by the Imperial Government in Clause 74 were insisted on, the Queensland Government would insist on a further alteration in the covering clauses of the Bill, making it necessary that the Bill should be approved

by the Queensland Parliament before becoming law in Queensland. The basic principle for referring the Bill to the people had all along been that they should be offered the real Bill; and Western Australia would be the only colony in which the true Bill would be submitted to the people, the other colonies having referred a Bill which had since been destroyed.

MR. LEAKE: "Destroyed" was surely an exaggeration.

MR. MORAN: If the threat of the Queensland Government were carried out, in what position would we be had we previously taken the referendum? Apparently the federalists did not care what Bill went to the people, or on what terms federation was carried, so long as there was a referendum, the federalist leaders being seemingly very anxious to become members of the Federal Parliament. He (Mr. Moran) would like a further amendment, still further postponing the date of the referendum, so that the vote should not be taken before the ultimate fate of the Bill was known.

THE PREMIER: On the proposed date of the referendum, Parliament would be in session, and any necessary alterations in the Enabling Bill could then be made.

MR. GEORGE: What was the use of alteration?

MR. MORAN: The leading metropolitan newspapers might well abandon their present position of neutrality, and let the people know what they thought of federation.

THE PREMIER: There was no idea in his mind of obliging another colony at the expense of this, for neither Victoria nor New South Wales had behaved in such a way as to make him feel much pleased with them. At the same time, seven weeks from to-day was long enough to prepare for the referendum.

MR. MONGER: The Bill had not yet gone through the Upper House.

THE PREMIER: That could hardly take long.

MR. MORAN: They might yet chuck it into the gutter, and leave it there.

THE PREMIER: Seven weeks was a good while, and nine weeks probably too long.

MR. GEORGE: Then why was nine weeks fixed?

THE PREMIER: If hon. member would agree to split the difference, he would not object to making the 31st July the date. He did not wish to divide the Committee on the question.

MR. GEORGE: But they would divide.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member shook his head as if he had in his pocket every vote in the House.

MR. GEORGE: On the authority of the Premier it had been announced by the Press that the referendum would be taken on the 7th August. Why alter the date? If the Premier thought a great question of this sort could be fought out in the short time he mentioned, the right hon. gentleman was mistaken. If we erred at all, let us err on the side of giving the people ample time for consideration, and those who wished to fight the question throughout the country time to do their fighting. It was regrettable that the Premier, after ten years of consideration, did not yet know his own mind on this question.

Question—that the date proposed to be struck out be struck out, with a view to inserting other words (the Premier's amendment)—put, and a division taken as follows:—

Ayes	...	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	...	12

Majority for ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Sir John Forrest	Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Gregory	Mr. George
Mr. Holmes	Mr. Hall
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Higham
Mr. James	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. Monger
Mr. Leake	Mr. Moran
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Robson
Mr. Pennefather	Sir J. G. Lee Steere
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Wallace
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Wood
Mr. Throssell	Mr. Hubble (Teller).
Mr. Vosper	
Mr. Wilson	
Mr. Rason (Teller).	

Date struck out accordingly.

Further question—that "the 24th day of July" be inserted—put:

MR. MONGER moved, as an amendment, that "the 31st day of July" be inserted. This was the date the Premier had said he was prepared to accept as a compromise.

THE PREMIER: That amendment could be agreed to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH suggested that the last day of the month was a very in

convenient day for a public holiday, so far as business was concerned.

Amendment (Mr. Monger's) put, and passed on the voices.

Clause 4—Returning officer:

THE PREMIER moved that in Sub-clause 3 the word "appointed" be struck out, as unnecessary and misleading. Under the Electoral Act of 1899, returning officers continued in office without reappointment.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause 7—Voters' certificates:

THE PREMIER moved that in line 6, after "therefor" the words "at any polling place" be struck out, and "in the form of the second schedule hereto" be inserted in lieu. Application might be made at the Registrar's office, and not at the polling booth, the latter of which would be named in the certificate.

Amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that in the last two lines the words "in the form of the second schedule hereto, at least two days before the date of the submission" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu: "On any week day except Saturday between the hours of nine a.m. and four p.m., and on Saturday between the hours of nine a.m. and twelve noon up to and including 28th July, 1900."

MR. GREGORY suggested that arrangements should be made to have the registrar's office open on the Saturday afternoon for the convenience of working men, who had no other time at their disposal for applying for electors' rights.

MR. GEORGE: The suggestion was a good one in the interests of men in factories and so on, who worked until five o'clock in the day, and did not leave their employment until twelve or one o'clock on Saturday. In their case, if the Premier's amendment were allowed to pass, it would mean losing a day's work to obtain the right to vote in the referendum.

THE PREMIER: The registrar could not be at the office always.

MR. GEORGE: The registrar did not do so much work during the day that he could not work at night.

Question—that the words proposed to be struck out be struck out—put and passed.

On the further question as to inserting the other words,

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the word "noon" be struck out, and "six p.m." inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed, and the amendment as amended agreed to.

THE PREMIER moved that in Sub-clause 3, after "each," the words "polling place within each" be inserted; further that at the end of Sub-clause 3, after the word "certificate" the words "in the presence of such officer" be inserted.

Amendments put and passed.

Bill reported with further amendments.

On motion by the PREMIER, Standing Orders were suspended to enable the further stages to be completed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is there any reason why the third reading should not be taken to-night?

• THE SPEAKER: The Bill will have to be reprinted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:51 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th June, 1900.

Paper presented—Question: Cyanide Plants for Public Batteries—Leave of Absence—Federation Enabling Bill, first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Further return relating to the appointment of relatives of Ministers to offices in the civil service, as ordered.

Ordered to lie on the table.