

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 22nd May, 1900.

Swearing-in of new Members—Election of President—
Presentation of President-elect. Papers presented—
Question: Motions for adjournment and limit of
debate—Address-in-reply, resumed and adjourned
—Adjournment.

The Legislative Council met at 4 o'clock,
p.m., pursuant to adjournment.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour Mr. Justice Stone, having
been commissioned by the Governor,
attended in the Chamber to administer
to newly-elected members the oath of
allegiance to Her Majesty.

The Clerk of Parliament (Mr. C. Lee
Steere) produced the election writs,
showing the return of eight representatives
to fill vacancies caused by effluxion of
time.

The following representatives then took
and subscribed the oath, and signed the
members' roll:—Sir George Shenton
(Metropolitan Province), Mr. J. W.
Hackett (South-East Province), Mr. C.
E. Dempster (East Province), Mr. F. M.
Stone (North Province), Mr. M. L. Moss
(West Province), Mr. C. Sommers (North-
East Province), Mr. J. M. Drew (Central
Province), Mr. Wesley Maley (South-
East Province).

His Honour the Commissioner then
left the Chamber.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
(Hon G. Randell): It is my duty, Mr.
Clerk, to remind the House that it is
necessary, before proceeding to further
business, to elect a President; and I now
call upon the hon. members who have to
perform the duty of proposing and second-
ing an appointment.

HON. R. S. HAYNES (Central
Province): I move that Sir George
Shenton be re-elected President of the
House. On looking around, one cannot
see any person more fit to fill the high
and important position, which entails
sitting for many weary hours in the chair
listening to debates, not always of the
brilliantest; and throughout the time I
have had the honour of holding a seat in
the House, Sir George Shenton has dis-

charged the functions of President in
a manner which certainly reflects the
greatest credit on him. Whenever the
privileges of the House have been
threatened, as they have been on some
occasions, we have always found a noble
champion in Sir George Shenton. Whilst
firm in seeing that our privileges are
preserved, he has been careful never to
do that which might bring about collision
between the two Houses; and it is seldom
a person can be found to fill the duties
of such an office in so able and impartial
a manner. I need say nothing more of
him, because he is known to all the mem-
bers of the House. All I will say is that
I know of no person who could fill the
position so well, and I hope he will
not only be re-elected this time but on
future occasions. I therefore have much
pleasure in proposing that Sir George
Shenton be President of the Legislative
Council.

HON. H. LUKIN (East Province): I
have much pleasure in seconding the
motion. In our proposed President we
have a man whom most of us have known
for many years, and known favourably.
He has the confidence, I am positive, of
every member in the House; and, more
than that, the late election has shown he
has the entire confidence of the electors of
the metropolis, and that is saying a great
deal. We have known Sir George Shenton
in very many capacities, and he has always
shone in every public matter he has under-
taken.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon.
G. Randell): It gives me great pleasure
to see the unanimity prevailing in the
House with regard to the re-election of Sir
George Shenton as President. All that
has been said by Mr. Haynes and Mr.
Lukin will, I am sure, be indorsed by all
members, especially those who have had
the privilege of sitting under Sir George
Shenton as President of the House; and
as Sir George Shenton has been in the
past, I am sure he will be in the future.
He has acquired considerable knowledge
of the technical management of the House,
and to myself has been of great assistance
in the duties I have had to discharge for
the last two years. It affords me peculiar
pleasure, having known more of him,
perhaps, than any member of the House,
and having been his colleague in many
departments of city life, to see that he has

been again returned by a large majority for the metropolis. I should have been extremely sorry if, after the services Sir George Shenton has rendered, not only to Perth but to other portions of the community, and after the many manifestations of liberality and broad-mindedness on his part, he had been refused by the electors; and therefore I feel sure I am only expressing the opinion of hon. members when I say we desire to congratulate him on his re-election to the House, and on his being—as I have no doubt he will be—re-elected to the position of President.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East Province): I, too, would like to add a few remarks on the pleasure I feel at the prospect of again seeing Sir George Shenton President of this Chamber. He has hitherto filled the position to the utmost satisfaction of the House, and in a manner of which we feel proud; and I feel extremely pleased he will again be re-elected.

No other member being proposed,

SIR GEORGE SHENTON rose in his place and said: I assure you I feel most deeply the great compliment just bestowed upon me by you in again re-electing me to the office of President of the Legislative Council. I have now, as you all know, been connected off and on with politics for the last 30 years, and it is a source of satisfaction to me that after that long period I still enjoy the confidence of the members of the Legislative Council. Of this Council, which first commenced its life in 1890, only two of the original members are left, namely Mr. Hackett and myself; and of the original number of fifteen which formed the Council, six are now dead. That shows the great changes which have taken place in the last 10 years. I am much obliged to Mr. Haynes for the flattering manner in which he spoke of my past services as President of the Council. During the past eight years I have had the honour of filling the position, it has been my one object to do everything in my power to maintain the dignity of this House, and at the same time to most carefully guard its privileges. Differences have arisen between the two Houses, and when those differences occurred I think the Legislative Council maintained the position that they had taken up. The

President has rather delicate duties to perform, because there may be differences of opinion amongst the members; but he is ruled by the Standing Orders, and though there are times when he may have to call members to order, he does not do that in his private capacity, but simply as President of the Council, who has to see that proper procedure is observed during the course of business. I trust that in the future the same good feeling will exist between hon. members and myself as in the past, and that they will strive to support the dignity of the Chair because, unless that be done, we cannot carry on our work properly. I now again thank hon. members for re-electing me as President, and place my services at their disposal.

Having been conducted to the Chair,

THE PRESIDENT said: Now that I have formally taken the Chair, I once more thank hon. members for the great honour they have conferred upon me in re-electing me as President of the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I beg to move that the President do leave the Chair for the purpose of hon. members attending Government House, to acquaint His Excellency the Administrator with the fact that Sir George Shenton has been re-elected to that position.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Hon. members then proceeded to Government House to present the President-elect to the Governor, and on returning to their Chamber,

THE PRESIDENT said: I have to inform hon. members that I proceeded in company with hon. members, to Government House, and informed His Excellency the Administrator of your choice of President, which choice he has been pleased to approve of. His Excellency the Administrator also conferred on Parliament its undoubted rights and privileges.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Further Telegraphic Correspondence between the Premiers of Western Australia and New South Wales, relating to the Commonwealth Bill. 2, Regulations under

Beer Duty Act. 3, By-laws of Municipalities of Bunbury, Coolgardie, East Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Northam, Perth, Busselton, Fremantle, Roebourne, and Day Dawn. 4, Regulations under Sluicing and Dredging for Gold Act. 5, Regulations under Mines Regulation Amendment Act, 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT AND LIMIT OF DEBATE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES, without notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Standing Orders Committee would expunge that section of the Standing Orders which provided that, on a motion for adjournment, no discussion should be proceeded with, but the question be put at once. He desired to know whether the particular Committee were prepared to move in that direction, so as to bring the Standing Orders of this House in a line with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly; because if that Committee were not prepared to do so, the matter would be made the subject of a motion, seeing that the present Standing Order deprived members of a right enjoyed by members of Parliament in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that he was not able to answer the question of the hon. member at present, and notice had better be given, either for a question or a motion.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

Debate resumed on the Address-in-reply, moved at the previous sitting.

HON. R. S. HAYNES (Central Province): I must first pay a tribute to Mr. Briggs for the able manner in which he proposed the Address-in-reply to the Speech read by His Excellency. The hon. member seems to have gone to a great deal of trouble in order to put this matter as fairly as possible before the House; and I listened, as I am sure hon. members did, with a great deal of pleasure to the way in which he explained the matter, and pointed out the similarity between the proposal to federate here and the proposal to federate in Canada. I regret, however, that the Speech of the Administrator, which is very short, should contain an element which, I think,

strikes at the root of the whole demand made by the people to vote "Aye" or "Nay" on the question of federation. I refer hon. members to paragraph 3 of the Speech, which reads:—

All efforts to obtain the amendments having failed, my Advisers are of opinion that the electors should now have the opportunity afforded them of deciding by their vote whether Western Australia should enter the Federal Union as an original State.

What is the meaning of the word "electors"? I take it that the word "electors" in that Speech means only those persons whose names are on the roll. But, in my judgment, it would be nothing short of a farce to send the question of federation to the vote of only those persons who are on the roll, in order to decide whether this colony shall or shall not join federation. When this question was first mooted in this Chamber, and it was suggested that representatives should be sent to the Federal Convention, I did not vote for the proposal, but endeavoured in every way to block it. Every person who spoke in favour of sending delegates said it was not the intention to join federation, but that the delegates were being sent over for the purpose of seeing what was going to be done, and of assisting to draft the Commonwealth Bill in such a way that when Western Australia desired she could join the union at some future time. I pointed out then that by sending delegates, and taking part in the consideration of the measure, we would place this colony in such a position that we should be forced to join or stand out altogether. My words have come true, and Western Australia is now in the position that we must either join federation at once or stand out altogether, because we could never join on terms we may hereafter get. What is our position in regard to federation? My opinion is that the Government have placed Western Australia in a most humiliating position. In the first instance, the Government were prepared to further the federal movement, and for Western Australia to join. At the Melbourne Convention the question arose as to on what terms Western Australia should join, and a proposition was made that £500,000, or some other sum of money, should be given to this colony to compensate us for

the losses we would suffer by reason of our joining at once. At that time our delegates made no movement whatever; but, as a gratuitous act by Victoria, the clause was inserted providing that for five years there should be a sliding scale of reduction in the customs tariff of Western Australia.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was not Victoria.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If the suggestion did not come from Victoria, it did not come from Western Australia.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It did not; it came from Tasmania.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The great objection to that clause was that it would unsettle our finances, because every year the tariff would be changed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That would rest with the Parliament of the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: But the proper time to have offered that objection was when the proposal was made by the Tasmanian representatives. If the representatives of Western Australia had then said they wanted five-years fiscal freedom they would have got it; and, in like manner, if they had said they wanted an intercolonial railway, such a proposal would have been accepted. But our representatives did not think about the matter until after they returned, and had become frightened by some outcry against federation; and then they suddenly turned round and said the Bill would not suit this colony. That was the Bill we sent our delegates over to assist in drawing, and these are the persons who are now crying out that we do not want federation. Then it was said Western Australia would not have federation unless five-years fiscal freedom were allowed; but now the Premier turns round and quietly says, "We will take the Bill just as it was first agreed to." The Government seem to have lost the confidence and respect of the Governments in the Eastern colonies, and certainly lack the confidence of the persons who placed them in power in this colony.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Yes; because the contention of the Government is that we ought not to federate, because federation will be the ruin of the colony, and yet they call Parliament together and say they will allow the people to say whether

they will ruin the colony or not. But it is those who have the management of affairs who are ruining the colony. The Government are honest in the intention to obtain the opinion of the country and ascertain whether the people are in favour of federation or not, the proper course is to submit the question to the people, and not to the electors, giving a vote to every person of 21 years of age who is a British subject, and has resided six months in the colony. These are the persons who will be electors under federation, and who will have to bear the burden, if any; and these are the only persons who ought to be consulted now. There may be some difference of opinion as to whether these are the persons who should decide the question of federation, but if any hon. member says I am wrong in my contention, let him appear before any public meeting in the colony and contend that the question ought to be left to the electors only. The electoral rolls of the colony are in a disgraceful condition. Hundreds are improperly taken off the rolls, and hundreds are on the rolls who ought not to be there, and under the circumstances it is impossible to get a proper expression of opinion. We have had an exhibition in Perth of how the rolls are stuffed for the City Council, and it is from the list made by the City Council that the electoral rolls for the colony are in part made up.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is the law at present.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is the law making of the hon. member.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And so the hon. member (Mr. Haynes).

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I have always opposed the law right through, and never aided the Government in introducing such a measure.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What year did you take?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The hon. member who interrupts me did aid; and I am glad to say he will have to take the responsibility when he faces the electors.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What electors?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I mean the electors should be stand for the Federal Senate. If the question of federation or no federation be submitted, it should be submitted to the people as a whole, and not simply to the electors, for what is

the use of sending the question to the electors as they at present stand? I hope that when the Enabling Bill is introduced, it will be provided that every person of the age of 21 years—

HON. H. LUKIN: Who is on the roll.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No, not on the roll; but every person who is 21 years of age and is a British subject—

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And has an interest in the country.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I am sick of that cry of "interest in the country." All I know is that those persons who say they have a big interest in the country have that interest at the expense of those who have no interest in the country at all. My contention is that every person of 21 years of age who is a British subject, and who has resided six months in the colony, should have a right to apply for an elector's right, and to vote on the question; also to make a declaration that he or she is of the age of 21 years, a British subject, and has resided in the colony for six months.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is equal to the separation petition.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I cannot see that. Any person may then apply at once and get an elector's right, and when the person goes to vote, he or she will present an elector's right to the returning officer, and thus have the right to vote. The returning officer, by taking the elector's right, will be able to prevent impersonation. He can easily find out whether the person has voted previously or not. I do not say that impersonation could not take place under these circumstances, but such a method of procedure would prevent impersonation to a great extent, and I would punish any person who was found guilty of impersonation in a very severe manner indeed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How are you going to tell a person's age?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The hon. member asks, how can you tell a person's age? When a person applies for an elector's right, he or she will declare the age, and if afterwards it is found that he person is not 21 years of age, then that person will be subject to prosecution.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: But how would that affect the referendum?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I do not think that my fellow-man is such a scoundrel

as some hon. members think he is. I think there are some scoundrels, but they are not the persons to risk very much for the purpose of getting a vote. Mr. Burgess asked how a returning officer would know whether a person was 21 years of age. How does he know that a person is 21 years of age when he applies to get on the roll at the present time?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: He has to declare it.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: And he will have to declare it in this case also before he gets an elector's right.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Declare it to-day and vote to-morrow; surely the hon. member is not serious?

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I was never more serious in my life, and the hon. member knows it. There seems to be a way of getting out of a corner by saying that a person is not serious; it is merely a subterfuge. I think there were 400 voters taken off the roll in one of the electoral districts of this colony. I do not know how many were taken off the roll in the Coolgardie district; the people who look after the rolls could tell us. There are people who are entitled to have a vote, but they have no vote. To take a vote on the question of federation on the roll, as at present constituted, would be a farce.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Take it under the new constitution.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The rolls under that will not be made up for six months, and then we should not be able to join the federation. I admit there is a difficulty, but we should not try to increase that difficulty. Let hon. members show us a better way out of the difficulty than I have endeavoured to show. I want to get the sense of the people, and I do not want to get it on the present roll, which is in a pitiable and deplorable condition. If hon. members can make a better suggestion I am willing to fall in with it. Our idea should be to get the will of the people expressed. I think it is too soon to join in the federal movement, but it is not for me to say that Western Australia should not join; therefore I sink my personal opinions, and I shall abide by what my fellow colonists say, and if they command me to vote I shall carry out that command. I am here as the representative of the people; hon. members

are here as the representatives of the people; and it is our duty to carry out the will of the people; not the will of those on the electoral roll now, some of whom have got on by a subterfuge.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is the duty of the representatives to advise the electors what to do.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I contend that is our proper course when the Bill comes forward, and I am glad that the Government have introduced the Enabling Bill. If the measure is not amended in another place before it comes here in the way I have indicated, I hope some amendment will be made in this House. I hope hon. members will not make the measure a party question, but will devise some means by which the will of the people can be expressed, and by which we can find out whether the people really do want to join the federation or not. If we support that principle we may be able to adopt some method by which we can obtain the opinions of the people. I am pleased the Government have introduced the Enabling Bill, but I may say that the position Western Australia occupies in the eyes of the other colonies is a humiliating one. We have been playing fast and loose, and the Government and the Premier have shown lamentable weakness. Western Australia says we will have to come in now, and we are craving for something. We say, "Give us a railway," and the other colonies say, "You will have to come in as you are." We have shown our weakness. But sinking all that, I shall do my best under the circumstances to obtain the real expression of opinion of the people, and I will join hon. members in devising the best method of obtaining the will of the people.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central): Although I am inclined to think the Government of this colony have taken a sudden somersault in the attitude they have taken up, and the recommendations they have brought forward, in now wishing to submit the question of federation to the people, I am rather surprised to find that amongst supporters of the Government there has been some attempt to show that a purely constitutional course is being taken in the proposition which the Government have made. When the question came before us last session I

took some pains to point out and urge—and I then had some support which I find lacking this year—that there was no constitutional right in the colony to submit this Bill by way of referendum in the manner proposed and indicated in the Speech of His Excellency. I do not think, unless there is some reason, excuse or explanation from the Minister leading this House to show how the colony is justified in the course proposed, that the Bill should have been brought before us in the way it has been. There should have been something to show, too, that there is no precedent, in some form or other, which will warrant us in adopting the principle of the referendum on so great and important a question as federation or the joining with the other colonies in federation. I do not like new departures of this kind in constitutional matters. I am surprised that there is no indication from the Government that the course they are proposing is anything but a new and dangerous proceeding, a new departure in Parliamentary practice in this colony. After reading the speech given by the new members who have come into this chamber since last we met, I recognise that this question of the referendum will pass through this House, but I would like to have seen, as Mr. S. Haynes has pointed out, the terms on which the Bill is to be submitted to the people. I cannot help recognising that there has been a victory on the part of the adherents of Mr. Matheson and his friends, the federationists at any price—

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Referendum at any price.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That they have brought pressure to bear, and that they have got the referendum at any price. Last year I opposed the referendum on the terms proposed, and now I am speaking now as one of those who are standing up for the country party—made a stand, but now we have been thrown over by the Government of the day for the interests of a few diggers and miners on the Eastern goldfields, for a few clamorous persons whose words are much more weighty than their votes if we can judge of the votes cast at the last election.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Half are off the roll.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: And the other half ought not to be there. As to the remarks of Mr. R. S. Haynes, I would like an amplification in regard to something which he said. He has given us an idea on the subject of the issue of electoral rights, and if such were adopted the question of impersonation would be abolished, that is if the view put forward is accepted—that the Bill shall be referred to the adult suffrages of Western Australia. Then every individual who has been six months in the colony would make an application for an electoral right, and to each claimant, on the proof of his or her capacity, an electoral right will be issued, to be delivered up at the time of voting. That would do away with all impersonation, and it would do away with the necessity of inquiring too closely into the right of a person to vote. The production of the electoral right will do away with the possibility of a person endeavouring to vote twice. I do not altogether agree with Mr. R. S. Haynes that this question should be put to the adult population of Western Australia. I do not think they are altogether the people to have a say in the matter; but it must either be put to the adult population of Western Australia or the people who are property owners, the people who will suffer and will have to pay if we join the federation and it is a financial failure for the colony. Some provision should be made that property-owners who have something to lose, not the people who are on the roll to-day, or the people who have no interest in the ultimate or permanent welfare of Western Australia, should have some control as to whether we should join the federation or not. I do not think any referendum would be complete, or would be fair to the colony as a whole, or fair to those who have invested all they have in the colony, and have spent the best part of their lives in trying to make the colony what it is to-day, if those who have nothing to lose have to decide the issue. We are looking at the question in the dark. I do not know what the proposals are, and I do not know whether Western Australia has a chance of getting the suggested amendments.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We know we are not going to get them.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We do not know in what form the Bill will

come from the British House of Commons.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We will not get the amendments.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If Mr. Burgess was so certain about that he would not be so willing to vote for the Bill to the people. In spite of what we did last year, in spite of the combinations of last year, and what was said last year, some hon. members are going to vote for the Bill to the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We took the proper course last year.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We took the proper constitutional course last year, and I should like to hear why we should not take the proper constitutional course this year. Has anything happened to change the views that hon. members held last year?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We persuaded the people to vote against it.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It would be far better to take the same constitutional course as then.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It would be useless.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I feel the hon. member's persuasion would be equally useless. I was much disappointed with the Speech of the Administrator, because I thought we should have had some indication of the terms on which this question was to be brought forward; at any rate, some idea of the basis on which the vote was to be taken. I should have liked to hear from the leader of the House whether the vote is likely to be taken shortly, or after a lengthened period, or at any rate, some few facts from which we could gather the intention of the Government, and judge as to the necessity of our immediately going to the country, and, so to speak, raising the "fiery cross," and forming some sort of combination to warn the people of Western Australia as to the measure which has been foisted on them by reason of the fears of a few people on the Eastern goldfields.

HON. A. G. JENKINS (North-East): I listened with very great pleasure to the remarks by Mr. R. S. Haynes with regard to the vote that should be taken on the Bill if it be sent to the people. As he has said, it would be nothing short of a farce if the Bill were sent to the electors, or, in

other words, only to those who happen to be on the roll at the present time. In the Revision Court the other day hundreds and thousands of names were struck off the roll because those persons did not happen to possess the residential qualification at the time. A man may remove to another district and still be a resident of the colony, and entitled to share in its prosperity or downfall, and yet he is struck off the roll and not allowed to vote. I fail to see why the same practice should not obtain here as in the other colonies, where every man, or adult, having an elector's right is allowed to vote.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We have no electors' rights here.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: We could make provision for electors' rights; we are not going to stand still all the time. I hope Mr. Haynes's words will receive due attention from the House, and that an amendment in that direction will be insisted on, because if it is not we might just as well prevent the Bill going to the people at all.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Rather better.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Fortunately Mr. Whitcombe does not express the wishes of the country. The Government ought to have taken up a better stand throughout the whole of the proceedings. It is to be regretted the Premier should have so lowered the people of the colony in the opinion of their fellow-colonists as to leave it open to the Melbourne *Argus*, one of the leading newspapers in Australasia, to cast a slur on this Government and the colony generally; because when such a newspaper practically accuses the Premier of double-dealing, shuffling, and attempting to mislead his fellow-colonists, things have come to a pretty pass.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The *Argus* is unanswerable. The accusation has not been denied.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: That is so; and to accusations coming from such a source some answer ought to have been given. It is to be regretted that all the dissension and ill-feeling on the Eastern goldfields of this colony have been caused simply through the fault of the Government, and of those members who are now "climbing down" from the position they took up last session.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: They are, and their hands have been forced.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Who threw the Bill out last session? Yourself?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: You, sir.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You acted with us.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: We voted with you to effect our own ends.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Then there are two double-dealers.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: If hon. members had listened to the prayer of the Federal Petition, and allowed the Bill to go to the people, I venture to assert a great deal of the present ill-feeling and dissension would never have existed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There would not have been the slightest difference.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Those hon. members who would not listen to the prayer of that petition have themselves to thank, because they were fully warned at the time that dissension would arise if the Bill did not go to the people.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Who prevented the Bill going to the people? The Government did not.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The Government voted against the petition signed by 23,000 people.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Anything to confuse the public.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Anything to draw a "red herring" across the trail. However, this is not a time for altercation, but it is the time to send the Bill to the people in such a way as to get a fair vote.

HON. H. LUKIN (East): It was not my intention to have said anything to-night, but owing to the challenge thrown down by Mr. Jenkins I feel it incumbent on me to reply, because I recognise I am one who, through thick and thin, opposed the Bill going to the people last year. I did so both on the hustings and in the House, because although I recognised the Bill must ultimately go to the people, more consideration of the measure was required, and last year was not the proper time to take the vote. I maintain that this House last year acted perfectly within its constitutional rights in not referring the Bill, because the people had not had time to consider it; but now that there has been time to consider the

measure from all sides, it is proper that it should be referred to the people.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: To the people, not the electors?

HON. H. LUKIN: To the electors, because I consider the electors to be the people. There are one or two other things I would like to mention. Mr. Jenkins said he would refer this great question to the people by means of some electors' rights. But the great question to be decided here is the goldfields vote as against the vote of the rest of the colony.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

HON. H. LUKIN: Strike the goldfields vote out of the referendum, and the Bill would never be carried.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I doubt it.

HON. H. LUKIN: What I have stated is a great fact. We know what these gentlemen on the goldfields would do, because we had an instance last year, when a petition from them was proved to have been signed over and over again by the same men.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

HON. H. LUKIN: A federation petition was sent to the Queen in order to force our hands in the matter, and it has been absolutely proved that a gentleman, who had no business to do so, signed it twice, and made a solemn affidavit before the Governor that all the signatures were genuine. When honest people have to fight dishonest people, the former must be safeguarded in some way; and if we go outside the rolls we have nothing with which to protect ourselves against similar tricks and dodges.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Under electors' rights there could be no dodges.

HON. H. LUKIN: There could, because outside the rolls, what safeguard have we? Like Mr. Haynes, I like fair and square dealing, and if we were safeguarded so that we should only get the votes of the adult males of the colony, I should be prepared to refer the matter to them.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We can devise some scheme.

HON. H. LUKIN: But we know what has been done, and what has been done once can be done again; and, having no safeguards whatever, we should be over-brown. Although I am in favour of the Bill being referred to the people, I hope

that if the vote be taken fairly and squarely, without any double-dealing, we have still a chance of preventing this colony joining federation at the present time; because to join now would, I am perfectly certain, be disastrous to our best interests.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Am I in order, Mr. President, in rising to make an explanation in regard to remarks which have fallen from Mr. Lukin, who has referred to the fact that I twice signed the Separation Petition?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No names were mentioned.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Mr. Lukin deliberately pointed to me, and said I made a solemn affirmation that no person had signed the petition twice; and it is on that point I desire to offer an explanation.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member may explain if hon. members have no objections.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: This petition was signed by me when it was first brought round for signature on the goldfields, and on the day the petition was to be presented, a schedule having been left vacant for those members of Parliament who were in favour of it, I signed it again as a goldfields representative, and I maintain I was perfectly entitled to do so. I have made inquiries, and I find other petitions were signed in the same way. So far from concealing the fact that the petition had been signed twice by myself, I stated the fact publicly on two occasions, pointing out that I had signed it in the first instance in my private capacity, and in the second instance in my public capacity as a member of Parliament; and that, I say again, I was entitled to do.

HON. H. LUKIN: A lawyer's quibble.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is a perfectly fair explanation.

HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East): I crave the indulgence of the House as a new member. I had no intention of speaking to-night, and would not have done so but for the possibility that the debate might end without my having an opportunity of saying a word on the part of some moving spirits who live on the goldfields. In regard to the rolls, I can only confirm what has been said by Mr. Haynes—that the people of the Eastern goldfields have had no proper opportunity

of enrolling their names. The population of the Eastern goldfields is, I believe, set down at something like 80,000, and if a referendum were now taken of the electors actually on the rolls, there would be no possibility of getting an expression of opinion of the Eastern goldfields population. I know in the contest I recently fought there were only something like 1,858 names on the roll, whereas, had all the people entitled to vote been on that roll, there would have been something like 5,000 or 6,000 electors.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Whose fault is that?

HON. C. SOMMERS: The fault is in not providing an electoral system such as prevails in the Eastern colonies; hence it is so difficult to get on the roll. I can only say, if it is the wish, and I believe it is the wish of all right-thinking people, that an expression of the people's opinion should be taken on this great subject, then it is not a question of taking the votes merely of the people who happen to own a few acres, with a few cows and sheep depasturing on them—

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Many of them even are not on the roll.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Many of them are not on the roll, and I have read in the Press recently of the numbers who have been struck off; but there is no possible chance of getting a true expression of public opinion unless we do refer the Bill to the people. We know that woman's suffrage will soon become law.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It has become law.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Then why should not the women have the right to vote on this question? Why should not every adult be granted the same privilege? I maintain that the only way of getting from the people a true expression of opinion is by allowing every adult to vote. I agree with the suggestion of Mr. Haynes that any person who has resided six months in the colony should have a right to vote on this question. True, such persons may not have property; but we know that in all the other colonies where a vote has been taken, it has been a vote of the people. Those goldfields people have not come here for the purpose of staying for six months only, in order that they may be able to vote on this question. After hearing the argu-

ments used in this debate, one would think that those goldfields people paid their passages from the Eastern colonies on purpose to get votes and carry the Bill through. But the people are here with the intention of staying, and it is the duty of the Government of this colony to make those people stay; and this can be done. We know the resources of this great colony, and I am sure, inducements are held out to these people to stay here, we shall make this colony what it should be. Mr. Lukin and Mr. Whitcombe, early in their speeches, said "Let the Bill go to the people"; but they qualify that afterwards, and say "Let it go to the electors."

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No; I did not say "the electors," either.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Is it proposed to cut off the goldfields people and take a referendum from the others?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Nobody suggested that.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: You would do it, if you had your way.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I think the first suggestion was, if we cut off the Eastern goldfields—I believe that was the remark—and allowed the people in the settled districts to vote, then the hon. member would be satisfied.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member (Hon. C. Sommers) is mistaken.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I was only drawing a comparison.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I believe the people of the Eastern goldfields, representing something like half the population of this great colony, were referred to as a few speculators who followed shifting and uncertain occupations. Well, I think the hon. member (Hon. F. Whitcombe) would only visit those goldfields a little oftener, he would find that we have interests in the country which are very great indeed.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You have Toorak there.

HON. C. SOMMERS: We have Toorak and a Piccadilly, as well as Boulder. But I say, were the system of electoral rights introduced, there would be no way of falsifying the votes by any means, whether by duplication or otherwise; and there would be far less danger of falsification than there is at

present, because it is patent to anyone that even the people now on the electoral roll can vote twice if they wish to.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They often do.

HON. C. SOMMERS: In towns like Boulder, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, which are near to one another, a man could, if he wished, vote several times on the same day.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: If he voted unlawfully he would be liable to prosecution.

HON. C. SOMMERS: So he would be under the system proposed by Mr. Haynes. I would say that this great question is very dear to my heart; and unless the Bill is sent to the people, more stringent steps will be taken by those who are now called the shifting population of the Eastern goldfields. I trust such legislation will be brought in as will enable the opinion of the whole of the people to be taken on this great subject of federation. (General applause.)

On motion by HON. A. B. KIDSON, debate further adjourned till the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 5.40 o'clock until the next day at 4.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd May, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Fishery Regulations—
Question: Branch Railways (private) on Goldfields—
Sessional Orders—Address-in-reply, adopted—
Motion: Duties on Imported Meat; Amendment
passed—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Regulations (new), made under Mineral Lands Acts 1892 and 1899.

By the PREMIER: 1, By-laws of municipalities of Bunbury, Coolgardie, East Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Northam, Perth, Busselton, Fremantle, Roebourne, and Day Dawn; 2, Further Correspondence re position of colony in regard to federation.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—FISHERY REGULATIONS.

MR. GEORGE asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: 1, Whether he had taken any steps to remove the regulations restricting fishing in the Southern waters; 2, Whether he was aware that such regulations had caused widespread distress among a hard-working industrial population.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—1, No steps have been taken in the direction indicated; 2, I am not aware that there is widespread distress owing to this closure. From careful inquiries I find that there is almost the same number of persons employed in this industry at the present time, in the Southern waters, as were previous to the regulations referred to.

QUESTION—BRANCH RAILWAYS (PRIVATE) ON GOLDFIELDS.

MR. VOSPER asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether it was true that two branch lines of railway or tramway had been constructed from the Kalgoorlie and Kanowna lines by private enterprise; 2, If so, what were the terms of the concession or authority granted; 3, What was the gauge and length of the said lines; 4, Under what legal authority the Government had granted such concessions or authority; 5, What consideration the Government had received for such concessions; 6, Who were the persons to whom the concessions had been granted; 7, What running powers they had.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied:—The questions should have been addressed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, as the Land Act provides for the construction of such tramways. The Railway Department has