

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th August, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By MR. GORDON (Government Whip) : Return as to Inspection of Mines at Kalgoorlie, and number of Accidents reported.

NEW MINISTRY.

MR. SPEAKER announced that he had received a notification to the effect that the following members had been appointed to offices of profit under the Crown; namely the members for Guildford (Mr. Rason), Menzies (Mr. Gregory), Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson), Bunbury (Mr. N. J. Moore), and Roebourne (Dr. Hicks).

MR. W. B. GORDON (Government Whip) : I beg leave to move without notice—

That owing to the acceptance of offices of profit under the Crown, the seats of the members for Guildford, Bunbury, Menzies, Sussex, and Roebourne be declared vacant.

MR. H. BROWN (Perth) : I second the motion

Question passed.

ADJOURNMENT, FIVE WEEKS.

MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS.

MR. GORDON moved—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until 3:30 o'clock on Tuesday, 3rd October.

He said: This adjournment is necessary in order that the new Ministers may seek re-election; and some of the writs will not be returned before the 28th September. I may add that Ministers, on taking possession of their seats after re-election, intend at the earliest possible opportunity to bring in the Estimates.

MR. H. BROWN : I second the motion.

AMENDMENT, ONE WEEK.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) : I move an amendment—

That the House at its rising do adjourn until this day week.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth) : I second the amendment, and desire to take this occasion to make a statement of the reasons which govern us in moving this amendment. I think such an explanation is at least necessary from us. It will be remembered that the Government of a week ago retired in connection with a vote of this House concerning the purchase of the Midland Railway. As far as we on this (Independent) bench were concerned, we made this question the most important before the House this session; and without dwelling at any great length on the matter, suffice it to say that it was sufficient for us on this question to have brought about the downfall of a Government proposing the purchase; and also sufficient, were everything else equal and no other obstacles in the road, to prevent us from forming any alliance with any section of the House except on the understanding that this question should be dropped. The leader of the Opposition at that time, the present Premier (Hon. C. H. Rason), was not willing, or was unable for party reasons perhaps, to definitely make an announcement that, so far as his party were concerned, they were opposed to the purchase of the Midland Railway; and we had been forced into this position in connection with the no-confidence debate, that on both sides of the House we had leaders with whom we were at variance in connection with this question—a question of such magnitude as precluded us from handing in our allegiance to either party without a clear understanding upon it. We framed our own amendment to the no-confidence motion; and on being submitted to the House it was defeated by the combined efforts of the Opposition and the Government. Nevertheless we pegged away at this question; and in the speech of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) I claim exposed the unfairness of asking this country such a price for that deal, the market value of the property at that time being 33½ per cent. below the price asked. These tactics designedly carried us past the

31st July, and at once exposed the insincerity of the company in saying that after that date they would no longer give this country the option of purchase. We saw how quickly that position was abandoned; and we voted for the Daglish Government on the clear understanding and belief that this question would not be again submitted to the House attached to the purchase price; but afterwards the question was submitted to the House by the then Premier. It is not for me to say whether he did so with the concurrence of his own caucus or not, but certainly it was not with the whole concurrence of the Government party of which the Independents were an integral and loyal part. The matter was reintroduced and put a second time as a putative non-party motion, or was affirmed as such by the then leader of the House—not by us; yet in spite of this being a non-party question, it was directly owing to the Midland Railway question that the Government resigned. They thus resigned on a non-party question. At least that was the sequence of events that brought about the present position. I maintain that the member for Subiaco resigned with a majority behind him. No doubt he had his own good reasons for doing so; but I want it clearly understood that the great bone of contention between this small section (the Independent party) and the Labour party had been removed by the final defeat of the Midland Railway question and its compulsory retirement for this session from the House. Notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding that the way between the Government and ourselves ought to have been clearer than ever for a proper working understanding, the Daglish Government chose to resign. I do not know whether they were entitled on their resignation to hand over the government of the State to the allegedly conservative section of the House, seeing, as I say, that they retired with a majority behind them pledged to liberal and democratic measures, which majority still sits together. Therefore, we have the present position in this Chamber. We are asked to adjourn for a month in face of this fact. It is the first time I have had any knowledge of such a position in this House. There is no parallel to it. In the case of Mr. Leake, that gentleman

had the very best of reasons for informing his Excellency that he would have a majority, because he got it; but to-day there is no majority in favour of the present Government.

MR. H. BROWN: You are not game to put them out.

MR. MORAN: The member for Perth says we are not game to put them out.

MR. BROWN: I say "you" are not game.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member's language is not parliamentary, even if it is a bit gamey. Suffice it to say that my object to-day is to ask this (Opposition) side of the House to refuse to adjourn for a month, and to take the inevitable consequence of declaring no-confidence in the Government.

MR. H. BROWN: They will have nothing to do with you.

MR. MORAN: I am glad you understand one another. Let us place the position as it ought to be placed and as the country is entitled to know it, and then we will see who it is we have heard so much about as being opposed to a dissolution and to going to the country. We will find out who does not want to go to the country. I advocate this for two reasons. Firstly, we ought to have majority government, and I am prepared to prove that this does not mean a dissolution. Secondly, if it does mean a dissolution, it is far better to have a dissolution to-day than in a month's time. That is the position. In order to put ourselves right, all through the reign of the Daglish Government we (the Independents) have asked and worked for a coalition between the Labour party and the more advanced liberals in this Chamber. [GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That was your object.] I have never made any secret of it. If there be any disgrace attached to it, we must accept that disgrace. I do not wish to bandy words over the matter. My object is not to delay the business of the country beyond placing this matter for future use in its true light, while not wishing harm to the new Ministers. I am not going to be a party to any sniping of Ministers in their electorates. That is not a manly course. I have no desire but to see Ministers come back to the House.

MR. H. BROWN: Is it a manly course to adjourn only for a week?

MR. MORAN: The hon. member knows that the dominant party on this side of the House has decided not to support us in the course we are now taking. I regret that this is so; but I intend to clearly point out that there is no occasion for any doubt. [MR. SCADDAN: Have you good reasons for making that statement?] I have the best of reasons; because I sought for a conference with the Labour party and met with a denial. Let us have openness in our deals. We do not want any secrecy in this matter at all. I maintain, what we have sought for all along was a coalition between the liberals of this House and the Labour party, a working coalition by which we might have had a homogeneous party representative right through from the Executive down to the very end of the party. There were nine points out of ten in common between us. The tenth was of great gravity, but now it has gone. With reference to the general policy of the Labour party, there was no objection to their aspirations. What I say and what I assert is this: it was economically a strong Administration, even more important still than planks. But above all things we must have majority government; yet it seems that we are not to have responsible government, that we are to abandon it altogether and have a non-party system—to try something else. It is found impossible to bring about a coalition. Why? Not because of any undue requests on the part of this (Independent) party; not because of any disbelief in the loyalty of this (Independent) party; not because we have not been genuine in seeing that the Government should go on; but it has been impossible to carry on because of the split in the Labour ranks, because the Labour party could not present 22 strong in a working alliance. For that reason they were unable to bring about a coalition. I deeply regret it; I most sincerely regret it; but I want it to be clearly known what it is that prevented responsible government taking place in this Chamber. It is without doubt the exclusiveness of the Labour party on the one hand, which was being broken down, or what would have broken down from the fact that there was not that unanimity which guarantees a working

majority. When the Premier found himself harassed and the Government diminished in prestige over the Midland Railway question, the Premier should have tried again before resigning; he should have exhausted all means of forming a reliable Government; he should have endeavoured to bring about a coalition after the defeat on the Midland Railway question. The Premier should have made every effort to have healed the split in his party, and have drawn the twenty-two men on this side into a working majority. I am clear on that point. Were we stronger in numbers than we are to-day by one or two, it would have been a question. But I hope the House will dismiss from their minds any ungenerous sentiments about myself as being an office seeker, for I am not an office seeker, I have already given proof of that, except on terms with the side of the House where I wish to be myself; then there is no one more ambitious to climb the political ladder than myself. Before handing His Excellency's commission to the direct Opposition, the Premier should have tried all he could to heal the split on his side. He should have found if it were not possible to have the advanced liberals kept in power by the Labour vote. Was that not another alternative? I wish to assure the House and the country in definite language that there was no obstacle as to numbers; but the Premier did not take that line of action, and the result is that His Excellency's commission has been handed by the Premier to his direct opponent. I say in conclusion in reference to this matter, that our own predilections here were always in favour of a coalition such as would have carried into effect within the next two years nine-tenths of the programme of the late Premier. Why was it not possible for 26 members to carry that programme out? No fault rests with us (Independents). I come to the present position. I say at once that it is not responsible government to-day, but government by permission of the Opposition; there is no doubt about that. As I have said, if we are Independent it is not our fault, and we have sought to amalgamate ourselves with those who we believe have nine-tenths in common with us.

MR. H. BROWN: Unfortunately, at the present time no party will have you.

MR. MORAN: I do not want any more of those boyish insults from the member for Perth, because his position does not warrant him in giving an opinion at all. He is trespassing when he presumes to have opinions of that sort. When on the question of sewerage and drainage, I shall be prepared to listen to the hon. member. What is the present position? We had an announcement from the Premier in the Press—and this is an important point, the other is past history—that the Opposition would not seek to bring about the downfall of the Government just now. Accompanied by that was another announcement to the effect that Ministers were to be vigorously opposed in their constituencies. I want to analyse that. If we are to have a dissolution, the proper time is now. If we are not to have a dissolution to-day, it is highly wrong to put forward a fair face in order to allow the Estimates to come down, and important business and work to be brought forward; not to harass the Government yet, but to bring about the same result by defeating Ministers in their electorates. It is untenable and unfair to the Government and to the country. I decline to grant an extended adjournment; for it is not going to be any good to Western Australia to defeat any Minister, and why? For this reason. Supposing you defeat the Premier, or the member for Menzies, two leading members of the Cabinet, what is the inevitable result? It means that in a month from now you have a dissolution, and the trouble from which the country is suffering to-day is aggravated ten-fold by the delay and confusion following a dissolution, which must ultimately come. Let us be clear, the defeat of Ministers means a dissolution a month hence; that is inevitable. If Ministers are going to be defeated or it is sought to defeat them, why not bring about the downfall of the Government to-day? You save a month, and it is just as easy to go for a dissolution now; it is almost as easy to have the turmoil of a political election than one or two Ministers defeated, even if it means patching up the Ministry afterwards. Our true course to-day is, not to allow Minis-

ters to carry on—not to aggravate the position by trying to defeat one or two Ministers. Let us put the matter clearly before the country; let us have plain ideals, and plain common ends. Is the idea, party first and country second? Let us have none of that. I shall not consent to it. If it is party aggrandisement first and country afterwards, then I will have none of that. Let us consider the Ministry as individuals. I may say at once, I should be long sorry to see any one of those members absent from Parliament as an individual. If I do not approve of them as a Government, I am taking the proper and constitutional course to-day. I do not think it is fair on the part of men who are afraid to face their own electorates, when they want to bring about a dissolution to shoot from behind and have a safe position. It is not fair. We are here in Opposition in a majority. I know the amendment will not be carried; I regret it very sincerely. As I stated, to my mind to-day is the proper time for a demonstration of force made on behalf of those on this (Opposition) side of the House. Were there an announcement in the Chamber of a proper coalition between the parties with a majority of 26—and it might be more—were there a proper announcement made to-day of a complete heal in the split in the Labour party, and that for the next two years we decided to carry through a specific programme under an alliance which should last till next Parliament; were it possible to make that announcement here in this House to-day—I know it may be trenching on prerogative, but we have a right to speak our minds here—under those conditions a dissolution would be impossible, where we have a clear majority of the House who worked together all the last twelve months to carry through all the legislation of last session. Let me not be ungenerous when I say that on some matters we differed, largely helped by the Opposition, but still on two motions of want of confidence we clung together for the late Premier, who now sits in Opposition, there being a clear majority in the House; and the only question which nearly led to a disruption of this party was the question of the Midland Railway; and that is gone. Were it possible to-day, or had it been possible yesterday, to make an

announcement of a coalition on a proper working basis, the interests of Western Australia would, I assert again, have demanded not a dissolution, but that members on this side of the House should have come to the House to seek the country's gratification with a coalition, which could have been brought about 12 months ago. Under those conditions, there would not have been a dissolution, and I am free to state to-day that in my opinion a combination Government of that character would never, under those conditions, have been met during the next two years with a solid Opposition of 23 members. When I say that, I have the very best grounds in the world for doing so. I have to advert to a leading article which appeared this morning in our most influential journal, the *West Australian*. It is not usual to refer to articles of this character, but the standing of the *West Australian*, the weight of its opinion, and the evident impartiality of its statements right through this political crisis demand, I think, that we here at least on this bench take some notice of its opinions on these matters. I may be allowed therefore to make one or two observations in connection with the article which appeared this morning, and which I think needs referring to and in one or two instances putting right from our standpoint. We saw in a report in the *West Australian*—and it was repeated in its leading article—that caucus refused to ratify a working coalition with the Independents. All I can say is I have not officially heard anything of that sort yet. I do not know that the Independents put forward to caucus any proposals for a working coalition. Those proposals have been there always. Our actions in the House and country have been a testimony to our desire all along the line. Some of us have, I believe, sacrificed our own political preferment with the idea of bringing about a coalition on our side of the House. Members will remember there was a conference between these two parties a little time ago, and the apple of discord did not come from the Independents. Let that be repeated. There was no objection, so far as I can gather, from any Labour member against a working coalition with the Labour party. I come to another

statement in that article, in which it says that parties will never be done away with. And the *West Australian* very sensibly goes on to point out that so long as government lasts so long shall we have interests, small at first, coming together for mutual protection and forming themselves into parties. That is how the safety of the British Constitution goes on. May the day be far distant when any House will be here and its members bound, pledged hand and foot to two opposing parties. I want to see party government on those lines on which we have known it for centuries past. I want to see such party government as will make it impossible for 11 out of 21 men to decide the fate of a railway that would cost a million and a half, when perhaps the remaining 10 and another 19 here are opposed to it; but an iron-bound caucus would enable that 11 practically to carry the measure against the other 29. That is what I do not approve of. That is why I say a coalition between the Labour Government and the Independents would be productive of better government than would be possible by a Labour Government pure and simple. We should be more likely to get independent speech, more likely to get minorities represented. I hope we shall never get a time in the British Empire when minorities will not have the privilege of coming together and banding themselves together. That is how minorities live; that is how justice is done. The splendid flexibility of our constitution makes it possible for all shades of politicians to find a voice in this House. Long may it be so. Another assertion of the *West Australian* from which I beg to differ is the statement that Mr. Daglish had this fatal weakness, that behind him he had not a majority. Again I repeat that Mr. Daglish had a sufficient majority to carry him through two motions of want of confidence—at least on the occasion when he moved his vote of want of confidence against Mr. James he had a majority which carried him to those benches, and kept him there until he resigned himself. Again on the no-confidence motion the other day—[MR. GORDON: On your amendment]—on three occasions, I am reminded by the only member who voted against him, the Government Whip. Why he has not been leader of the Opposition and is

not at present Premier I cannot understand. Mr. Daglish had a majority behind him. But if the *West Australian* means that in connection with the Midland Railway matter, which was discussed in this Chamber, the then Government were not in my opinion sufficiently strong, and had not sufficiently definite opinions on finance in connection with that matter, that is right. But that matter is gone; and I tremble to think what chances there would have been of financing Western Australia, what chance my friend Mr. Rason would have had of financing Western Australia, had he to find a million and a half for that railway. He will find it hard enough to finance this country without the railway. I assert again that Mr. Daglish had a majority, and had the means of making that majority homogeneous; for although there was this split in his party, that party, on a motion of want of confidence, was pledged to vote with him. We were the only men not pledged to vote with him on anything; but we voted with him loyally on his general policy all along the line, all the time pointing out that we thought it a fair thing that we should have some knowledge of what was going on in the country. That demand remains unimpaired to-day. I have told members that Mr. Daglish had the means of making his majority as stable as any majority could be.

MR. HARDWICK: I hope you do not mean this (Government) side of the House.

MR. MORAN: I can simply say this. I never in my whole life met a more tolerant or more generously disposed Opposition in regard to not aggravating party differences than the Opposition at present sitting on that (Government) side of the House. I think they conducted themselves in a most eminently fair-minded manner, and on every question showed a most tolerant and generous spirit. In that matter there is not a word of blame attaching to them for the tactics adopted right through the piece. As I have said, on two motions of want of confidence Mr. Daglish commanded a majority. I refer, of course, to the time when he went into office and we followed him; and I and others sitting here were pledged to do so before our electors, pledged to give the Gov-

ernment a fair trial, and we sought to do it. It is to-day in this Chamber, because of the split in the Labour party, that the Rason Government is enabled to last one day; no doubt about that. And only because of the fear of the defection of some of the Labour party is a dissolution on a working democratic majority not now available. One other assertion in reference to the *West Australian* article, which is of importance to us. It is this. In speaking of us it asserts that we have refused to allow ourselves to be incorporated with either section. That is a rather cleverly-designed word. I have never heard it before in connection with party politics, the word "incorporated." I admit that it applies to the Labour party; I admit that they are incorporated under a seal which they cannot break. But it is not a fair word to use in talking of an ordinary alliance. If the *West Australian* means that we have not made up our minds to take the pledge and sign a platform—which I maintain was broken by the party themselves—and be subject to caucus rule outside the Chamber, that is true; but it is not quite correct to say that we have refused to ally ourselves with any party. On the contrary, as I have been saying right through, we have sought such an alliance as would be honourable to both parties and would be in the interests of the country. But I do not think the word "incorporated" should be used in connection with a matter of this sort, because, as I have said, we have not been desirous of making ourselves one of a cast-iron pledge-bound party. We have no disrespect for them whatever; nor have we ever sought to break up that party, or made use of any organisation against carrying on their own organisation. Our appeal has been that in the day of success the methods they used when in a minority might very well be revised, now they are in a majority. In seconding the amendment by the member for Gascoyne, I point out that if this amendment of ours is carried this afternoon, Mr. Rason, no doubt, will reconsider his position to-morrow morning, and in reconsidering it he will doubtless be prepared to give His Excellency what advice he considers proper. One can rely on Mr. Rason for always doing that, for observing the strictest form in con-

nection with these matters. That being so, either a dissolution will be announced right away and the necessary steps be taken to carry it into effect, or else there will be a new Government formed, whose members too will have to go to the country. In the second alternative, they can go just as quickly, and can come back just as quickly, as the five men now seeking re-election. So there would be no loss of time in that respect. In the event of a dissolution, all will start from one mark. If there be a dissolution, I hope and trust we shall come to some working alliance by which the two parties in this House shall go to the country firm and bound together for the present. I do not see that members need be afraid of a dissolution. It all depends upon the strength of administration and the interest attending any alliance made; because the constitutional advisers of the Crown in this country as in every other country know well that we must exhaust the House first, and that a dissolution is the last resource. If we can carry on majority government we should do so, no matter under what conditions, and there should be a party pledge given to carry on a definite line of policy. That is sufficient. The amendment moved makes it possible for either of these courses to be adopted. I regret the necessity for moving this amendment, and the amendment is not moved in a hostile sense against Ministers personally. I absolve myself from any desire to hamper them in going before the country. That, to my mind, is not fair sport. I want to conclude by stating that I have always objected to this system in Western Australia of sending Ministers back, because the system was adopted in the old days always as a device against the poor man. We know what elections cost, and that in this House there are not many rich men. We know that the system of re-electing Ministers has been abolished in New Zealand; it has been abolished in the Commonwealth, which has the most democratic constitution in Australasia; it has been abolished in South Australia, which from a democratic standpoint ranks next to the Commonwealth. When we have triennial Parliaments, and particularly when we have a clear issue like the present, when not one man of the

five has recanted or crossed the floor of the House, but when each of the new Ministers has stood forth honourably at the call of his leader to fill a position which may be the lawful desire of any member of this House, where is the necessity for snipeshooting individual Ministers? more especially as such a course must inevitably, in a month's time, compel us to do that which we, by refusing to take the constitutional course, have said to-day we will not do; our motive being to allow the Estimates to be brought in, and not to harass the country. Well, if it be wise not to harass the country, if it be wise to-day to let Ministers bring down the Estimates, it is wiser still not to delay the business of this country by having re-elections at all. I hope I have as clearly as possible placed my position before the House and the country, in this appeal for either a frontal attack—a movement right along the line—or for allowing events to take their course, so as to give the gentlemen now holding His Majesty's commission the chance which they say they desire, to put before us an active policy of works, and Estimates of which I believe the country to-day is so sadly in need.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I do not intend to give a silent vote, but wish to say bluntly that I shall vote in favour of the amendment to the Government proposal; and for this reason. I consider it to be a political crime for the present Premier of Western Australia to attempt, in view of his position in this House, to face the by-elections of himself and his Ministers. Personally, I think the ex-Premier, Mr. Daglish, showed a certain lack of backbone when he threw up the sponge. When he resigned he had in the House an assured majority of three; he had a majority of three on which he could depend; and I think we could at that time have claimed that one or two members of the then Opposition would have supported the Government. At any rate, I claim that the member for Subiaco went out of power in a majority of five. [MR. BURGESS: That is your idea.] It is, and I give it to the House as my idea, not as yours. The member for Guildford (Hon. C. H. Rason) faces this House to-day in a minority of three at least; and if a test vote were taken, it is very questionable whether that minority

would not be considerably increased. I for one, if my vote will bring it about, will heartily welcome a dissolution in preference to the present state of affairs in our Parliament. It cannot be said that it is a new thing for a member of this (Independent) bench to advocate a dissolution as the best remedy for the present state of affairs. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Connor), on behalf of the Independent bench, stated during the last no-confidence motion that the Independents, then on the Government side of the House, would welcome a dissolution, would welcome an appeal to the electors as a whole, for a decision on political affairs; and I think that is far the best solution of the present difficulty. One would have thought the new Premier, before informing His Excellency that he could carry on, would have first absolutely assured himself, in order to assure His Excellency, that he had behind him a certain following, enough to give him a stable majority as Premier to carry on the affairs of the country. I should like to know from someone where that majority is to come from. The Premier has with him 23, if we count every one of them. One, as we know and regret, is unable to be with us; and we hope the time will speedily come when he will once more be in our midst. But counting them all, the Premier has 23 supporters. He cannot have reckoned on the support of this (Independent) bench. If he assured His Excellency of a working majority, that majority can have been arrived at only in virtue of a promise of support from the direct Opposition; and I am given to understand that on any vote affecting the fate of a Government, that (Labour) party must vote as its majority decides in caucus. To-day the party sits in direct Opposition. If it has decided to accord its support to the Premier, it is sitting in the wrong place. At all events, I take it as an Oppositionist that the presence of the ex-Ministers on the direct Opposition benches is proof positive that they are not supporters of the present Government. If we adjourn this House for a time sufficient for the re-election of the new Ministers, in my opinion that will only postpone the inevitable day when they must be thrown out of power. The by-elections to be held may or may not

result in the return of all the Ministers. The member for West Perth said he disagreed in any opposition to Ministers at by-elections; but I would point out that those who have been in the main responsible for opposition to Ministers at by-elections are those who have just accepted portfolios and are themselves seeking re-election. Particularly do I refer to the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory), who, when a former member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) formed a Ministry, strongly opposed one of the colleagues of that gentleman: I refer to the late Judge Moorhead. The member for Menzies, in company with a Labour member, took good care to spend all his spare time in Mr. Moorhead's constituency, trying to overthrow him. And within the last few months, when the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) saw fit to reconstruct his Cabinet, we have seen that the member for Menzies was particularly bitter in his opposition to the re-election of the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch). Such members cannot object if they are opposed at by-elections. Personally, I have always disapproved of opposing Ministerial re-elections; but these men cannot grumble if they have meted out to them the treatment which they meted out to others.

MR. DIAMOND: They are not grumbling or making a song about it.

MR. GORDON: Do not whine.

MR. THOMAS: The member for Dundas is not whining; but the interjector has whined for a considerable time, and will probably whine again before he is much older. Personally, I think it is absurd to ask the House to grant the extension of time requested; because if the Government come back without losing any of their Ministers, they have then to face this House in a hopeless minority; and that will be only a postponement of what must inevitably come—either a reference to the country as a whole, or a change in the occupants of the Treasury bench. I was returned as an opponent of the James Administration. I see the perpetuation of the politics of that party, practically the same *personnel* occupying the Treasury bench as occupied it at the time when I sat in direct Opposition, and when I was returned again to oppose them directly; so I feel I have no option but to record my vote to put an end to

them at the earliest possible moment; and I sincerely trust that the late Government will see fit to do that this afternoon, instead of postponing it till after the by-elections.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): The House has already unanimously agreed that the seats of the members who have accepted offices of profit under the Crown shall be declared vacant. Those members have asked for a reasonable time, so that they may go to the country to secure the approval of their constituents. The member for West Perth, when seconding the amendment that the House adjourn till this day week, asked the House to agree to something to which I think it ought not to agree, after having already agreed that the seats shall be declared vacant. No one is more anxious than I to see an end put to what I may term the unsatisfactory state of politics in this country, where since 1901 political life has been decidedly unrestful. The hon. member considers that no Government without a majority has yet sat in this House; but I would point out that the Leake Government, to which he referred, came to this House and acted without a majority; and had it not been for the action of the then Opposition, who assisted to carry on the business in the hope that something definite would be arrived at and a more satisfactory position created, that Government would not have been allowed so long to continue in power without a vote of no-confidence. As to the question to-day, if a dissolution is to take place, it should take place at once; but we have already agreed that the Ministers' seats shall be declared vacant, thus giving them an opportunity of going to the country; and as they have asked for what is after all only a reasonable time—constitutionally we cannot make the time shorter—it is surely the duty of the House to agree to the present motion. If we could terminate this state of things and let some majority rule in this House, from whichever side it may come, and if we could establish a stable Government, I think it would be in the best interests of the country to do so. However, I do not feel inclined at this stage to agree with the remarks of the hon. member, preferring that the House should act more generously and accept

the motion of the member for Canning in preference to the amendment.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I have in my hands a copy of the Electoral Act, which lays down a provision as to the time necessary for the election of ordinary members of the House. The same rule applies to Cabinet Ministers. It is laid down that the date fixed for the nomination of candidates—and in this case there has to be a date fixed for nominations, because in some cases there may be more than one candidate—shall be not less than seven nor more than thirty days from the date of the issue of the writ. I take it that the writ will be issued to-day, so that the date of nomination must be less than 30 days from now. Provision is also made for the date of polling; and it is laid down that the date of polling shall be not less than seven nor more than thirty days from the date of nomination. Therefore, if the Ministers had thought fit they could have made the polling days something like eight or nine weeks from now. I think members seem to have forgotten that one of the Ministers is Dr. Hicks, who was the member for Roebourne. Roebourne is one of the largest districts in this State, and polling places in that electorate are something like two or three hundred miles apart. It is true that for some years they have not had any election in Roebourne; but judging from the threats one hears from the ranks of the Labour party, one can naturally expect that they will put up a contest in the Roebourne district, which shows that it is absolutely necessary that full and sufficient time be given to the people of Roebourne for holding an election. In those distant places a longer time is allowed than for places like Perth and Fremantle. So as regards the time, I do not see how any objection can be brought forward to the proposal of the member for Canning. The member for West Perth has not been quite consistent in his arguments. At one stage I thought he was insisting on the necessity of having a dissolution, but afterwards he went on to try to prove that, even if we voted with him on this amendment, it did not necessarily follow that there would be a dissolution. I suppose the hon. member thought it necessary to reassure some anxious members of this House. The

hon. member blamed the leader of the late Government, the member for Subiaco, for having resigned, and complained that there was a sufficient majority to have carried on the late Government; and he tried to prove that it was our duty to vote for his amendment in order that a farther opportunity should be given to members on the Opposition side of the House to form a Government. I honestly believe that the people of this State are tired of trying any farther experiments with a view to expecting a permanent Government from the House as it is at present constituted. The remedy, of course, is a dissolution. It is quite true, as the member for West Perth says, that there is a majority on the Opposition side of the House; but the hon. member quite forgot to say that, although there may be a majority as regards numbers, there is no cohesion amongst members on that side of the House as regards political views. On that side of the House there are 22 or 23 members who, as we know, are most hopelessly disunited. Only seven days ago the leader of the Labour Government announced that he intended to resign on account of dissension in his own ranks. That was the cause of the resignation of the Daglish Government. Also, on the Opposition side of the House there are four Independents.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is your trouble. They are not on your side of the House.

MR. FOULKES: I wish at all times to speak with that amount of respect that may be due to those members. They have a policy of their own. The member for West Perth says that he insists on having a coalition with the Labour party, and that the views and opinions of the Independent party should be represented on the executive body of the present Opposition party; and he complained that in the past the views of the Independents had not been sufficiently represented. I mention this to show that the member for Subiaco and the member for West Perth agree that there is considerable want of cohesion among members on the Opposition side with regard to their political views. We cannot expect the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher), who represents such a large squatting community—at least I do not expect him—to agree with the

views of the member for Hannaus (Mr. Nelson), unless the member for Hannaus chances to change his views in the next few weeks. All I have risen to say is that I consider Mr. Rason should be given a fair opportunity to set out what policy he intends to bring forward. I agree with the member for West Perth that it is not quite fair to go in for this sniping business. It is all very well for the Labour party to say that they will not oppose the motion of the member for Canning, while, as the member for West Perth says, although they do not oppose the adjournment here, they are practically going to do it in the various constituencies the Ministers represent.

MR. A. J. WILSON: What about the Leonora election?

MR. FOULKES: I know nothing about the Leonora election. The people of the State are anxious that this state of affairs should be ended. I think all parties in this House agree that it is impossible to have a stable Government. I can give the reason. It is entirely owing to the four members of the Independent party. One week we had these four members most cordially supporting the Daglish Government, and the next week attacking it more bitterly than the members of the then Opposition. One week we have them supporting most cordially the Rason party, and the next week actively opposing them. The result is that both sides of the House are absolutely at the mercy of the four members of the Independent party. I believe that the whole State is tired of this state of affairs, and I am strongly of opinion that the sooner these four members are sent back to the constituencies they are supposed to represent, the better it will be for this House.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): In my opinion this debate would never have arisen had Mr. Rason adopted what should have been his constitutional course, being sure of a majority before forming the Ministry. I am strongly opposed to any Government being constructed without a majority.

MR. PRESSE: Did your previous Government have a majority?

MR. HOLMAN: We had a majority sitting behind us, and at present we have a majority against this Government. It

does not redound to the credit of the Assembly if we allow a minority to govern the country: it will show great weakness on our part. The only solution is a dissolution at the earliest possible date. I see no reason why Ministers should be allowed to go to the country to waste five or six weeks, as the final result will be a discussion in this House, when a dissolution will be bound to come. I am not prepared to give the present Government any support whatsoever. I do not think they are entitled to any support. In my opinion they are entitled to all the opposition members of this House can give them. We have heard something about opposing Ministers when they go to the country. I maintain the people in the country are in duty bound, if they do not consider Ministers should hold office, to give all the opposition they can. When we come to look back we find that the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory) made a great tour through the country assisting me to get a seat against the Morgans Government. Now we find that three of the strongest supporters and two of the defeated Ministers of the Morgans Government are the colleagues of the member for Menzies in the present Government. Why should we not oppose such a man, who has chosen to change ground in so short a time, and who has as colleagues men he has bitterly opposed in the past? We do not need to look back far to see how bitterly the member for Menzies opposed these gentlemen in the past. I am astonished to see members of the ex-Morgans Government taking the hon. member in with them. When we see the relics of the James Government and the relics of the Morgans Ministry trying to rule this country with a minority, I think the only thing we can do as right-thinking members of this Assembly is to send members of the House back to the people, so as to allow them to adjust matters in the House in a much better manner than at present.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I intend to support the motion moved by the member for Canning, but at the same time I may be pardoned for expressing surprise at the fact that a Government has been formed which it now appears does not possess the confidence of a

majority of members of this House. When I resigned, it was not, as the member for West Perth has indicated, because of the result of a vote taken on the Midland Railway question, but because of the fact that I did not feel satisfied that I possessed the confidence of all the members sitting on the then Government side of the House, and I was not content to retain office without having that assurance. I proposed to recommend His Excellency to send for one of my colleagues, had one of those colleagues of mine been willing to undertake the responsibility of forming a Ministry; and that, as it appears now, would have been perhaps the more proper proceeding. However, no hon. member who was then sitting with me in the Ministry was willing to undertake that responsibility, and I therefore had no alternative but to recommend His Excellency to send for the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason). I did so, believing that the member for Guildford would not undertake the task of forming a Ministry without satisfying himself that the Ministry he formed could secure the support of a majority of members of this House; and I felt satisfied that if the hon. member found he could not form a Government that had the confidence of a majority he would return the commission to His Excellency, so that it might be open to me to recommend that a dissolution take place. I claim that if a dissolution is necessary now, or was necessary a week ago, I, as the holder of office who had not been defeated, had the claim to the dissolution if a dissolution became necessary. It seems to me that that is the plain constitutional position. If the member for Guildford resigns, or is unable to obtain a majority for any Ministry he may form, that Ministry should not have been formed. But the member for Guildford should have been in a position to give an assurance that he had behind him a Ministry with a sufficient majority to enable him to carry on the business of the country. Coming to the present stage, I want to state that, personally, I do not fear and never did fear a dissolution, although I desired to avoid one and desire to-day to avoid one, because one has to think of something higher than personal considerations or party considerations; one has to think of the interests

of the country, and it seems to me it would be a distinct disadvantage at the present time to have a dissolution if any party in the House can command a majority, if any Ministry can be formed which can obtain the support of a majority of members. For this reason: most of the works are completed, or nearing completion, and it is impossible for any new works to be started until parliamentary authority has been given. It is therefore desirable, before the three or four months that must be taken up in the election of a new House and the assembling of a new Parliament are entered upon, we should first of all have our Loan Estimates and the Estimates of Consolidated Revenue approved by the House, so that the business of the country may not stop for a long term at a period when we require the fullest expenditure on public works that the circumstances will allow us to carry out in the interests of the State. That was the reason that made me desirous of avoiding a dissolution at the present time; that reason existed a week ago, and exists to-day. Although the leader of the new Ministry has taken what appears to me to be a very unconstitutional action, I am not prepared to adopt any proposal to destroy the Ministry once constituted without knowing what the policy of the administration may be. I want to know what their policy is, I want to know what their administration is likely to be; and I should be sorry indeed to see any indication in this House of a sudden-death motion in respect of any Ministry that may exist or that may be formed hereafter, unless indeed such motion were carried after a general election, when the two opposing parties had had at least an opportunity of placing their views before the country, and the country were aware what the contending policies were, and when a lengthy discussion was unnecessary to place the *pros* and *cons* before the electors of the State. For this reason, in addition, I intend to support the motion, at the same time reserving to myself the right at any future stage to take such action as may be necessary, according as the policy or administration of the new Ministry justifies it.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): It is unfortunate that the leader of the Opposition has indicated his intention

not to support the amendment. I feel confident that in the interests of the State the majority sitting on this side of the House should not allow the minority to rule. It was pointed out by the member for Katanning that when he was member for the Williams and leading the Opposition in the old Parliament, and when the late Mr. Leake was Premier, a similar position then existed as exists to-day. I certainly say the Leake Government had control of the affairs of the country with a minority. But whose fault was that? The fault of the then Opposition, led by the member for Katanning, who is now sitting behind the present Government. As I interjected when that hon. member was speaking, the time the Leake Government were allowed to rule was when members in Opposition were consolidating their forces to make sure that when they moved an adverse motion it would be successful. But we have a solid 26 on the Opposition side of the House, and there cannot be more than 23 members on the Government side. There is no necessity for any delay such as took place when there was minority rule by the Leake Government. The Opposition are in a position to-day to carry the amendment only for something that occurred previously which will not permit men to record their votes. I would like to say that it is more fair and manly for us on the Opposition side to put an end to the Government to-day than to go to the country and fight individual members in their electorates, which has been described as sniping by the member for West Perth, and I think it is a very good phrase. I would like to point out to the member for Dundas that the member for Menzies on one occasion came to help me; but we were then fighting a Government with a majority in the House, and unless we sniped they would have remained with that majority. It was for those in Opposition then to defeat Ministers, so that we could reduce their majority. We successfully sniped on that occasion. If we in Opposition were in a minority and the Government had a majority of two or three, it would be right to fight against Ministers in their electorates, so as to reduce their majority and increase the minority. We would be justified in doing that. While we have

the power in this House, if we believe the electors of the country are behind us, we should put an end to the Government to-day. I do hope, while we are not in a position in consequence of what has been announced by the leader of the Opposition, to put an end to the Ministry to-day, that it will be the duty of the House to take up that position on the earliest occasion possible.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle) : I ask members of the House to think of their honour and the honour of the House. We are practically pledged to vote for the motion. We have declared the seats of Ministers vacant, and the carrying of the amendment would be an act of treachery on the part of members and unworthy of members of this House.

MR. MORAN : That is out of order. The word is distinctly against parliamentary rules ; it is not permissible.

MR. SPEAKER : I did not hear the word applied to any member.

MR. MORAN : I ask you to rule, Mr. Speaker, that "treachery," applied to any motion before the House, is distinctly out of order.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. member has not applied the term to any member, and I cannot therefore ask him to withdraw it.

MR. THOMAS : It is applied to a motion moved by a member.

MR. DIAMOND : It is clear to a majority that an understanding had been arrived at apparently to give the Government the adjournment.

MR. MORAN : They got it.

MR. DIAMOND : The carrying of the amendment would be an act of gross treachery on the part of members of the House. I say the House would be guilty of treachery if the amendment be carried by the House, and I appeal to members to have some regard—

MR. THOMAS : I consider the member in his remarks has referred to me personally. The amendment has been moved, and I stated my intention to vote for the amendment ; and the member for South Fremantle has stated that members who voted for the amendment would be guilty of gross treachery.

MR. SPEAKER : If the hon. member takes the word to apply to himself, I will ask the member to withdraw.

MR. THOMAS : Seeing I announced my intention of voting for the amendment, I ask that the hon. member withdraw the word. And I suppose the mover of the amendment will ask for a withdrawal also.

MR. DIAMOND : Seeing that the cap has been fitted by the hon. member to his head, I withdraw the remark.

MR. THOMAS : I ask for an unqualified withdrawal.

MR. SPEAKER : The Speaker must be the judge in these matters, and I do not think that the hon. member is in order in objecting to the general application of certain terms.

MR. DIAMOND : I have a great regard for the honour of the House, and I think it is necessary for me to say that no one could be less frightened about the result of an election than I would be.

MR. CONNOR : What !

MR. DIAMOND : The House will stultify itself by carrying the amendment. I shall be very surprised indeed if the amendment is carried, and I think it would be an act of gross injustice. This action has been taken while Ministers are removed from the House by the acceptance of office : it should have been taken at a previous period.

MR. MORAN : When ?

MR. DIAMOND : When the Independents offered themselves body and soul to the Labour party : it should have been done then. The member for West Perth has repeatedly referred to the word "we." I would like to know since what time within the last few hours have he and his colleagues become members of the party on the Opposition side of the House ? I think every member of the House has a perfect right to vote as he likes ; and I as one jealous for the honour of the House, ask members not to stultify themselves, but to vote for the proposition.

MR. W. B. GORDON : I do not think any member of the House is surprised at the amendment, coming from the quarter it does—the four Independents of the House. We know that during the last 12 months their politics have, to speak kindly, been very erratic. The member for West Perth has told us there can be no coalition between the four Independents and the Labour party, for the simple fact that the Labour party was itself dis-united. If there could be no coalition

previous to the resignation of the Daglish Government, I would like to ask to-day, is there any chance of a coalition? Has that breach been healed to-day in the ranks of the Labour party? This House knows, I suppose, but I would like to make it plain to the country, that the Independents cannot join the Labour party or coalesce with them, not on that ground, but on other grounds; the grounds that were mentioned in the amendment of the member for West Perth on the Address-in-Reply, in the no-confidence debate. The member for West Perth has endeavoured to lead the country off the track in telling us to-day that the bone of contention has been removed. He wants the country to believe the bone of contention has been the Midland Railway. I wish I could read the amendment on the no-confidence motion by the member for West Perth as against the Daglish Government. It not only mentions the Midland Railway, but it accuses them of bad finance. It accuses them of managing the affairs of the State in a dastardly manner; it accuses them of having no business acumen at all; therefore I want to emphasise to this House and to the country the fact that the bone of contention to-day as between the Independents and the Labour party has not been removed, and Mr. Daglish has not proved himself any better financier since the time that amendment was moved on the no-confidence motion, but, if anything, a worse financier. As regards the constitutional aspect that has been placed before this House, if Mr. Rason or any member of that Ministry were in his seat to-day, he would absolutely answer that accusation as to the step taken being unconstitutional. The time will come, and very soon, when Ministers will have an opportunity of answering that accusation and showing what an unfair attack it has been; but they are not in their places to do so now. It will be proved clearly from constitutional authorities that their conduct in taking office has been in accordance with constitutional procedure. I may say that I expect the four Independents to vote even against their own amendment, especially if they see many of the Labour party sitting or voting with us.

MR. F. CONNOR (Kimberley) rose to speak.

MR. GORDON: Is the hon. member in order?

MR. MORAN: Certainly; I have not finished yet.

MR. CONNOR: I want to pose now as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia who took up the democratic standpoint 13 years ago, when there was not any other democrat, at all events who at present has the honour of sitting in this House, who took that standpoint. I took that standpoint when I came to this House, not because of any policy or because it suited me, but because with my whole heart I supported democratic measures, and I continued in that position, too. I have stayed in that position all the time I have been in this House. I have never changed my position from one side to the other to benefit myself in all those 13 years, although I have had opportunities. Consequently I can reply to some of the remarks, the insinuations, the ignorant remarks, may I say, of particularly one member who has spoken in this debate. I will remind the Labour party of the time when I was sitting in opposition to the James Government and when they were supporting the James Government. I will ask them to go through the pages of *Hansard*—what we say may not be much; it is not a question of what we say, but how we vote—I will ask them to look through these pages and see the list of votes. I ask them if I have not given them loyal support right through the piece, even when sitting in opposition to them. I can refer to the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) as to that. Insinuations are thrown out broadcast, not only against the party to which I have the honour to belong, but against the individual members of the party; that they are unworthy and unjust, and are not justified by what has taken place in the past history of this Government, this Parliament, this House. I want to say that in my opinion there can be only one end to the position in this House, and that is what was mentioned when I made a very eloquent speech on the last no-confidence motion. I spoke for, I think, about thirty seconds. I said all in that thirty seconds which I felt at the time, and I could say all I have to say in thirty seconds here. My words would be that there is only one solution to this

difficulty, and that is for the members of this House to appeal to the people, and allow the people to decide. I took that stand then, and I take it now; and I have no hesitation in telling members that I will take that stand to the bitter end. Whether it is a Labour party, a Conservative party, a Democratic party, or any other party sitting on those benches, I will oppose that party so long as the discontent existing at present through all sections of this country prevails. I hold that so long as that exists it is my duty as a member of Parliament, and it is the duty of every member here, to take the same stand, and let the people decide who is right and who is wrong. [MEMBER: Make your amendment 24 hours.] Sudden death! If members want leave for 24 weeks I cannot help it. I would have them, not personally but as a political factor, finished in 24 minutes, if I could be of that much service to the country. I will not give a silent vote on this question. It has been pointed out again and again that the democratic—and I class myself in that category—majority in this House, for reasons which nobody can understand, and which that democratic majority, at least the leaders of it, cannot explain, is going to allow a conservative, an ultra-conservative majority, to rule this country. That is an unfortunate position of affairs, and to my mind it points to one thing and one thing only; and I am going to say something now which may be considered as far-reaching, perhaps too far-reaching. The position in this House to-day only points to one thing, and that is the abolition of Parliament as it exists in the States of Australasia. I say it must come, and very soon, when such a state of affairs as exists to-day in the present House must be stopped; and under the present system I do not know how we are going to stop it. I want to know why the great Canadian States which are ruled by practically county councils, greater places than Australia, with greater revenue, more population, more wealth, are not ruled by a Parliament such as sits here, that grabs, one side or the other, for office—who will be in office and who will not be. They are ruled by a system of government which I hold would be of value to this country if it were introduced here. Members can take

some other great financial centres concerned; they can take, for instance, the city of Glasgow, the second city in the Empire—what are they ruled by? Their revenue is greater than ours, and their population perhaps tenfold. Here we have a Government sitting with all this paraphernalia, and these gentlemen hungering for office; all these gentlemen scrambling for office, and it is only scrambling for office, I hold—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making those remarks.

MR. CONNOR: I will withdraw the word "scramble," and I will not apply another word I was going to apply to them. I will not say that they are treacherously looking for office. This party of four, of which I am one, has been accused by nearly all sections of the Press of having been office-seekers. I want to say first of all that I am not an office-seeker. I am not going to have the opportunity, but I ask members to believe that no position in any Cabinet would tempt me; so consequently I think it is hardly fair that we should be taunted as being office-seekers by not only the Press and a large section of the public, but by members of both sides of the House. Let me tell members, and perhaps some of them do not know it, that this party has been offered seats in a Cabinet by both sides of the House. What I say now I know, because I personally was there. The offer was not made to me, but I was present, and I know both sides of this House offered seats in the Cabinet to members of this party as soon as this party was formed.

MR. GORDON: Not enough to catch you.

MR. CONNOR: Your party offered us two, anyhow.

MR. GORDON: You wanted four.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member's party offered us two seats, and I think we could have got two honorary portfolios if we had joined them. I did not intend to say that, but it is absolutely true. I wish the hon. member would take breath for a little while. We were accused by an hon. member of selling ourselves body and soul to the Labour party. The Labour party offered us positions in their Cabinet. [MR. BOLTON: When?] I would rather you did not ask me exactly when. I say it is true.

If the hon. member denies it, I will tell him when; but I think it will be as well not to ask me.

MR. ANGWIN: He cannot deny it.

MR. CONNOR: The ex-Honorary Minister supports me. It was so. We Independents were prepared to work with the Labour party, and all that we asked of them was a certain position. It was not a paid position, but an honorary position in their Cabinet; and the position did not eventuate.

MR. F. F. WILSON: Who was the cause of its not eventuating?

MR. CONNOR: It did not eventuate, anyhow. I do not think it will make any difference how much or how little I talk. I wish to say that if nobody else calls for a division on this amendment, I shall. I think I have made my position clear, or made it clear at all events that I do not want office. The amendment will put the position clearly before the country; it will show whether the leader of the Government and his party are justified in flouting the wishes of the people who sent them here; and it will prove whether or not the late Government kept the pledges they made to introduce and pass democratic measures in this House.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I intend to say a few words before this vote is taken; because I, like other members on this (Opposition) side, feel very strongly on the question at issue. The party (Labour) of which I am a member are in a minority in this House as compared with Government supporters, who number 23 to our 22. Looking at the position from that standpoint—because I can look at it only from the standpoint of my own party—I must recognise that the Government are in a majority. When the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Daglish) retired from office, he retired, as he said, because he did not think he would be able to carry on the Government with honour to himself, with credit to his party, and with advantage to the country. The present Premier was sent for, and, however he did it, must have satisfied the Governor that he had a majority in this House.

MR. MORAN: So he has. He will get it directly, and a big one too.

MR. TROY: If he has not a majority, I for one cannot understand why he was

entrusted with the formation of a Cabinet. The position of parties to-day shows that he has not a majority; and the Premier must have known that when he formed his Cabinet. I feel that he has committed a grave breach of the Constitution; because, recognising that the ex-Premier could not carry on with his majority, how could the present Premier hope to carry on with a minority? He could not hope to do so; therefore I say with all respect to the Premier that he must indeed have been desperately anxious for office. How will his action appear in the eyes of the country? The people must recognise, and cannot help recognising, that the position of affairs is very indecent: a majority in Opposition, a minority governing the country. [MR. DIAMOND: Unanimously.] Unanimously, we are told. When I bear in mind the personnel of that Ministry, the members of which were only a few years ago opposed to one another, but are now sitting cheek by jowl on the Treasury bench, I ask, how can they hope for long to be in a majority, or to be unanimous, if they are true to their political opinions? Only a few years ago we had the spectacle of the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) and the Premier (Hon. C. H. Rason) opposing the present Minister for Works (Hon. Frank Wilson) and the present honorary Minister in the other Chamber (Hon. M. L. Moss). To-day we have them, one would think, applying their minds to the circumstances of the position.

MR. GORDON: The same as your party have done.

MR. TROY: The member for Canning has no mind to apply to anything. When I look at that minority, when I recognise the radical members for Wellington (Mr. Hayward), Murray (Mr. McLarty), and Irwin (Mr. S. F. Moore), and that eminent socialist, the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown); when I see those great liberals and democrats the members for Kataning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) and York (Mr. Burges)—

MR. GORDON: Is the hon. member right in criticising the present Ministry?

MR. SPEAKER: He is quite in order.

MR. TROY: I am certainly in order, though the member for Canning would like to rule me out of order. When I

recognise the different political opinions held on the Government side of the House, I, like other Oppositionists, recognise that Government supporters must be a very unanimous party. To my mind, when the Premier found he had not a majority, he should have informed the Governor that he could not carry on. The Governor would then have sent for the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), who, not being able to carry on, would have made an appeal to the country; and then the political atmosphere would have been more or less cleared. There is no getting away from the fact that to the majority of members the present position of affairs in this House is absolutely intolerable. It cannot obtain long, and the sooner an appeal is made to the country the better. It seems to be the intention of the House to give the Premier an opportunity to formulate his policy. After all, what sort of policy can we expect? We have been promised by the member for Canning that the Government will consider the Estimates; and I suppose the only other part of their policy will be the old gag about the restoration of public confidence, that is of public confidence in themselves. That is about the only policy we can expect; for what other policy can come from such a Government as is now in power? In conclusion, I do not think that the present Premier has acted wisely or well in taking office. I cannot understand how any man in such a position would take office, unless, as I said before, he was desperately anxious for office. I cannot understand how such a Government, composed of men of all political creeds, can hope to formulate a policy for this country. I for one, if the party of which I am a member had a majority, would not allow the present Ministry to live longer than to-day; because I do not think that such men as the Minister for Works, the Honorary Minister in the Upper House, and the Colonial Secretary, can legislate in the interests of the majority of the people of this State. Years ago the country gave out distinctly that it had no confidence in these gentlemen; and I think it has the same feeling towards them to-day. I feel very strongly on this matter; and I say again, if the party of which I am a mem-

ber had a majority, and I can look at the question only from the standpoint of my own party, which is in a minority of one, and therefore cannot put out the Government—

MR. MORAN: What about the measures? Never mind the party.

MR. TROY: The Government are in a majority of one compared with my own party; and if the Labour party were in a majority of one I say it would be their duty at the earliest possible moment to end the travesty of government that exists to-day.

MR. C. C. KEYSER (Albany): I intend to vote for the motion. Personally, I should favour a dissolution, if I thought it would bring about a state of affairs different from that existing to-day; but we have no guarantee that on an appeal to the country parties will be altered.

MR. A. J. WILSON: That is good.

MR. KEYSER: The hon. member interjecting pretends to be in favour of a dissolution, and has urged it at times; but yesterday he was not quite so willing to face a dissolution. The point I wish to emphasise is that the Daglish Government took the reins of office when they had a minority in the House. That is an absolute fact. They could not depend on the support of the Independents on any question brought forward. The Independents reserved the right to support the Government when they thought fit; and the Government had no control over the Independents.

MR. THOMAS: Has any Government any control over anybody?

MR. KEYSER: The Independents have always been a separate body in this House; and apart from the Independents the Daglish Government was always in a minority. The Labour Government voluntarily retired from office because of dissension in their own party. There was no adverse motion to put out the Daglish Government, who, had they thought fit, could have been in office to-day. But rather than remain in office whilst they had the voting support of their own party but not its moral support, they resigned; and surely no Premier could remain in office when he had not the unanimous support, both by voice and vote, of his party? After the Premier retired he advised His Excellency to send

for Mr. Rason, who was sent for and formed his Ministry. Until Mr. Rason has proclaimed his policy, we do not know whether or not he has a majority in this House. If the Rason policy is sufficiently liberal and democratic to appeal to me, I shall support the Rason Government. I shall not support any Government simply because it is constituted of certain members. I shall support measures.

MR. BOLTON: Do you expect them to be liberal?

MR. KEYSER: If the measures are liberal I shall support them. If the Premier proclaims a policy which I consider to be illiberal and reactionary, I shall take the first opportunity, should a motion be moved, to put them out.

MR. A. J. WILSON: But do you not want sympathetic administration of measures?

MR. KEYSER: I certainly want good administration. I would favour a rest in legislation and a return to administration, if the administration is good. The member for Yilgarn fears a dissolution more than I do. I am not afraid of a dissolution. While I aspire to be the representative of a constituency in this State, it is not all I aim at; and if I could bring about a stable Government my seat would be sacrificed at any time to do so. I am quite with the member for West Perth in his desire to bring about that state of affairs; but I contend that if we put the Rason Government out to-day, it will be purely on personal grounds and because we take exception to certain gentlemen as members of that Ministry. It is immaterial to me whether Mr. Daglish or Mr. Rason is Premier, so long as the measures are liberal and so long as the legislation is democratic. That is all I require. The personnel of Ministries does not come into my consideration at all, in one sense. The member for West Perth said that if the Rason Government were put out, a dissolution is not inevitable. If it is not inevitable to-day, it is not inevitable a month hence, not in any sense. In fact, if Ministers go to their constituencies and one or two are defeated and this side of the House is thereby strengthened, we would have a much better chance of carrying on the government of the country than by a dissolution. All that we

require is a strong majority able to carry on the government of the country. Personally, I regret that though there are about forty democrats in this House we are unable to form a democratic Government. I think it is unquestionable that there are only about ten conservatives in this House. [MR. BOLTON: I should like you to name them.] Does the Labour party think more of its party than it does of the country? Is it not willing to submerge its sectional interests, and meet other democrats in the House to form one body which would bring about stable government? Although a Labour member I am prepared to join with any democratic party that can be formed in this House.

MR. TAYLOR: You are a good brand of Labour member!

MR. KEYSER: I am not a hide-bound Labour member. I do not think more of the Labour party than I do of the country.

MR. NEEDHAM: You had better cross the floor.

MR. KEYSER: I have supported the Labour party at all times in what I have considered the interests of the State; and if a good democratic party can be formed out of the present House I am prepared to join it. If it is cast on democratic lines it is immaterial to me who is leader. It is my opinion that the fault of the Labour party is that its members are too hide-bound, too exclusive, too conservative; and if there are any members of this party in favour of liberal legislation, is there any reason why the democrats could not form one compact body?

MR. HORAN: You tried it.

MR. KEYSER: I would try it, and I would do so at any time.

MR. A. J. WILSON: But you did try.

MR. KEYSER: I am willing now to try. The member for Forrest alludes to a meeting which did not succeed. Why? Not because the Independents did not hold views in common with ourselves—[MR. A. J. WILSON: I am referring to the present Government.]—for our views are practically in common. Why we could not come to an agreement was because of dissension in our own party. So long as our party remains as it is there can never be any cohesion. There is not the proper feeling that ought to

exist, and not the willingness to submerge personal opinions and work for the good of the whole. For these reasons I support the motion of the member for Canning. I should like to see the amendment withdrawn, if the hon. member would consider the suggestion. [MR. MORAN: I should like to do so, but they won't let me.] I think it would be wise to do so. If the policy of the Rason Government is not liberal and does not meet with our approval, let us turn them out.

MR. THOMAS: They are in a minority. That is good enough for us.

MR. KEYSER: Until the policy is delivered, we cannot tell whether the Rason Government will command a majority or not.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I have no desire to give a silent vote on the important issues engaging the attention of the House to-day. I had already arranged my vote before the amendment moved by the member for Gascoyne was submitted. I had decided on all questions at issue to-day to pair with the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins); and consequently whichever way the member for Boulder may be looked upon as voting, my vote will go against that hon. member's. In reply to those members who have said that we ought to wait until such time as the policy of the new Government is proclaimed before taking any decisive action, I want particularly the members of the Labour party to remember that but a short time ago a joint meeting was held between representatives of the present Government and representatives of the present Opposition. I refer to the predominant part of the Opposition. I wonder what the object of that meeting was. Was it simply a little conversation or *tête-à-tête* between representatives representing the then Government and the then Opposition, or was it a legitimate and honest attempt on the part of the two largest parties in this House to do what the hon. member for Albany has just suggested ought to be done? [MR. KEYSER: Both wanted their own way.] Quite so; and that is the obstacle before us to-day. Is there any indication before us of the remotest possibility of the position of a few weeks ago being changed by the mere fact

that there has been a change in the position of parties? It may be so; it may be that the salubrious influences of the cool shades of Opposition—[MR. LYNCH: Or the healing hand of time]—may have worked a miracle upon the political sentiments of some members now occupying seats on the Opposition side of the House or the sentiments of members on the other side; it may be that members on the Government side may be prepared to-day to entertain proposals from the Opposition upon which a working alliance may be arrived at. I am one who has always said that the paramount consideration, so far as the Labour party is concerned, is measures and not men. With all due respect to the late member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson), although we as Labour men always look upon him as the key-stone in the arch of opposition to Labour politics, I am prepared to say here that if that gentleman is prepared to mend his ways in the future, in common with his colleagues, and to give us a policy and measures which we believe will make for the material progress of this State, I am quite prepared to occupy this seat on the Opposition side of the House for the next two years, or the next ten years, or the next twenty years, and allow him to occupy a seat on the Ministerial bench. I may say in passing that I do not think a dissolution would have the effect of displacing me or causing me to lose my seat. In fact, I believe I could go farther than some members are prepared to go in this matter and say that I believe that my constituents have such implicit confidence in the representation I have given them in this Chamber that they will see that I shall not have any opposition. But notwithstanding the fact that my own position is better assured as far as my seat is concerned than of any other member of the House, I say the time is by no means ripe for a dissolution of this Parliament. I say we have grave and important issues to consider. We have the advice of the leader of each party in the House, that the most important issue at the present stage of affairs is the question of the financial position of our State. If that be so, if there be unanimity in the minds of the three leaders in the House on this question, it occurs to me that the right thing

to do is to try and bring about a condition of affairs which will enable us to give the necessary attention to that important phase of the question and the affairs of this State. I want to say in regard to some of the actions of the present Government, that I think we have just cause for disagreeing. I have no desire to suggest anything in regard to any action ; but I notice an extract in the newspapers under "Latest Mining," and this is a very late report. It says: "State Battery Charges—Mr. Gregory's Prompt Action—Refuses to Sanction Increased Charges." I submit this is undue generosity on the part of a gentleman who has just been appointed to a Ministerial office, and whose appointment has not yet been endorsed by his constituents. This strikes me as being a most unfortunate action on the part of the Minister for Mines, taken at a most unfortunate time.

MEMBER: How many batteries has he in his electorate?

MR. MORAN: Do not let us deal with personalities.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I do not care if he has one or many. I do not go into the question whether the charges are too high or too low; but I say a matter of that kind ought not to be interfered with until after the result of any election likely to take place has eventuated. In my opinion, so far as the present constitution is concerned, there is only one thing that an honourable man can do who finds himself in the position of leader of this House, and who finds himself facing practically the solid opposition of 26 members against 23 members on his own side; the only position in those circumstances appears to be for the Premier to recognise that his Government does not, by the position members have taken up in the House to-day, possess the confidence of a majority of members. That being so, how does the request of the member for Canning, who is acting on behalf of the Government to-day, for an adjournment for five weeks, compare with the action of the leader of the Opposition who the other night, without any vote on the matter, while the four Independents were sitting on the Government side, and believing he had the moral support of a majority, voluntarily resigned and

advised the Governor to send for the leader of the Opposition? Does the position of the Premier contrast with the position of the leader of the Opposition? In my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of the country, it will contrast in a most unfavourable light. In this instance, instead of putting off the inevitable for a period of five weeks, I think it would be a graceful act on the part of the Premier to make an appointment with His Excellency the Governor for 6 o'clock this evening and pass in his cheques; and either advise His Excellency to dissolve this Parliament or send for some other hon. member who may probably be able, even with the scattered party remnants of 25 or 27 that obtain in the House to-day, to form a stable Government. I think that the position is perfectly clear that the Premier and the new Government will find it absolutely impossible to carry on, except under one condition, and that condition is that the policy which was supported some 18 months ago by the present Minister for Mines and the present Colonial Secretary and the present Colonial Treasurer will be put forward as the policy of the incoming Government. If the Premier does this, I believe I should be inclined to join hands with the member for Albany and say that if the Government are prepared to bring forward the progressive policy that their predecessor (Mr. James) was prepared to meet the House with, we should have a considerable amount of pleasure in helping them to carry the programme into effect. I believe the present Minister for Works, in view of the circumstances and position of the House to-day, might even be induced to adopt a more progressive policy than has been his wont hitherto. Are the three members of the Cabinet I have referred to likely to be dominated by those three members of the Cabinet who were in the combination formerly got together by Mr. A. E. Morgans, when the Labour party on that occasion had the greatest possible pleasure and greatest satisfaction in joining hands with the present Minister for Mines and the Colonial Secretary in trying to bring about the defeat of those new Ministers? It is quite evident, at all events so far as I am concerned, that those of us who believe in a progressive reform policy in

this country have not the remotest possible prospect of getting that from the gentlemen likely to occupy the benches on the other side of the House for the next few weeks.

MR. BURGESS: That is your idea.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I think it is the idea of the member for York; otherwise he would not be sitting where he is. If the hon. member were satisfied the Government were likely to bring in a bold reform policy, I do not know where he would sit. [Interjection by MR. BURGESS.] If the hon. member will come down to my constituency I shall have the greatest possible pleasure in taking him on. [MEMBER: Two to one.] Yes, I will give him ten to one. I say, having regard to these circumstances, there seems to be no possible prospect of our getting anything like a policy which will be satisfactory to members sitting on this side of the House; and if that be the case, if there be no prospect of it, if the only policy is to be the policy enunciated by the member for Canning (Mr. Gordon) this afternoon—Estimates and nothing, but Estimates—then I feel there is no justification for our putting back the parliamentary clock for five weeks now, or putting it forward for five weeks, as the case may be, and at the termination of that period our having brought about a position of affairs which will throw us into chaos for probably another 12 or 15 weeks, pending the dissolution of this House and a general election. I say that under the circumstances, the right thing for the Premier to do, in my opinion and I believe in the opinion of the majority of the country, is to return the commission to His Excellency the Governor, and advise him to dissolve Parliament or send again for the present leader of the Opposition.

MR. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I regret very much that the time has come when we have a Ministry in office and not in power. I wish now to deny the statement which has been made that the Labour Ministry when they took office did so without being backed up by a majority of the members of this House. I think that if we only go back a little way we shall find very clearly that there was a distinct motion

voted on in this House, and on that motion the Labour party went over to the Ministerial benches. I have been sometimes trying to puzzle my brains as to why the four members now sitting on the Opposition cross-benches, and who had for some considerable time sat on the benches opposite, have been picked out as the only portion of that Independent party to be the butt of a large number of members. I think it has been done for one reason—because they acted consistently with their votes in putting the James Government out of office somewhere about 12 months ago. There is not the slightest doubt that some members in this House do not act consistently with the vote they gave at that time. Had they done so, they would have supported the Labour party during the past 12 months in carrying on the business of the country. If they had done that, there would have been no necessity for the climax which has been reached to-day. I only trust that the position in which we are placed will be looked at very keenly by the electors of this State. I very much regret that the present Ministry should have taken office with a minority, and I also very much regret that I am in such a position that I cannot vote to put them out. The position they know is there.

MR. CONNOR: Then the hon. member has no right to be in this House.

MR. ANGWIN: That is a matter of opinion.

MR. CONNOR: It is not a matter of opinion.

MR. ANGWIN: Certain circumstances have taken place as stated by the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) just now, which debar me from taking the action I should very much like to take, and which I regret very much I am not in a position to do, in regard to the overthrow of the Government. I only trust the time will not be far distant when this will be entirely removed. I only hope that the Ministry which has just taken office will bear in mind that it is in a minority, and will reconsider its position and recommend His Excellency to send for some person who will carry on stable government in this State.

Question—that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question—

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

Ayes	29
Noes	4
Majority against			25

AYES.
 Mr. Bath
 Mr. Bolton
 Mr. Brown
 Mr. Burges
 Mr. Carson
 Mr. Cowcher
 Mr. Daglish
 Mr. Diamond
 Mr. Gill
 Mr. Hardwick
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Hastie
 Mr. Hayward
 Mr. Horan
 Mr. Isdell
 Mr. Keyser
 Mr. Layman
 Mr. Lynch
 Mr. McLarty
 Mr. S. F. Moore
 Mr. Needham
 Mr. Nelson
 Mr. Plesse
 Mr. Scaddan
 Mr. Taylor
 Mr. Troy
 Mr. Watts
 Mr. F. F. Wilson
 Mr. Gordon (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Butcher
 Mr. Connor
 Mr. Thomas
 Mr. Moran (Teller).

Amendment (one week) thus negatived.

MAIN QUESTION.

MR. MORAN: I am anxious, like everybody else, to see this question settled before the tea adjournment.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member, having seconded the amendment, is not in order in speaking to the motion.

MR. MORAN: I have not yet spoken to the motion, but to the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: The mover and seconder of an amendment are out of the debate, unless a farther amendment is moved.

MR. THOMAS: Before this question is finally disposed of, I think it is necessary for someone from this (Independent) bench to state that the Independents called for a division because they were informed by some that an arrangement had possibly been arrived at, and informed by others that an arrangement had been arrived at, between the Premier and the ex-Premier. It was therefore necessary, in order to establish the position of parties, that a vote should be taken. We Independents attempted to take a vote in order to kill a Ministry that had no right ever to exist unless it had been pledged support by the present leader of the Opposition; because no support was offered by the In-

dependents. Therefore, if the Premier was able to assure His Excellency of a working majority, that majority must have been assured by the ex-Premier and present leader of the Opposition. That was why the Independents took the amendment to a division; and I think we have proved to the country that those people who occupied the Treasury bench one short week ago, with a majority behind them, were afraid to attempt to put their principles into practice; were afraid to bring Bills before the House with a view to placing them on the statute-book; but went into Opposition, and are now according their support to the party which a week ago attempted to throw them out of office. That is the position to-day. A coalition has been arrived at between those who attempted to force the Labour party out of power and the Labour party, who of their own free will vacated office. We Independents have shown that we have not altered our opinions; we have shown at the first available opportunity that we oppose to-day exactly the same party that we first threw out of office at the inception of this present Parliament. We have at the first opportunity defined our attitude by calling for a division, to bring sudden death to that Ministry which had no right ever to come into being; and I for one regret that the rest of the Opposition—presumably they will sit in Opposition, though they will be only half-hearted—did not see fit to put a sudden ending to a Ministry which has no right to exist. I seriously suggest to the Labour members that they should allow the duties of active Opposition to devolve upon the Independents, who are prepared to take them; for be they 4 or 45, the Independents are prepared to do their duty, and not to sit on one side of the House and vote with the other.

MR. DAGLISH: It is not necessary for me to make any statement for the benefit of members of this House; but as any remarks made here find a place in *Hansard*, I rise to state, without farther comment, that members are perfectly aware that no arrangement whatever has been made between the Premier and me.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at eight minutes past 6 o'clock, until Tuesday, 3rd October.