

complete, and tenders will be called this week. 3, There has been no long delay. The work of the office has not permitted earlier attention to this particular building, as it had to take its turn with other works.

QUESTION—PUBLIC WORKS OFFICERS, DISRATING AND DISMISSAL (ALLEGED).

HON. F. WHITCOMBE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If the attention of the Government has been called to a letter published in the *Sunday Times* of the 20th May, referring to the disrating of Mr. H. W. Hargreave and the dismissal of James McCarthy from the positions held by them in the Coolgardie Water Supply Branch of the Public Works Department. 2, Whether the attention of the Director of Public Works has been called to the circumstances of such disrating and dismissal. 3, If not, will the Minister make inquiry into the causes leading up to the same?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, Yes.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In mentioning the adjournment, he proposed that the House should reassemble on Tuesday; but he desired to announce, for the information of hon. members who were from the country, and who perhaps would not be able to attend on Tuesday, that it was not his intention to take the second reading of the Enabling Bill then, should the measure reach this House on Tuesday, but simply to take the first reading and to proceed to no further stage on that day.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If the Bill were not reached on Tuesday, the House would adjourn till Wednesday; therefore, would the Colonial Secretary say he would take only the first reading on Wednesday in that case, so that there would be no necessity to send telegrams?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was perfectly willing to take the second reading on the day after the Bill was introduced. He moved that the House do now adjourn.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 4:40 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 31st May, 1900.

Appropriation Message (Federation Enabling Bill)—Question: Electoral Registration Arrangements—Question: Mining Rents Unpaid—Question: Mining for Lead, Tin, Copper, Coal—Question: Voting Illegally at Elections—Privilege: Member for Geraldton; a Point of Order overlooked—Federation Enabling Bill, second reading; in Committee, Clauses 1 to new clause, progress—War Telegram, an interlude—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE—FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

Message from his Excellency the Administrator was read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Federation Enabling Bill, in regard to taking the referendum.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. DOHERTY, without notice, asked the Premier, Whether it was the intention of the Government to advertise in the public Press of the colony information as to the best means for facilitating the enrolment of persons entitled to be registered under the new Electoral Act.

THE PREMIER replied: There would be no difficulty in any one getting on the electoral roll who was entitled to be registered, if such person would make application to the Electoral Registrar in his or her district. In addition to this, it was proposed to instruct those persons who would be appointed under the Federation Enabling Bill for issuing new certificates to electors, to also ask each person so applying to fill up a form by which he or she might be also registered on the Parliamentary electoral roll. By this means a large number of persons would have a ready facility provided for getting their names placed on the Parliamentary roll, at the same time that they applied for electoral rights to be exercised in the referendum on the federation question; and it was probable that each adult person (not already on the roll) who applied for the new electoral right would also fill up the form for getting his or her name registered on the Parliamentary electoral roll. Further,

if the persons so applying were also qualified to become voters for the Legislative Council, they would be asked at the same time to fill up a form which would place them on the roll of electors for that body. By taking this course a large number of people would be got on the roll, and a good deal of trouble saved, while what was desired by the hon. member would be done, namely to get as many persons as possible put on the roll before the next general election.

MR. DOHERTY: Would the Government advertise the names and addresses of the registrars?

THE PREMIER: Certainly; full publicity as to the electoral registrars and other persons entitled to issue voters' rights would be given. It was proposed to have a number of these officials, and to utilise as far as possible the police stations and post offices throughout the colony. By these means due notice would be given not only to the people of the towns, but to people living in somewhat isolated places.

QUESTION—MINING RENTS UNPAID.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Minister of Mines: 1, Whether the list appearing in the *Government Gazette* of 25th instant, showing something like 1,250 gold-mining and mineral leases on which the rent for the present year remains unpaid, gives the actual state of affairs in this connection on that date. 2, If not, what was it?

THE MINISTER OF MINES replied: The list as it appeared in the *Government Gazette* was correct.

QUESTION—MINING FOR LEAD, TIN, COPPER, COAL.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Minister of Mines, Whether, in view of the large quantity of mineral land which was alienated from the Crown in the early and subsequent periods of settlement, and which remains practically undeveloped, he will bring in a Bill, as early as possible during the next session of Parliament, with the object of assimilating the law in regard to mining for lead, tin, copper, and coal on private property, to that which exists in regard to gold and other precious metals.

THE MINISTER OF MINES replied: Prior to the passing of the present Land Act, all land alienated from the Crown

was granted subject to a reservation of all gold, silver, and other precious metals, the lead, tin, copper, and coal forming part of the freehold. A Mining or Private Property Act could not be applied to these lands, as regards the minerals mentioned.

QUESTION—VOTING ILLEGALLY AT ELECTIONS.

MR. HARPER asked the Premier Whether the Government propose to take any steps to bring to justice those persons who were alleged to have voted illegally at the late elections for the Legislative Council.

THE PREMIER replied: The law officers had been instructed, and steps were being taken in the matter.

PRIVILEGE—MEMBER FOR GERALDTON.

POINT OF ORDER OVERLOOKED.

THE SPEAKER: Before proceeding to the Orders of the Day, I would like to call the attention of the House to an irregularity which occurred last night, partly through my own fault in not calling attention to it at the time. When the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) submitted his motion that the Press should be admitted to the select committee appointed to inquire into the allegations made by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), I ought to have called attention to the fact that it was necessary to suspend the Standing Orders before such a motion could be passed. Standing Order 352 reads:

The evidence taken by any select committee of the House, and documents presented to such committee which have not been reported to the House, shall not be disclosed or published by any member of such committee, or by any other person.

It would, of course, be of no use having the Press present unless they could publish the evidence, and this the Press cannot do according to the Standing Order I have read. I understand that when a joint select committee of both Houses was appointed some time ago to consider the Commonwealth Bill, they requested that the Press should be admitted and report the evidence coming from the members of the select committee themselves. I do not know whether

am correct in that view, because I was not in the colony at the time.

THE PREMIER: That was the case.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Has the House the power to suspend the Standing Orders?

THE SPEAKER: If there be an actual majority present, the House can suspend the Standing Orders without notice; otherwise notice must be given. At present I do not think there is an actual majority here.

THE PREMIER: Twenty-three members ought to be present.

THE SPEAKER: I count only 21 here.

MR. HUBBLE: When a select committee was appointed to inquire into the cattle-tick question, some two years ago, representatives of the Press were, in the first instance, allowed into the committee-room; but I think you ruled, sir, that the Press ought not to be present.

THE SPEAKER: I could never have ruled that, because the Standing Orders empower reporters to be present, though not to report the proceedings.

MR. HUBBLE: The proceedings of the committee on the tick inquiry were reported, and I, as a member of that committee, thought your ruling was that the Press had no right to do that.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite right. The Press had no power to report the proceedings.

MR. HUBBLE: They were not authorised to do so?

THE SPEAKER: They were not authorised to do so; but the House can give authority for the Press to report the proceedings of a select committee, if the Standing Orders be suspended. I see that there is now an absolute majority of members present.

MR. SOLOMON: As one of the select committee appointed last night, I move that the Standing Orders be suspended, with the object of allowing the Press to attend and report the proceedings.

MR. GREGORY: I second the motion.

Question put and passed, and the particular Standing Order suspended accordingly.

FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

SECOND READING—DEBATE RESUMED.

Debate resumed from previous day, on the motion for second reading, moved on 23rd May.

MR. HARPER (Beverley): When this question was before the House last year, I used what influence I could to prevent the Commonwealth Bill being referred to the people, and opposed the measure in every way I could; and I am very gratified that, by whatever means it was brought about, the referendum was delayed. At that time there was an immense amount of more or less spurious sentiment floating about the country, and the people were not in a position to judge—at least that was my view—calmly and coolly on a serious matter which was more or less imperfectly put before them. Since that time we have been much enlightened, and I am quite prepared at this time to accept the proposal to refer this question to the people. I will just touch on a few of the altered conditions which, I think, have tended to enlighten us. This time last year the Press of the Eastern colonies was extremely hostile to Western Australia, about which nothing could be said bad enough, and the idea of asking for any modification of the Commonwealth Bill was scouted as absurd and ridiculous. But lately that has been largely altered, and we find the Eastern Press, at any rate the leading Press, after looking into the matter, have come to the conclusion that our position is a reasonable one, and have gone so far as to urge the Premiers at the late conference to, if possible, grant our requests. One little matter, I think, indicates something behind the scenes. When the Premiers refused to recognise our requests, it was said we must trust the Premiers in the matter, because they were expert politicians, and it might be they knew or had reasons to believe our requests were merely a bit of bluff, and that the Premier and people of Western Australia would give way if the people of the other colonies held their ground. The next thing I will allude to is the so-called "separation petition" from the goldfields, which petition was, I may fairly say, encouraged by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake).

MR. LEAKE: What?

MR. HARPER: Encouraged by the member for Albany.

MR. LEAKE: Oh!

MR. HARPER: That petition has been before us for some time, and it would, I think, be very difficult to find any docu-

ment presented to Her Majesty containing such a hash of ignorance and mendacity. I think, therefore, we must realise there is still a great deal of ignorance in regard to this matter; and that fact justifies the position of those who said that time was necessary to clear away a good many misconceptions. It has been repeated over and over again that all competent authorities on financial questions are agreed that this colony must lose very heavily by going into federation on the terms laid down in the Bill; and there is no need to argue that, because it is not denied by any one whose opinion is worth considering. I would like, however, to refer in connection with this to a paper which was published a short time ago, written by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), and purporting to be a history of the federal movement in Western Australia. As to the historical portion of the document I do not wish to refer to it, because I do not think the member for Albany can be complimented on, amongst his other brilliant abilities, that of being a historian. But I wish to allude to a few remarks made by him towards the close of that paper, when he said:

Patriotic national sentiment, the bond of union, the administration of our common wants by one controlling body instead of six, universal laws, and a defensive alliance, are all ideas which require no elaboration.

The hon. member appears to have now put last that which was originally his first plank, namely "defensive alliance," placing "patriotic national sentiment" first. The plank of "defensive alliance" has, I think, considerably disappeared; and the "bond of union" may be very strengthening or it may be very galling: it just depends on circumstances. As to a defensive alliance, the value of a defensive alliance is markedly written in the pages of history, for now we know it is established throughout the world that if any hostile hand is laid on British territory, the Empire will spring to arms; therefore we need have no fear with regard to the necessity for a defensive alliance. The hon. member next says:—

Here, as elsewhere, the material advantages are discussed, and the federalist is challenged to show, in pounds, shillings, and pence, what profit will accrue; as though it were possible to prepare a ledger account, with the gains on one side and the losses on the other.

Those who are opposed to federation have certainly not asked the hon. member, nor asked anyone else, to state the advantages in pounds, shillings, and pence, because the advantages have been already amply stated; nor has anyone asked what are the pounds-shillings-and-pence gains; but the federalists have been asked to give examples of what the gains will be. That is a challenge thrown out from the very first, and up to this moment it has never been answered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Answered over and over again.

MR. HARPER: The next point is the most important in the whole of the remarks made by the leader of the federal movement (Mr. Leake):—

Federalists believe there is danger in standing aloof, and view with alarm the continuance of those barriers against friendly trade and intercourse which federation would instantly remove.

One of the first arguments of federalists is that those barriers would not be removed by our joining in the federation, that they would be retained for years, and that it would be a long time before the removal would be given effect to; but the hon. member (Mr. Leake) says these barriers will be instantly removed under federation. We are carefully told by him, and by his coadjutor the member for East Perth (Mr. James), that the federal tariff would not come into operation for several years, and that for five years the sliding scale would be guaranteed to this colony; that, therefore, this colony would be unlikely to suffer. That does not agree with the hon. member's position here. But what is most important, to my mind, is the absolute fear which the hon. member has from time to time expressed with regard to this colony's financial position, and that fear is manifested here by him still more. The hon. member's fear is a quality which those opposed to federation will not enjoy with him; and, with regard to the fears which have been expressed, I would like to refer to a few points which have been spoken to by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) on the subject. It will be remembered that he, having had considerable time during the recess of Parliament to consider this matter, and knowing that he had been challenged over and over again to show what the dangers and the loss as well as the benefits

of federation would be, this is the result as set forth by him :—

If they did not federate, the federated colonies would make their own arrangements for the mail services, and the first port of call would be their own colony of South Australia.

I do not know whether the hon. member got that from any of the companies or from the Eastern colonies.

The result would be that they would be forced to make their own arrangements for a mail service, or wait until some coasting steamer brought them back from Adelaide. That was only one of the things in which it would hinder and hamper them.

We may assume, therefore, that this is the most important reason, as set forth by the hon. member. With regard to it, I would like to say that the hon. member seems to have assumed that the mail vessels are entirely under the control of the Eastern colonies, that they are owned by them, and that the mail steamship companies have to do just as they may be ordered by politicians in the Eastern colonies to do. My impression is that there are three parties to that agreement: firstly the British Cabinet, secondly the shareholders of the companies, and thirdly the Eastern colonies which contract for the mail services; and I cannot imagine that the shareholders of those British steamship companies will be prepared to sacrifice their trade with Western Australia, or that the British Cabinet would permit the Eastern colonies to use their spite against Western Australia, in this direction.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would not be spite: it would be pure commerce.

MR. HARPER: I do not think it is pure commerce to lose trade. The hon. member does not seem to realise that this is just what those Eastern colonies could do in regard to this colony if we were federated, for though I do not say they would do it, yet it would be in their power to do it; whereas while we retain our sovereign rights as a self-governing colony, this is what they cannot do to us, because we could retaliate and make it worse for them than they could make it for us. Some further important enlightenment we have gained in the last few months is furnished by the actions of the federation delegates sent by the Eastern colonies to London. Mr. Deakin said:

If the Imperial Parliament secured the passage of the Bill as it stood, and also passed a

separate enactment providing an Appeal Court for the whole Empire, the Federal Parliament of Australia would willingly adopt a resolution recognising that tribunal.

To say the least, it is rather a large assumption for a delegate to state that he could undertake what the Federal Parliament would do. Mr. Kingston and Mr. Deakin said the demand for the passing of the Commonwealth Bill, without amendment, was backed up by the voice of the Australian people. That statement, I maintain, is not true. Mr. Barton has said :—

The opponents of Clause 74 are, with few exceptions, also opponents of federation on any terms.

That I think we may safely deny. Mr. Kingston, in a letter he wrote to the Press in London, a characteristic letter,

Ridiculed the implied unselfishness of the Australian Chief Justices whose names have been mentioned, in view of the prospective benefits possible to accrue in the shape of peerages. He characterised Lord Lamington's extraordinary intrusion into the counsels of the Empire as being unseemly, unconstitutional, and unfair.

I think these statements may be more or less incorrect, and can only be described as born of arrogance and dressed in mendacity. Then we have the final amendment the Premiers of the other colonies were asked to assent to, for enabling Western Australia to join the federation. They said that, however much Western Australia might desire the amendment in regard to the sliding scale tariff, it was not possible for those Premiers to amend the Commonwealth Bill. One might well ask oneself, supposing either New South Wales or Victoria found under the constitution as framed that they would suffer some serious disability, whether they would not find a way to alter it. I am confident they would. That brings me to the point with regard to the sliding scale. It would be important to know whether the conditions which would be produced by the sliding scale were fully realised by the delegates of the Eastern colonies at the Convention, when that scale was discussed and put into the Bill, because if they did realise its effects and did not explain and point them out at the time, I say it looks like a bit of conspiracy on their part in putting Western Australia into a very difficult position.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They did not trouble themselves to conspire.

MR. HARPER: One of the delegates who attended the Convention in Melbourne has informed me that he ventured to suggest there might be some difficulty with regard to the effect of the sliding scale on Western Australia, and that he was immediately "jumped on" by Mr. Reid and informed that he knew nothing about it. If those delegates did realise and did not point out the effect of the sliding scale in regard to Western Australia, they were unfaithful to the position they held as delegates; or if they did not perceive the effect of the sliding scale, that circumstance does not say much for their fitness as delegates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That provision was framed by a lawyer.

MR. HARPER: Whoever framed the provision, it was discussed at the Convention, and we know the Treasurers of the several colonies were there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where were our delegates?

MR. HARPER: That is no answer to the point I am stating. One or two remarks which fell from the Premier in this House the other evening, as well as some omissions, deserve notice. One omission is that the Premier never indicated one of the most important effects which federation will have on this colony; that is the effect it will have on the public works policy of the Government. If our finances become strained under federation, that effect must reflect on our public works; and it is necessary we should be fully informed by the Premier, at any rate, of his views on that subject. In regard to the Enabling Bill now before us, the conditions of the question having been altered, as I remarked before, I am going to offer no opposition to the Bill; but I am not going, and I hope many on this side of the House as well as on the other side are not going to accept the Bill as it is, as has been assumed by hon. members opposite, without any attempt at alteration. The federal party have been allowed free scope, and have stated over and over again that an enormous majority of the people in this colony are in favour of federation under the terms of the Bill. In fact, I think they have constantly prompted the politicians in the Eastern colonies to believe that only about 10 per cent. of the people in this colony are opposed to the Bill as it stands. The

time has come now when we shall ask those advocates of federation to prove their contention; and I hope this House will demand such a positive proof of it that there can be no mistake in the future. The amendment which I hope will be moved will be to the effect that not less than 50 per cent. of the voters in this colony shall register their votes in favour of the Commonwealth Bill. There can be no doubt whatever then about their decision. This amendment may be opposed by hon. members opposite, but our reply will be: You say that 90 per cent., or say even 70 per cent., of the people in the colony are in favour of federation under the terms of the Bill; therefore all we ask is that you bring up at least 50 per cent. of the voters, to establish your doctrine. It will be surely unwise for this country, being in the exceptional position in which everyone in authority has recognised it to be in, it will surely be most improper to permit this question of federation under the terms of the Bill to be carried by a bare majority of those who vote on it. The position as between the federal leaders and the opponents of federation is that the former say: "Rush into this; never mind protecting yourselves; throw yourselves entirely upon the generosity of those in the East. If you do not, take care of the penalties. We appeal to your timidity, your terror—to the penalties you will incur." Those who oppose federation say: "Stand to your guns and defend your own rights, and do not leave that to other people to do for you. If you leave that to others, you deserve to suffer." That will be the issue before the people: Are you going to throw the whole of your sovereign rights into the hands of someone else, or will you hold them yourselves and see that you get fair value for them? That, I maintain, is the question which will be fought out in the country, and I have very great hope that the people of this colony will prefer to adhere to the spirit of the race, and to hold their own.

MR. HASSELL (Plantagenet); Although an anti-federalist, I intend to vote, and always have intended to vote, for the Bill going to the people. I consider the Government made a great mistake last session in not allowing it to go to the people, and had I been here

then, I should have voted for its being sent to the people.

MR. MORAN: We all voted last session for sending the Bill to the people.

MR. A. FORREST: The Bill providing for the referendum was passed by this House.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): Up to the present time, this question of federation never seems to have been properly put before the country. The hon. member who has just sat down states he will vote on this occasion for the Commonwealth Bill being referred to the people of the colony, and at the same time charges the Government with having, in the last session of Parliament, prevented its being placed before the people. Of course, opponents of the Government will always take up a cry such as that, and if by any means the object the Government desire has not been obtained, will say the Government must be distinctly to blame for it, and that no other section of the community should share the blame. I can assure hon. members that it was the desire of the Premier, who took the most prominent part with regard to federation last session, and also the desire of several other members of the Cabinet, that nothing should be done to prevent the Commonwealth Bill being referred to the vote of the people. The Premier chiefly comes in for blame in this matter; but any blame that may be cast on the Premier is, I can assure the House, borne equally by his colleagues in the Cabinet. As a rule, the Premier, as the leader of the Government, is always the Minister most fired at by those directly opposed to the Government; but on this question I believe there was no intention, on the part of the Government as represented by the Premier, of preventing the Commonwealth Bill from going to the vote of the people. The Enabling Bill of last session was defeated in another place; but in that connection I should like hon. members, instead of making bald assertions through the Press and on the public platforms, to prove those assertions in some way, to show distinctly to the people by some means other than simple assertion that the Government did anything to prevent the Bill from going to the people as the people desired.

MR. GREGORY: The Bill would not go to the people now but for the separation movement.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I consider the refusal by this House last session to grant the petition from the federal party in this colony was a blunder. I admit it was a blunder. Had there been a little more consideration given to the question at the time, the petition would not have been opposed; because, only a few minutes before, this House had agreed to send the Commonwealth Bill to a vote of the people. After a division had taken place on that question, which terminated weeks and weeks of discussion, the House was no doubt in a somewhat excited state, and without further debate on the subject, the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) asked the Speaker to put the question of which that hon. member had given notice.

THE PREMIER: And he did that to get it off the Notice Paper.

MR. LEAKE: Your colleague in the Council did the same thing, voted against it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The member for Albany asked the Speaker to put the question moved by him; and he did that, as the Premier says, to get the question off the Notice Paper. Had the Government and other members on this side of the House had sufficient time to consider that question, I feel quite confident the prayer of the petition would not have been refused by this House; that those who voted for sending the Commonwealth Bill to the people, and for the people being asked whether they desired certain amendments made in the Bill, would have been found voting on this question with the member for Albany. It was admitted by the Speaker that there was no necessity to put the question when it was moved by the hon. member, because the Speaker said the question at issue had already been decided by the House. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] However, of course, very naturally this incident was used by the opponents of the Government, and used not only here in Perth, but all over the colony wherever the opponents of the Government went, although certain members of the Government were perhaps just as much in favour of federation on equitable terms as were the Opposition.

The Government have been charged with changing front on this question. [MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.] I think the term "Government" is used too often in discussing this question of federation, which has not been taken up as a party question in any of the Australian colonies. I believe I am correct in stating it has always been agreed by the various Cabinets that federation should not be considered a party question, and that hon. members should vote on the subject as they thought best.

MR. GREGORY: And when did you submit the Enabling Bill? This is the first time an Enabling Bill has been before us.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We had an Enabling Bill before us four years ago. I shall have something to say about that Enabling Bill directly—that Bill to enable this colony to send delegates to the Convention in the East.

MR. GREGORY: That is another matter.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And that Enabling Bill provided for the Commonwealth Enabling Bill. But owing to certain events which happened, it was impossible to give effect to the machinery provided by that Act. However, it would have been much better if the Government had not been so frequently alluded to in the discussions on this federal question. By both sides of the House it was agreed that this was not to be a party question; yet, strange to say, there is no subject we have had to consider that has been made more of a party question than this question of federation. We have found persons of all shades of opinion with regard to federation sitting on the other (Opposition) side of the House; and yet at the same time, no matter what cropped up, they were always opposed to the Government. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), in speaking last night, attacked the Premier on every point he could possibly raise with regard to this question of federation.

MR. KINGSMILL: Then he must have made a long speech.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And what did the Premier endeavour to do? What any statesman would do in the position he occupies, and with the responsibility cast upon anyone who is the

Premier of a colony like Western Australia?

MR. LEAKE: Lost his temper.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: He tried to get the best terms he could for the colony. In this connection no one has worked harder or longer in the interests of Western Australia than has the leader of the present Government. A very much greater responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who have to administer the affairs of the colony than rests on those sitting in opposition. The Government supporters in this colony feel their responsibilities thoroughly, and none feel those responsibilities more than Ministers themselves. Everyone admits that with regard to this question Western Australia is in a very different position from any of the other Australian colonies; and having admitted that after careful consideration, and after looking at all the different phases of the question, it was considered, I believe by a large majority of this House, that if we were to enter the federation on the terms laid down in the Commonwealth Bill, Western Australia would be involved in a considerable loss. This colony, on the introduction of responsible government, and after the discovery of gold, entered upon a new life, and till quite recently very few persons here interested themselves in the political life of the country; and I may safely say that four years ago, when this question of federation came up in the House, and when the Premier asked the House to agree to an Enabling Bill to allow this colony to elect ten delegates to proceed to the Convention to be held in another colony for the purpose of framing a Commonwealth Bill, the members of this House scarcely considered the question. At that time the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) represented the whole of the Eastern goldfields; the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) represented the whole of the Murchison goldfields; and we had another goldfields member in the House representing Pilbarra. The question of federation had never been thought of, or at all events was little spoken of in Western Australia; and I believe the sole object this House had in passing that Enabling Bill to permit the House to elect delegates to the Federal Convention, was that this colony should be represented in an all-

important matter like this, and so that the delegates might have an opportunity of exercising their influence in framing a Bill under which, it was hoped, we as a colony would some time or other federate. There is not the slightest doubt, when that Bill came before the House, that is what was prominent in the minds of hon. members. No doubt there were a few ardent federalists in the House, men who would have adopted federation at any price. All members of the House were at that time imbued with the federal sentiment, but they did not treat the matter seriously, and I am certain they did not believe Western Australia would be able to join the Commonwealth save in the distant future. Moreover, I believe there were many members in the House who did not consider that the discussions that were likely to take place at the Convention would eventuate in Australian federation. We all knew there was a great deal of opposition, at the time, in the other colonies to this question, and it was generally believed that New South Wales, the mother colony, would not be prepared to enter into federation at that time. But the Convention took place, and I am pleased to say the other colonies have decided to accept federation. I am very pleased to say that they have come together in a spirit of compromise and agreed to federate, and that federation is almost an accomplished fact. The hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) last night stated that a very serious mistake had been made in this question not having been submitted to the people four years ago, and the hon. member was not quite certain as to the date, but he decided eventually that it was four years ago. I believe the hon. member's mind went back to the time when the Federal Enabling Bill was before the House. I am glad the hon. member admits that he made a mistake on that occasion, but I hope the hon. member has not told the people in the country in the past that that mistake was made by this House, without admitting at the same time that he was instrumental in making that mistake.

THE PREMIER: He never would tell them that, I am certain.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I hope that hon. gentleman (Mr. Illingworth)

will not tell the people in the future that a grave mistake was made, without telling the people that he assisted in making that mistake.

MR. LEAKE: What mistake was that?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The mistake of allowing delegates to be elected by the House and not by the people. The member for Albany, unfortunately, was not in the country at the time when this discussion took place. I am sorry he was not here, because, no doubt, he would have been able to assist us in the matter. I am referring to this subject at present because the member for Central Murchison has never taken up a decided party opinion in regard to the question: he has endeavoured to be as fair in regard to it as possible. I hope he will be as fair in the future as he has been in the past in dealing with it and that if any mistakes are made, he will admit that he helped to make those mistakes. Just the same as when a very gross mistake was made in the House some years ago—I refer to the dual title question—the hon. member, I hope, will admit in the future that he made a mistake on that question.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He has never yet admitted that he made that mistake.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Open confession is good for the soul, and I know the hon. member is a righteous man.

MR. KINGSMILL: Surely you are not using that as an argument against him?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member said last night that there was a distinct attempt four years ago—the very time the Enabling Bill was before the House—to keep this question back from the people, and he twitted the House with not sending delegates elected by the people to the Convention. The hon. member distinctly twitted the House with that; but the hon. member ought to have humbled himself before the House last night, and told hon. members that he was one of those who helped to make the mistake.

THE PREMIER: That is it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member said the question was not taken seriously, and that if the voice of the people had been sought, a serious intention would have been realised. The

hon. member said that the voice of the people had not been sought on the question; that if Parliament had decided that the delegates should be elected by the people, and the question had been brought forward seriously, the people of the colony would have realised that there was something serious in the question; they would have risen to the occasion, considered the subject, and would have been in a better position even now to judge of the question than what has been the case during the last four years. The Enabling Bill was introduced by the leader of the Government nearly four years ago—on the 1st October, 1896. The member for Central Murchison, who was then leading the Opposition in the House, I think, in the magnanimous way in which he generally accepts matters of this kind, stated he considered the question should not be treated as a party one. I regret that those who have been leading the movement during the last four years have not taken up federation in the spirit that the member for Central Murchison did on that occasion. But what did the member for Central Murchison say in congratulating the Premier on introducing the Bill? He said:

I think that in all probability the Premier has voiced the sentiment of this House, and that there is not likely to be much, if any, divergence of opinion in reference to the Bill. The hon. gentleman had voiced the opinions of the House and the country in proposing that the delegates to the Convention should be elected by Parliament! The hon. member for Central Murchison went on to say:

This is not a party question, but a national question, and as such I think we shall be able to approach it.

I regret to say that although we approached it so on that occasion, members of the House have not continued in the same straight road that they gave promise of in the first instance. The hon. member also said:

At first I had a strong feeling in favour of the proposal which suggested that the people of the colony should decide this question. While I would have preferred that their representatives should have been chosen by the people—

The hon. member had it in his mind then:

I am fully prepared to waive the point.

The hon. member for Central Murchison concluded by saying:

I trust this Bill will pass without opposition, and that the choice of representatives will be made with wisdom and judgment.

And what was the discussion on the Bill? Two or three members alone spoke, and when the House went into Committee did any hon. member move any amendment in the direction referred to by members of this House during the last day or so? No; the Bill was allowed to pass without debate or amendment. I hope members of this House at that time, and the member for Central Murchison especially, will remember this when they discuss the federal question before their constituents in the near future.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will you give me a train up?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There has never been an attempt by the Government of the country to keep this matter from the consideration of the people.

MR. GREGORY: Question?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There never has been any attempt. The duty of the Government was to see that every issue was placed before the people of the country as clearly as it could be. In Western Australia we were new to political life; our position was different from that of the other colonies, or I might say was different from the position of those who represented the people in the other colonies. There are men in the other colonies whose whole life has been spent in politics, I might also say men who are ornaments to Australia as statesmen. When it was decided to send delegates to the Convention to discuss the question of the Commonwealth Bill, it was difficult to find persons who were in a position to discuss the question with the statesmen of the other colonies. It is no shame to the statesmen of this colony to say this: they are not less brainy and intelligent than people in the other colonies, but the people of this colony had not had the same education in these matters that the people of the Eastern colonies had had. I maintain that if the members who represented Western Australia at the two or three Conventions which led up to the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill, as it has now been passed by

the other colonies and accepted by the Imperial Parliament, had assisted the Premier with their brains and intelligence, the position of Western Australia would be very different from what it is. There is not the slightest doubt, everyone can recognise it and see for themselves in reading the debates, that the Premier of the colony threw his whole soul and interest into the Bill and did all he could, but he would have had to be a giant indeed who could fight single-handed the statesmen of the other colonies.

MR. KINGSMILL: Were they opposed to one another?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is not the slightest doubt about it, the statesmen of the other colonies were a bit too much for the representatives that went from Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: Hence the sliding scale.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government will bear me out in what I say.

THE PREMIER: There is no doubt about it, they all hung on to their own colonies.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is not the slightest doubt about it. When members come into this House, they do their best for the constituencies they represent: that is the main idea.

MR. D. FORREST: They would not come back again if they did not.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I believe hon. members are sufficiently national in their ideas not to sacrifice everything for their constituents. At the same time when members come into the House, they even fight for the interests of their constituencies.

MR. MORAN: During the last session, more especially.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No doubt they are quite right in doing that, and more power to them, as the member for Pillarra just remarked. That is what the representatives of the other colonies were doing at the Convention. They were fighting all the time with the sharpest and keenest weapons at their command for the colonies they represented, and they arrived at a compromise by which four or five of the colonies have now agreed to go into federation; but I am afraid Western Australia was left out in the cold to a very large extent.

If we had only admitted last session that a serious mistake had been made in the past, and had all decided to work together with one mind to amend the Commonwealth Bill in the interests of Western Australia; if the Opposition in this House, instead of making the question of federation a party cry to a very large extent, had joined hands with the Government, and there had been one unanimous voice from this House and the Parliament of the country, asking the people to agree to certain amendments; or, even without going to the people at all, if the unanimous voice of this House had gone forth, proclaiming to the other colonies and to the British House of Commons that we were desirous of having certain small amendments placed in this Commonwealth Bill, which we considered would be an advantage to the colony of Western Australia—not an undue advantage, but one which it was only right we should have, which we ought to have claimed, and which all the most eminent men in the other colonies said this colony really deserved—

MR. GREGORY: You could not have got the amendments.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If such a course had been adopted, that advantage could have been procured. It is no good to prophesy now, for everything is over; but these are my opinions, and I believe the voice of this House would have had enormous weight, if it had not been found that the people of the colony were divided on the question. However, now the question is to go to the people of the country, as I have always desired it should—and I have always advocated that line of action, whenever occasion offered in this House—the subject should be thoroughly explained. We in this colony have a majority of persons who come from the Eastern colonies. They have been brought up under the institutions of the Eastern colonies; their homes have been there till recently; the families of many of them are there, and it is very natural that their sentiments are, to a very large extent, with those who are in the Eastern colonies. The time will soon come when these people will be assimilated with the rest of the inhabitants of Western Australia, and these feelings, which I am sorry to say exist at present, will then

cease. Still, these feelings exist to a very large extent, and a great number of the people in Western Australia, when they see the other colonies from which they have come federating, say, "Why should we be cut apart from them? Why should we be separated in this great national movement?" I am pleased to find that those who were most anti-federal in their views are prepared to let the people of the colony have a voice in this matter. I am not going to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of federation at the present time. I listened with the greatest pleasure to the very able speech delivered on this question last night by the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran). The hon. member out-did himself on that occasion. He was serious and earnest, and I think the speech he gave will be a very useful passage for persons interested in this question to read and thoroughly digest. To combat the statements made by the hon. member would take long, as long as the hon. member took to deliver them, and no one at the present time in this House seems desirous of combating them. The hon. member—I am sorry for him—chiefly delivered that speech because he wanted to speak to those whom he represented, and who, he was afraid, would not give him a hearing at the present time. But the hon. member will have a hearing. The people he represents and has represented for some years in this colony will give him a hearing, and I am quite confident they will allow him to explain to them his views on this great national matter. As we are about to pass this Enabling Bill, and the question is going to the people of the colony for their decision "yes" or "no," now is the time when it is the duty of every member in the House, no matter of what shade of opinion, to do all he can to place before the people he represents his views of the exact position the people will be in with regard to federation. Now is the time for placing the matter before the people of the colony. I consider that the time to a very large extent has been wasted in the past. The people had not grasped the fact that they were likely to have the right to say "yes" or "no" to the adoption of this Commonwealth Bill. Such right will be accorded them, and now they know that perhaps only a month

or two will pass before they will have an opportunity of giving their verdict on the question, I hope they will rise to the occasion, and all take an interest in it, and be anxious to hear all about the subject, because I maintain there are very few people indeed in Western Australia who know what the outcome of this great federal movement will be. In fact, there is no one who knows exactly, no one who can explain to the people exactly what the position is going to be. A lot of work will have to be done, and numerous arrangements made after we accept federation, and no one knows what will be the position of each separate State in this great Australian union.

MR. KINGSMILL: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: A plunge in the dark.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I wish to impress on the House that having reached this point, it is now our duty to, as far as our abilities will allow, place this matter before the people of the colony dispassionately and clearly, and without bias in one direction or the other, and let them have the decision as the country desires they shall. As when this question originated in the House it was looked upon by the then leader of the Opposition as a national movement, and not a party movement, I hope that now, after four years of consideration, the leaders of thought on the Opposition side of the House will not make it a party question, but will, according to their lights, place clearly before the people of the country, without reference to the Government or to party, exactly what their position will be under this Commonwealth of Australia. There is much to think about, and much that we really want under this Bill; very much we would have liked to have to help Western Australia as a unit in the great Australian federation; but I am of opinion that we have to seriously consider this point at the present time: are we going to lose more than we will gain by keeping out of this federation now?

MR. MORAN: That is the point.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes; that is the point. That is the question we have to apply ourselves to, and that is the question we must, as far as we possibly can, place before the country. I trust that when it is submitted to the people, as I hope it will be, every member

of the House will deal with it in the same manner as I have on this occasion, and that it will be viewed not as an Opposition move, or as a Government move, but as a great national question, in which not only this House, but every man, woman and child in this country is interested.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): Although I have not spoken before on the subject during this session, I do not intend to respass very long upon the time of hon. members. I have been, and am still, opposed to federation, and I think I gave my reasons last session. I confess at once that I was one of the minority who opposed the Bill being submitted to the people. I did it for the reason that I am earnestly opposed to federation, and I represent a constituency in which I venture to say not half a dozen votes will be procured in favour of federation. I repeat that I am still of opinion that it will be detrimental to the best interests of Western Australia for us to join the federation at the present time. The origin of our trouble is the fact that this Parliament, or the Parliament of 1896, undertook to elect representatives out of its own body. If the representatives of this colony had been elected by the people, the representatives who would have been appointed certainly would have attended to their duties better than did the body of delegates chosen.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There would not have been a picnic then.

MR. QUINLAN: There can be no doubt, at any rate to my mind, that the members who were delegated from this colony neglected their duty, with the exception, I admit, of the Premier himself. The Premier has not had a commercial training, and, while I acknowledge his great ability on many matters, I am of opinion that if the Premier had had a commercial training, we would have had better terms than we were offered. Instead of having the sliding scale we would have been assured of protection for some years fixed, and I venture to say that the absence of such protection is the principal flaw in the Bill, so far as Western Australia is concerned. However, the chief point confronting the House at the present time is what shall be the condition under which the question shall be submitted to the people for their

vote. To my mind, the change in our constitution is such a very great one that at least a considerable proportion of the people on the roll which will be prepared for this purpose should vote in favour of federation—not, in my opinion, the mere majority of one. It is provided in the Municipal Act that when any attempt to raise a loan is made, a vote shall be taken, and there shall be not less than one-third in favour. I do not suggest that plan should be adopted in its entirety on the federation question, but I hope hon. members will at least see the importance of such a vast change in the constitution, and will be so reasonable as to allow some such condition as that one-half of the people shall not be ruled by a majority of one only. At any rate, the result of the action taken last session in regard to this Commonwealth Bill has done a great deal of good, because, had the Bill been submitted then, there is no doubt it would have been carried, and we know there has been a change of feeling in regard to federation. In my humble opinion, I believe federation will be rejected by the people, who realise the fact that the terms are not such as we would be warranted in accepting; and it must also be borne in mind that, while I believe in federation, the fact is, as has been provided in the Bill, this colony can join at a future time on the sliding-scale tariff condition. Anyone who knows anything about commercial matters must be aware of the disturbance and disorganisation of trade which would result from the carrying out of such a proposal. A merchant or an importer who has to do with customs business can vouch for what I say in this respect; and therefore I hold that while we may be able to join at a future time, we are justified in rejecting the present terms offered. I am also aware of the fact that the Federal Parliament will have power at a future time to accept this colony; and I firmly believe that Parliament will realise the importance of having Western Australia in the union, and that instead of having to ask concessions from the other colonies, these concessions will be readily offered by them. I will go so far as to say it has been proved by our own Government Actuary that there will be a loss of about £300,000 per annum on the basis of the present population; but let the Federal

Parliament offer this colony the amount we would lose in five years, and then I should be one to undertake the risk of joining.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was offered, and you rejected it.

MR. QUINLAN: It was proposed by the Adelaide delegates to offer something like £250,000 per annum, which is proof that in the minds of people outside the colony there is present the importance of doing something for this country on account of its unique position.

MR. MORAN: And the value of it as a market.

MR. QUINLAN: And the value of this colony as a market for the produce of the Eastern colonies. I believe the reason which actuated the Premier in rejecting such a proposal was, so far as I can gather, the loss of prestige which we would suffer.

MR. MORAN: We were too purse-proud.

MR. QUINLAN: We are prepared to sink prestige and accept the dollars. A mistake was no doubt made in rejecting that suggestion, because the terms, judging from those given to South Australia, which seemed to be more in sympathy with us, were those which ought to have been accepted and would have been granted. I know it can be argued by those in favour of federation that there is a risk that, while we stand out, the tariff at any time may be made free-trade, or reduced in such a way as to cause us to lose that or a similar amount; but I do not think it at all likely that a free-trade Government will be in power in this colony at any time, and therefore there is not much fear on that score. The other colonies, if we stand out, will soon be offering the terms which were previously suggested by the South Australian delegates. The transcontinental railway has also been referred to, and it has been said that this will at once be conceded. But we have no assurance whatever, because, as pointed out by previous speakers, changes of Government are frequent, at any rate in the other colonies, and the Government in to-day may be out to-morrow; and, therefore, we cannot accept an assurance of the kind as of any value so far as this colony is concerned. In 1894, when addressing the electors of West Perth, I said I believed that if

this colony entered federation we would be the greatest losers in the beginning and the greatest gainers hereafter. I should believe that, but we have not reached that stage. In my opinion, we have not such a population as would warrant us in joining hands with the stronger and richer partners; and I hope that when the question goes to the people they will realise the difference between the circumstances of this colony and the circumstances of the other parts of Australia. I agree entirely with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) in the reference he made to our value in relation to the other colonies for defence purposes. That seems a very important matter to the other colonies, and I have no doubt whatever, assuming we do join at this stage, that the other colonies would be only too glad to welcome us on that ground alone. Without Western Australia, the defence of the continent cannot be made complete; and therefore I say we hold the natural key to the position, and that sooner or later the other colonies will concede the intercolonial railway and the tariff conditions we desire. The recent action of the colonies in response to our demand or wish for the mail steamers to call at Fremantle appears to me to show that they are not altogether in sympathy with us, and forms an object lesson as to the sympathy and support we may expect in any matter concerning this colony particularly. It has been repeatedly urged by those in favour of federation, and has been proclaimed from the beginning of the discussion on the question, that our joining the union would be the means of increasing the population and bringing about cheap living; and I will only refer to those items for the moment. So far as the increase of population is concerned, I cannot see any inducement in federation to that end. The greatest attraction to the country is its mineral resources, and since the discovery of the goldfields here we have only raised a population of 170,000 people. Considering that the mineral resources are the greatest attraction, it is likely that the mere fact of this colony being part and parcel of federal Australia will induce people of the other colonies to leave their holdings and settle here? It is hardly likely that would be the result, considering the people here

probably been born and bred in the other colonies, and have their families there, and while they are able to get a living in their own places they will hardly elect to move about. It is not customary, at any rate, for settled people with families to move about, because as a rule it is acknowledged that "a rolling stone gathers no moss." It may be that young and venturesome people will come to the goldfields, but it is hardly likely we will get the increase of population as foretold by federal advocates. To my mind we have now the best means of inducing people to come to the colony, and we know full well what slow increase in population there has been. As to living, I consider the principal items of daily domestic use are cheaper in this colony than in the other colonies. There are, it is true, some items which possibly are dearer; but, as a whole, the tariff makes these articles cheaper here than elsewhere. That result, I admit, was brought about by the Opposition, and I give them credit for it. They were the means of bringing such influence to bear that the Government remitted some duties which were certainly too high. The federal tariff will, in all probability, be on the scale of the highest prevailing in Australia; and considering the high tariff, especially in Victoria, we know what to expect should this colony join federation. Therefore, I think the Legislative Council did good work in rejecting the measure passed last session here, because, by that action, time has been given to the people for reflection, and a change of opinion has come about. I have already heard it said that there are in this colony candidates for both Houses of the Federal Parliament who, if they are elected, are going to practise their professions in the other colonies. I know there is an ambition to represent this colony in the Federal Parliament on the part of some persons who have not sixpennyworth of interest here; and, therefore, we know what to expect from those who have their relatives, property, and interests in the other colonies, when once they are elected for six years. They are assured of that six years of office, and will be able to make provision for themselves from the mere fact of being representatives of this colony; and that will be a great advantage, especially

to those who are in professional occupations. I state, as a fact, that I know of candidates who are intending to offer themselves with that object in view. Further than that, if the people vote for federation, the vote is likely to be the strongest on the goldfields; and we may rest assured that, once elected, federal representatives having gone from here with their £400 a year, it will be "God help Western Australia." I am earnestly opposed to federation, and anything I can do to prevent that measure being passed I shall endeavour to do, and will show my side of the question, with all respect to those who hold contrary views.

MR. OATS (Yilgarn): I have said very little on federation from the start, either outside or inside the House, but I think it my duty to give expression to my general views on the matter. Since the Commonwealth Bill has been before the House, I have studied it from all standpoints as best I can, though I know such a measure requires a legal mind to grasp all the points. I have, however, heard the opinions of people on the Bill, both inside the House and outside, and I have formed a fixed opinion as to what is to the best interests of Western Australia. Not even the eloquence of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) can swerve me from that fixed idea. I consider hon. members have been called together to consider the Enabling Bill. I think we have talked enough about the Commonwealth Bill. It was passed here last session with certain amendments; it went to another place and was thrown out. I am glad to hear it is expected that during this present session the expression of opinion in the Council will be different from what it was then. I am pleased the Premier has promised this Bill shall go to the people, and that everyone will have an opportunity to vote. I admired the Minister of Mines to-night for the straight and honourable way in which he spoke to this question, although I disagreed with him on one point. When the Commonwealth Bill was first introduced to Australia, I consider the people of Western Australia were quite as competent to give an opinion as those of the other colonies. Why? Because at least 100,000 of the people in this colony at that time had come from the other colonies, and had been educated there; and why should

they have been debarred from voting at that time? Generally speaking I am quite in accord with the Minister of Mines. However, I have always felt very strongly on the manner in which the delegates were appointed to the Federal Conventions, and not so strongly on that as on the manner in which the delegates worked at those Conventions. This colony spent £4,000 to send them there, and the Premier no doubt did great and good work at the Conventions; but I think his duty was to call the delegates together in caucus, and to discuss the wants of Western Australia [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] I have not heard of one caucus of the delegates sent from this colony.

MR. MORAN: Spell it c-o-r-k-e-r-s.

MR. OATS: My dear boy, do not teach me how to spell a word. The member for East Coolgardie is the greatest interjector in this House, except the Premier; and while I might be assisted by the hon. member, I trust he will allow me to proceed without interruption. I contend the delegates who went to the Conference should have met in council and threshed out the *pros* and *cons*, for there were plenty of brainy men there. The Premier, who was present, could have insisted on the other delegates attending, or else it was his duty to have come back here and to have told us they would not do their duty. I know he said that, later on, but I think he should have said it at the beginning. The Premier has said on several occasions that the amendments required by Western Australia, if introduced in a proper manner at the Conventions, would probably have been accepted; therefore our delegates did not do their duty. The Federation Bill has now been before this and the Upper House, and has failed so far as Parliament is concerned; therefore I say the highest tribunal, the great people of Western Australia, are those who should long ago have been asked their opinion. I am pleased that hon. members think the Bill will be sent to the people, whatever hon. members' opinions may be. The people should now have their say. Let me tell hon. members the result of this throwing over of the Bill. What did it bring about? A separation cry on the goldfields, and quite right too. It wanted a lever like that to move the

people and to move the Government, and I think it has moved them both.

MR. MORAN: Hear, hear. Leave him alone now.

MR. OATS: I am talking of separation. Those 28,000 people on the goldfields who signed that petition to the House, or the majority of them, were good and true men, who were loyal to the colony, loyal to a united Australia, and loyal to the Empire; and I say they have been treated in a very disparaging manner. Moreover, if this Bill be thrown out again, either here or in the Upper House, I prophesy the result will be much more serious than on the last occasion. I think a cry will go up from end to end of Western Australia which will cause much greater friction than has hitherto arisen. I am very sorry indeed for the past friction, and I want to see pacification, and to see that every man shall be given the right of a man to voice his own opinion on this question at the ballot-box. I am quite confident that will be done. I am pleased the Premier has taken the step he has adopted. I hope the machinery of the election will be effective, and that every man and woman, as the Premier has promised, will have a vote. That is all I have to say.

Question—that the Bill be now read a second time—put, and passed on to the voices.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation of terms:

THE PREMIER moved that, in the definition of "Constitution," the words "third" be struck out, and "fifth" inserted in lieu; also that "if any" be struck out. As it was known there would be amendments, it was useless to say "any."

Amendments put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that there be added to the definition of "elector" the words "or who is at such time the holder of a voter's certificate issued under the provisions of this Act." The amendment would harmonise with the clauses on the Notice Paper giving facilities for voting to persons not on the roll.

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

Clause 3—Submission to the electors:

THE PREMIER: As there was not much time in which to make this submission

sion to the electors, it would be well for the Committee to insert the date when the referendum should be taken. As it must be taken soon, it was not obvious why it should be left to the Governor to proclaim the date, as that would only mean delay. He (the Premier) had been in communication with the Secretary of State in regard to the probable time when the proclamation of the Constitution would be made; and though unable to say when that proclamation would take place, he had been informed the date would depend largely on the time when the referendum was taken in this colony, and he had been urged to take the referendum as early as possible. He had asked whether the seventh of August—two months after the seventh of June proximo, by which time the Bill doubtless would have become law, would be a suitable time for the referendum, and would meet with the approval of the Imperial Government; if not, whether the home authorities would make any suggestion; and he had received the reply that if the referendum could be taken and communicated to London by the 7th of August, that would suit the Imperial Government. Evidently the best course was to insert the date in this clause, unless hon. members thought two months too short a time in which to take the reference.

MR. LEAKE: Say "not later than."

THE PREMIER: The Imperial Government had requested expedition, therefore we ought not to be later than that date.

MR. WILSON: Time would be required to get in the returns.

THE PREMIER: If taken on that date, the absence of returns would not matter, because the Electoral Act provided that each polling place could telegraph results. For the consideration of the Committee, he would propose that the words "at a time to be fixed by the Governor by proclamation in the *Government Gazette*" be struck out, and "on the seventh of August, one thousand nine hundred" inserted in lieu.

MR. WILSON: What day would that be?

THE PREMIER: On a Tuesday.

At 6-30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

THE PREMIER moved, as suggested, that the words "the time be fixed by

the Governor by proclamation published in the *Government Gazette*" be struck out, and that "on the seventh day of August, 1900," be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was desirable that a public holiday should be proclaimed on that date.

THE PREMIER: There would be a public holiday on that date.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4.—Returning Officer:

MR. LEAKE: Throughout the Bill, certain things had to be done by assistant returning officers.

THE PREMIER: Under the Electoral Act there was power to appoint returning officers.

MR. LEAKE: Paragraph 3 stated: "Every returning officer appointed under the Electoral Act shall be an assistant returning officer for the purposes of this Act."

THE PREMIER: The Government had appointed, or were about appointing, returning officers for every electoral district under the Electoral Act. He would look into the matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Existing rolls to be used:

THE PREMIER: The reason why the rolls in existence at the time the Electoral Act came into force, which was the 17th of this month, were to be used was because they were ready; and the reason why the electoral districts were made the same as the electoral districts in the 1896 Act was because the rolls applied to those districts. If we had to take the new districts under the new Electoral Act, new rolls would have to be compiled, which would take a long time, and nothing would be gained, seeing that the vote was not to be taken for districts, but for the whole colony. It was more convenient to deal with the rolls which were in existence now.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—Method of voting in absence; duty of assistant returning officer with regard to the ballot-papers of absent voters:

THE PREMIER moved that after the word "elector," in line 1, there be inserted—

Whose name is on a roll existing for an electoral district at the commencement of the Electoral Act, 1899.

The reason for the amendment was that a person who obtained a vote by certificate would not be able to send his vote, for the machinery would be too troublesome. In order to avoid any inconvenience, we must have a good many polling places, and a person who claimed a voter's certificate would have to vote where he obtained it. There would be no inconvenience if there were several polling places. Of course voters on the roll were in a different position, and it had always been contended that they should be able to send a vote. We had machinery already in existence for persons on the roll. Therefore we would let them utilise it if they so desired.

Amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that the word "second," in the last line, be struck out, and "fourth" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 8 and 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Majority of voters to decide:

MR. MONGER: There was an intention on his part to move that this clause be struck out, and a new one inserted in lieu thereof. It would be as well under the circumstances for him to formally give notice, and then for progress to be reported. The new clause would read as follows:—

Unless the total number of electors recording their votes in favour of the Constitution shall exceed 51 per cent. of the electors on the rolls, the Constitution shall be deemed to be rejected, and no further action shall be taken under the provisions of this Act.

He formally moved that the present clause be struck out, and the one he had just read be inserted in lieu.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could move that the present clause be struck out, but a new clause must be dealt with after the others were disposed of.

MR. MORAN: It would meet the wishes of a great majority, or a majority, if we reported progress at this stage, before striking out the clause.

THE PREMIER: This question might be postponed.

MR. MORAN: There was a desire on his part to have it postponed, because he knew that the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead), who was a mover in this matter, intended to speak with

some considerable force on this question, and he (Mr. Moran) deemed it to be of sufficient importance for a little notice to be given to the House. The subject would require a little debate, perhaps, and we ought to allow the hon. member to be present. He would ask whether, in order to obtain a fairly full House to deal with this great question, we could postpone the clause. He moved that it be postponed until after the consideration of the remaining clauses of the Bill.

Motion for postponement of clause put and passed.

Clauses 11, 12, and 13—agreed to.

New Clause—Voters' certificates:

THE PREMIER moved that the following be added to the Bill, to stand as Clause 7:

(1.) Any adult person of either sex, being a natural born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty and not subject to any legal incapacity, who has resided in Western Australia for twelve months, but whose name is not on any roll existing at the commencement of "The Electoral Act, 1899," may obtain a voter's certificate on making an application therefor at any polling place to the registrar or an assistant registrar for the electoral district in which such person resides, in the form of the second schedule hereto, at least two days before the date of the submission.

(2.) A voter's certificate, and the counterfoil thereof, shall be in the form of the third schedule hereto, and shall be signed by the electoral registrar or assistant registrar issuing the same, and by the voter.

(3.) Voters' certificates issued for each electoral district shall be numbered consecutively, and lists containing corresponding numbers, with the name, residence, and occupation of the voter set opposite each number, shall be prepared by the registrar or assistant registrar for each polling place within each electoral district.

(4.) Any person to whom a voter's certificate is issued may, on producing and delivering up the same to the assistant returning officer or other presiding officer, vote at the polling place therein named within the electoral district for which such certificate was issued, but not elsewhere.

(5.) An assistant returning officer, or other presiding officer, may require any person claiming to vote as the holder of a voter's certificate, before voting, to indorse his name on the certificate.

(6.) Any person wilfully and knowingly making a false statement in his application for a voter's certificate shall be deemed to be guilty of wilful and corrupt perjury, and may be punished accordingly.

The new clause proposed was the same as that of which he had given notice, with one or two slight amendments, which he

would explain. He would ask that the clause be taken in paragraphs, so that he might deal with them separately. The object of the clause was to allow every adult of either sex who had been twelve months in the colony to vote on this referendum, if they were natural born or naturalised subjects of Her Majesty, and not subject to any legal incapacity. Of course, those who were on the roll would be enabled to vote in the usual way, provision being made for that in a clause already passed. A person who was not on the roll, and who could qualify, would be able to get a voter's right by applying at places which would be designated, where an electoral registrar or assistant registrar would issue such right. The person applying would have to sign his name on the form of application, and if he made a false statement a charge of perjury would apply, and punishment would be the same as for perjury. A voter's certificate issued to an applicant would not only have the signature of the electoral registrar, but also the signature of the holder; and the holder would be compelled to vote at the place where the certificate was issued. If, for instance, he obtained a certificate from the registrar at the Perth Town Hall, he would have to vote at that polling place, and when he went to vote he would have to produce his voting certificate. The presiding officer would scrutinise it, and see that it corresponded with the list, and was genuine. If satisfied on that point, he would allow the applicant to vote "yes" or "no;" then take possession of the polling certificate, which would then have served its purpose. The process would be a very simple one, and no difficulty was likely to arise as far as he could see. Although it had not been pointed out to him by anyone, he observed there was a difficulty in regard to the Bill as it was first drafted, but he did not think it was mentioned in any of the various notices given by hon. members. Originally it was proposed that the electoral registrar of the district should issue these certificates. That seemed very good, but in looking into the matter, he (the Premier) saw it would be unreasonable to expect people to go miles and miles to the electoral registrar to get a voter's certificate, and then go back on the day of election and record the vote. People would

never take the trouble to do that. Therefore that plan would be quite unworkable. The difficulty would be got over by having a polling place at different stations throughout the districts where these certificates would be issued. The Government would do their best to have as many of these polling places as possible, so as to make it most convenient for those who desired to vote. Post offices and probably police stations would be utilised, as in South Australia, where all the electoral work was done at the post offices. There were one or two amendments he desired to make, and on these he would like to have the ideas of hon. members. He saw no reason for the ten days' limit in applying for a certificate. That period, in his opinion, was too long, and he saw nothing to be gained by such a provision, seeing that it was now proposed to have a number of polling places where certificates could be obtained; and three days, he thought, would be quite enough.

MR. A. FORREST: One day would be enough, because a man wanted to get back to his work.

MR. LLLINGWORTH: What was the law in Victoria?

THE PREMIER: It was three days, he thought, in Victoria, and it was not desirable there should be any hurry-scurry, but the officers ought to have time to get the rolls together, and the voter himself should have time for consideration. The rolls could be made up as the applications came in, and the complete roll could be used on the polling day. However, he did not feel very strongly on the matter.

MR. HALL: If the interval were three days, and a man had to go to Kalgoorlie, he could not vote there, and as he could not return to Perth in time, he would lose his vote.

THE PREMIER: That was so; but on an important question like this, it was extremely probable the man would stop in town. It was impossible to meet every case.

MR. HALL: Why could the man not vote at Kalgoorlie?

THE PREMIER: Because there would be no check on the voting papers, hundreds of which might be manufactured. If, however, a man had to vote in the place where he got his certificate,

there would be a check, inasmuch as his signature could be verified. Three days, he thought, were a reasonable interval, and he begged to move the first paragraph.

MR. GREGORY called the attention of the Premier to the question of assistant registrars. Under the Electoral Act there was no provision for the appointment of assistant registrars, and it was doubtful whether under the Bill any such power was given. He suggested that postmasters and mail custodians might be appointed to these posts.

MR. QUINLAN asked whether it was intended to have officers at all polling places throughout the colony.

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. LEAKE suggested that the last words of the paragraph, "at least 10 days before the date of the submission," should be struck out, and a voter allowed to take out his certificate when he came to vote.

THE PREMIER: The process would take too long, and the work would never be got through.

MR. LEAKE: After all, a check could not be very well exercised over the voters, and no one was likely to vote twice on the subject.

MR. A. FORREST: Twenty-four hours was quite long enough.

MR. LEAKE: As the member for Perth (Mr. Hall) had pointed out, if a person entitled to vote in Perth was obliged to go to Kalgoorlie, he would not be allowed to vote at the latter place, although there was a polling station close at hand. What was the object of the 10 days, or even the three days, period?

THE PREMIER: The desire was to have the roll properly made out.

MR. MORAN: There must be some check.

MR. LEAKE: There would be the butts by means of which a check could be exercised.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Was it quite certain that the period under the Victorian Act was three days?

THE PREMIER said he had not seen the Act himself, but he was so informed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: During the last week he had been assured by three or four friends from Victoria that they had received their elector's right on the same day they voted, the right being

handed to them in one booth and then walking to another and recording their vote. If facilities for voting were to be given, these facilities ought to be the fullest possible.

MR. HALL: The suggestion of the Premier meant that an elector would have to make two trips when one ought to be sufficient.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This vote was not like that at ordinary elections, where voters were hunted up by one side or the other, or by both. There would be no inducement for people to rush the poll.

THE PREMIER: Why not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was desirable to give every possible facility for voting, and, therefore, he urged that the words be struck out as suggested by the member for Albany.

THE PREMIER: A similar proposal to that made by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) had been brought under his notice that day, but he condemned it as impracticable. At the election for the Legislative Council, the other day, at the Town Hall in Perth there were hundreds of people wanting to vote at the same time, and it could easily be imagined what confusion and waste of time there would be if a man had to answer all the questions in order to get a certificate, and also record his vote.

MR. HALL: The arrangements at the Town Hall the other day were of "the year One."

THE PREMIER: That did not matter. These things must be done in order, and in no haphazard way.

MR. QUINLAN: As a returning officer on many occasions, he knew the difficulty pointed out by the Premier would be an actual fact, and therefore he hoped the Committee would accept the proposal of three days.

MR. LEAKE: Very well; that proposal would be accepted.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was impossible to make the period any shorter than three days. It would take some people five minutes to answer the simple questions necessary in order to fill up the form of application; in fact a returning officer would be required for every voter.

MR. LEAKE: It was possible the clause would have to be modified, seeing it provided a voter's certificate could be

obtained on "making an application therefor, at any polling place." Polling places were only declared for the day of election, and in fact polling places would not be declared ten days or three days before the election. Why not make a voter's certificate issue, on application to a resident magistrate or some official of of that sort?

MR. QUINLAN: That was the same question which had been asked about appointing officers at all these places.

THE PREMIER: Polling places would be gazetted, and returning officers appointed for each district. In Menzies or North Murchison, for instance, a returning officer would, as soon as the Act was passed, be appointed, and would send down a list of proposed polling places, which the Government would make as numerous as possible, utilising, as he had already intimated, the post offices and police stations. It would be too costly to keep an officer for two months at each polling place. Government offices would be utilised for the purpose, and forms could there be obtained up to, say, within three days of the polling day. This system would be far simpler than the method adopted for Legislative Assembly elections. Wherever there was a large number of residents there was always a post office or a police station.

MR. HALL supported the original suggestion of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake). It was unreasonable to think all the electors would wait till the last day in order to get their rights; therefore there would be no such rush on the polling day as was feared. The Government might also point out by public advertisement the desirableness of electors registering speedily.

MR. MORAN: Electors' rights should be printed on good paper, otherwise on the day of election many would be indecipherable.

THE PREMIER altered his amendment to read "two days."

Amendment put and passed, and the paragraph as amended agreed to.

Paragraph 3:

THE PREMIER moved that all the words after "district," in the last line, be struck out. It would then be unnecessary for the officer issuing certificates to send them to the returning officer. They

would be sent to the presiding officer at the place of issue, thus saving time.

Amendment put and passed.

Paragraph 4:

MR. QUINLAN: The words "at the polling place named therein" apparently meant that a person must get a vote at a particular polling place, and must vote at that place only. If "the" were struck out, a person might vote at any polling place in the district.

MR. MORAN: There would then be no check.

MR. QUINLAN: The voter's indorsement on his certificate was a sufficient check, in view of the penalties attached to falsification.

THE PREMIER: The paragraph was better as it stood; in fact, a similar provision had been contemplated when drafting the new Electoral Act. In South Australia there was a roll for each polling place, and a man must vote where he was enrolled. This plan had its advantages, for each voter was known at his own polling place. On the voter's certificate, the form of which was given in the third schedule, both the electoral district and the polling place were named, and at the latter the voter must record his vote. This would be convenient to the public, who would take out their rights at the places where they could conveniently vote.

Amendment put and passed; other paragraphs agreed to, and the new clause as amended passed.

Schedule II.—Application for voter's certificate:

THE PREMIER: In this schedule the space for the voter's name had been omitted. This should be supplied, and provision also made for the voter to state that he had not already a voter's certificate. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

WAR TELEGRAM.—AN INTERLUDE.

During the discussion of Clause 6 of the Federation Enabling Bill,

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Harper) said: I am in possession of an interesting telegram about the war in South Africa, which the Clerk will read for the information of hon. members.

THE CLERK read a telegram announcing the surrender of the Boers who had been garrisoning Johannesburg, also the British advance towards Pretoria, and the flight of President Kruger.

Members rose in their places, and joined in singing the National Anthem. Cheers were also given for the Queen and for Lord Roberts.

MR. MONGER afterwards said: On a fitting occasion such as this, am I out of order in suggesting that the House might adjourn, at all events a short time, for refreshments, after the pleasant piece of news we have received. (General laughter.)

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be quite out of order.

Adjournment followed shortly after, as recorded.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 27 minutes past 8 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 5th June, 1900.

Papers presented — Question: Perth Ratepayers' Meeting, turning out the light (alleged) — Question: Kalgoorlie Tramway Concession — Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1. Rott-nest Native Prison, General Rules and Regulations; 2. Attendances at and moneys granted to High School, Return to Order of the Council, dated 24th May, 1900; 3. Ministerial Relatives in Civil Service, Return to Order of the Council, dated 29th May, 1900.

QUESTION — PERTH RATEPAYERS' MEETING, TURNING OUT THE LIGHT (ALLEGED).

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (for Hon. R. S. Haynes) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1. If the Commissioner of Police or any of his officers are aware that a threat or attempt was made to turn out the lights at the Town Hall, Perth, whilst filled with people on the night of the 29th May. 2. Who were the person or persons who made the attempt or threat? 3. If an attempt was made, does the Commissioner intend to direct a prosecution?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The police had no knowledge of any threat or attempt having been made to turn out the lights of the Perth Town Hall on the night of the 29th ultimo, whilst it was filled with people. The answer to question No. 1 answered the other two questions.

QUESTION: KALGOORLIE TRAMWAY CONCESSION.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1. If in Mr. Jobson's Kalgoorlie Tramway Concession the rails and sleepers used in the line were the property of the W.A. Government. 2. If so, were the rails and sleepers sold to Mr. Jobson, or in what way did he become entitled to use them? 3. If sold, have they been paid for; and if so, when and what was the price? 4. By whom was the arrangement re rails and sleepers made on behalf of the Government? 5. Is there any arrangement whereby at any future time the Government shall resume the ownership or possession of the sleepers or rails; and if so, what are the terms?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1. The rails and a portion of the sleepers were the property of the Government. 2. They were sold to Mr. Jobson, under a special arrangement. 3. About two-thirds of the cost of these rails and sleepers has been paid, and the balance will be paid shortly. The rails were previously laid on the Eastern Railway and were in use for 10 years; they were subsequently taken up and laid on the Yilgarn Railway, where they remained for five years; they were again taken up for the purpose of being replaced by heavier rails. As they were reported upon as unsuitable for further use on