

Legislative Assembly,*Wednesday, 30th May, 1900.*

Question: Police Department, Royal Commission—
 Question: Fraud (alleged) re Railway at Kalgoorlie
 —Question: Tramway Permit on Goldfields, Transfer
 —Question: Railways on Goldfields, Supply of
 Water —Question: Electoral Claims, Supply of
 Forms—Question: Electoral Registration, Increase
 of Staff —Paper presented—Privilege: Complaint of
 Intimidation (withdrawn)—Privilege (Geraldton
 case): Aspersions on Legislative Assembly; Point
 of Order; debate resumed and concluded; Point
 of Procedure—Election Return, DeGrey—Return
 ordered, Mining Leases Surrendered—Motion with-
 drawn: Railway Employees' Association, Officially
 to Recognise—Federation Enabling Bill, second
 reading, debate resumed and adjourned—Adjourn-
 ment.

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

PRAYERS.

**QUESTION—POLICE DEPARTMENT,
 ROYAL COMMISSION.**

MR. VOSPER asked the Premier, How much longer did he intend to defer the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the state of the Police Department, in consequence of the lamented death of the late Commissioner of Police.

THE PREMIER replied: The Government were of opinion that the Commission should not be appointed until a further expression of opinion from this House was given in favour of it.

MR. VOSPER: Oh!

**QUESTION—FRAUD (ALLEGED) RE RAIL-
 WAY AT KALGOORLIE.**

MR. VOSPER asked the Commissioner of Railways:—1, Whether his attention had been drawn to the allegations made against the Perth Ice Company and certain officials of the Railway Department, in connection with freights between Perth and Kalgoorlie. 2, If so, what action he intended to take.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied:—1, Yes; but previous to my attention being drawn to the matter the department had taken steps for an investigation. 2, Such investigation is now proceeding.

**QUESTION—TRAMWAY PERMIT ON
 GOLDFIELDS, TRANSFER.**

MR. VOSPER asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands:—1, Whether, in

connection with the recent permit to construct tramways on the goldfields granted to C. Jobson, that person had since transferred his rights to others. 2, If so, to whom. 3, If to a syndicate or company, who were the members thereof.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—The department was not aware of any transfer having been made.

**QUESTION—RAILWAYS ON GOLD-
 FIELDS, SUPPLY OF WATER.**

MR. VOSPER asked the Director of Public Works: 1, Whether it was true that the railways at Kalgoorlie were being supplied with water from the 45-Mile dam; 2, Whether the water was carried over the line of tramway constructed by C. Jobson or his assigns; 3, If so, what was paid for such carriage; 4, Whether the said Jobson, or the persons now owning the firewood tramway, had obtained a lease of the 45-Mile dam; 5, If so, what was the term of the lease and the rental; 6, What was the Railway Department paying for the said water; 7, What object the Department had in view in leasing this dam and then buying their own water from the lessees.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied: 1, A portion of the water supply required for Kalgoorlie is obtained from the 45-Mile dam (otherwise known as the 42-Mile tanks); 2, It is carried over the tramway which connects the tanks and Sutherland's railway siding; 3, Replied to by No. 6; 4, Yes; 5, A copy will be laid upon the table; 6, 2s. 6d. per 100 gallons delivered at Sutherland's railway siding; 7, The object was to deal with these tanks in pursuance of the ordinary custom, whereby public tenders are called under certain stipulations safeguarding the public. The usual terms are embodied in this lease and Mr. Jobson being the highest tenderer his tender was accepted. I have the lease here, which I will lay on the table of the House.

**QUESTION—ELECTORAL CLAIMS,
 SUPPLY OF FORMS.**

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for Mr. George) asked the Premier: Whether the Government proposed to adopt adequate means to provide a sufficiency of

claim papers throughout the electoral districts of Western Australia.

THE PREMIER replied: Yes. Every electoral registrar in the colony has been supplied with printed forms of claim, and will supply anyone requiring them with as many as required. All resident magistrates, police stations, and school teachers in country districts are also being sent a supply of forms for distribution to those requiring them. All mechanics' institutes and similar institutions are being similarly supplied.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL REGISTRATION, INCREASE OF STAFF.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (for Mr. George) asked the Premier: Whether the Government proposed to adequately increase the staff of the Electoral Registrar, and so enable him to prepare a full and reliable electoral roll.

THE PREMIER replied: Yes; assistance will be given to any of the electoral registrars where and when required.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Copy of Conditions of Lease of the 42-Mile tanks on Reserve 2192, on the 90-Mile Road.

Ordered to lie on the table.

PRIVILEGE—COMPLAINT OF INTIMIDATION.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): Mr. Speaker, before the ordinary business of the House is proceeded with, I desire to bring under your notice and that of the House generally a question of privilege. It will, perhaps, be in the recollection of hon. members that at the conclusion of my remarks last night, addressed to the House in connection with the episode of the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) uttered words somewhat to this effect, that he knew of certain charges which could be levelled against myself which I would rather not hear. This is the second time statements of that kind have been made in this House by the same hon. member, and, so far, no charge of any sort or kind has been forthcoming from him. I may say that my reason for bringing this to your special notice as a question of privilege is that I regard such observations as a practical threat to

myself; a threat that if I venture to carry out my duties in this House in a manner disapproved of by the member for East Coolgardie, he will disclose some disgraceful episode in my career. I am not prepared to lie under a charge of that kind. If the hon. member has charges to level against me, they should be brought forward in this House, and he should not indulge in obscure threats. I would point out to him, for the benefit of hon. members, that we here work under the same rules and procedure and possess and enjoy the same privileges as the Commons House of Parliament; and amongst the most serious and gross contempts of the House is that of making any threat which would have a tendency, or would be likely to have a tendency, to deter an hon. member from doing his duty. I contend I have been practically threatened by the hon. member for East Coolgardie, and I therefore seek the remedy the procedure of the House entitles me to have. I may say I have not taken this action precipitately, or without giving the hon. member a chance to do something which will satisfy me. I this morning wrote to the hon. member the following letter, which I delivered to him personally, within the precincts of the House:—

C. J. Moran, Esq., M.L.A.

Sir,—In the course of last night's debate, and immediately after the conclusion of my remarks on Mr. Robson's case, you interjected an observation to the effect that you were able to bring some charges against me that I should not like to hear. This is the second occasion on which you have made a similar insinuation, and I now beg to request that you will be good enough to immediately formulate any charges you have to make against me affecting my position, either as a legislator or as a man—

MR. MORAN: Do you say "as a man?"

MR. VOSPER: If the hon. member wishes to disgrace himself by acting like an insulting blackguard, he can take that line of defence.

MR. MORAN: Is that quite Parliamentary, that last part?

THE SPEAKER: I did not hear the observation to which objection is taken.

MR. MORAN: I asked him to repeat some words I could not make out in his writing, and the hon. member made use of the words "insulting blackguard."

THE SPEAKER: Those words are certainly not Parliamentary, and if the hon. member used them in the House, he must withdraw that expression.

MR. VOSPER: I will withdraw it, but I will explain also that the words I read were "either as a legislator or as a man," and the hon. member most insultingly wished to know if I called myself a man. I will leave you to judge whether that was not sufficient to call forth a retort. If it were not contrary to the rules of the House, I should apply stronger words to the member. I will resume the reading of this letter:—

and to do this in public, so that I may have an opportunity of clearing myself. It must be obvious to you, as a man of honour, that insinuations of this description affect the personal honour of one concerning whom they are made. You will also perceive that I am making a perfectly fair request, and one to which a gentleman cannot fail to accede. I am prepared to meet you in this connection on the floor of the House, on a public platform, or in the Press; but I am not prepared to rest under the stigma undoubtedly conveyed by your remarks. If you have aught against me, out with it. To conceal the knowledge of my malpractices, whatever they are, and to pretend to hold certain charges in *terrorem* over me is not honourable conduct, and I trust that you will at once see the necessity of doing me justice.—I am yours faithfully,

F. C. B. VOSPER.

That letter was handed to the hon. member within the precincts of the House at an early hour this morning, and since that time the hon. member has seen fit to ignore the letter. He has sent no reply; therefore I claim the protection of the House, as I consider myself to have been grossly insulted as a member and a man; and, further, the hon. member employed a threat that in the event of my making use of my vote in this House detrimentally to the interests of his party, I should have certain accusations made against me. I challenge the hon. member here and now to make those charges, and to place me on my defence. I am prepared to meet him or any other traducer.

MR. A. FORREST: Put him in the Supreme Court.

MR. VOSPER: The hon. member is protected by the privileges of the House. I am entitled to move, in the ordinary way, that the hon. member be ordered to attend in his place to-morrow, in order to explain the remarks made.

THE PREMIER: We had better hear him now.

MR. VOSPER: Hear him now, if you like.

THE SPEAKER: I think the better plan would be for the hon. member to move that the words made use of are a breach of privilege.

MR. VOSPER: I will move to that effect.

THE PREMIER: What were the words?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member mentioned just now what they were.

THE PREMIER: We should like to know what they are, before we vote on them. If he will repeat the words, I will take them down.

MR. VOSPER: If hon. members had paid a little attention to what I was saying, they would have known what the remarks were.

THE PREMIER: You should give notice.

MR. VOSPER: I have not had time to give notice.

THE SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member will read the words again.

MR. VOSPER: I have not the words written down. I was leaving my place after addressing the House last night. I had been speaking about the disgrace falling on the Government, and the hon. member said the disgrace would fall on me. I said: "Nothing you can say can disgrace me." He then said: "I do not know so much about that. I can bring more charges against you than you would like to hear."

THE SPEAKER: The question is that the words repeated by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie are a breach of the privileges of this House.

MR. MORAN: I really must object. I want to see some more authentication than the hon. member's own statement.

MR. VOSPER: Would it be in order in a case of this kind to summon evidence from the *Hansard* report?

THE SPEAKER: Certainly not, unless a select committee were appointed. You can produce a paper containing the words, if you like.

MR. MORAN: Yes, some "rag." The *Sunday Times* will have them next Sunday, if he will wait so long.

MR. VOSPER: I am quite prepared to stand on the *Hansard* shorthand.

notes. That ought to be sufficient for hon. members.

MR. MORAN: I object. There is nothing before the House.

MR. VOSPER: There are hon. members here who can bear witness that they were used.

MR. MORAN: Is there any motion before the House?

THE SPEAKER: Yes; that the words you made use of are a breach of privilege.

MR. MORAN: What were they?

MR. SPEAKER: They have just been repeated by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper).

MR. MORAN: Are they before the House?

MR. SPEAKER: In the way stated.

MR. MORAN: I have no copy of them.

MR. VOSPER: That is a very honourable stand to take up!

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): Supposing for a moment that the words were said—we shall probably get the correct words later on, and no doubt the hon. member will rake them up, for this reason if for no other, that so great is the hon. member's egotism that he will keep himself before the public in some light, no matter what it is. If the hon. member were not pouring forth the vials of his abuse in some way or other on hon. members—on the Government, on their supporters, then on his own side—if the hon. member were not doing this, he would be making a martyr of himself. I do not know what the hon. member would look like as a martyr, whether he would be different from an ordinary individual, because he is not too good-looking at the best of times. Would the hon. member look different as a martyr, with a halo of glory round his head? There is no other hon. member in this Chamber who would have the overweening egotism to take up the time of this valuable session in protesting in this manner about his own personal honour and integrity. "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." The hon. member is over-jealous of his honour; he is easily aroused.

MR. VOSPER: You quote a very proper person.

MR. MORAN: Yes, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

MR. VOSPER: Iago.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member shows what is well-known in public, that the

man who is fondest of slinging mud and impugning every other man's character is the most sensitive to the slightest prick of criticism. I may have interjected something last night, and whatever I have said I am not going to retract. I do not know what the words were that I made use of—I do not know what I may not have said about the hon. member; therefore I must be careful, because I may have said something. When it is found what I did say, I suppose I will be hung accordingly, if I am found guilty. But the hon. member, in his overweening egotism, could not wait until the *Hansard* report comes out, so as to see what I did say, but he ran in this morning with the letter, and he says now I did not answer it. If the hon. member were to keep his hand on his hip and did not write any more articles until I did answer it, his hand would grow there, and he would not write any more articles.

MR. VOSPER: That is the conduct of a gentleman!

MR. MORAN: Like begets like. When I am spoken to as a gentleman I shall act as a gentleman, but when I am dealing with the likes of the hon. member, I shall choose my own weapons, and the hon. member knows it. I am not likely to run in the gutter after the hon. member, because if I follow a mudlark I must go in the mud. But now I think the hon. member has got over his little ebullition of feeling; he has now brought the matter before the House; and some little ointment has been poured on it in the way of the publicity which he has given to himself. Even at the expense of the position he holds, even at the expense of being called so egotistical, the hon. member has done this. Even when dealing with the question of the member for Geraldton last night, the hon. member soon forgot all about the discussion, and began to tell the House all about himself, how he travelled all round his electorate, how he rode all round Kanowna on a bob-tailed nag, during the last election, and how he had slept in a stable. It is always the same—it is always the hon. member to the front. Anything as a public man he says here—

MR. VOSPER: The word "public" does not appear in that letter at all.

MR. MORAN: Then if it does not, what has the private individual to do

with Parliament; what has the hon. member's private character to do with this House? I do not want to discuss his private character. I am not used to handling such stuff. If the hon. member does not mean his public character, why bring the matter before this House? He says I wish to intimidate him in the execution of his public duties. Intimidate! There are more ways of killing a dog than by choking him with butter. I will now allow the hon. member to revel in his own grease, which he will do when he ends his political career.

MR. VOSPER (in reply as mover): After this delightful exhibition on the part of the member for East Coolgardie, I shall not attempt to pursue a motion of this kind further. He has done all that I expected of him; he has fulfilled all my expectations to the fullest degree. We know the hon. member is a past-master in the art of abuse in which he has been revelling. When I have a charge to make against a man, I give all the details accurately, and I am prepared to take the consequences on the floor of this House or in the Supreme Court.

MR. MORAN: Or in gaol.

MR. VOSPER: Yes, even in gaol: I am prepared to go to gaol in support of my principles.

MR. MORAN: Then go, for goodness sake!

MR. VOSPER: I do not intend to indulge in the tirade of personal abuse which the hon. member has indulged in. I admit the hon. member's pre-eminence in the art of using Billingsgate: he has always been a shining light in this House in that respect. I make my charges in a way in which members can reply to them; but though the hon. member has seen fit to make abusive insinuations against me on two occasions, he has not the courage to bring them forward. I think the charges which he has made in the House should be supported; but he has not the courage to bring before the House any charge for its investigation. As far as I am concerned, the matter can now drop. I do not wish to pursue a matter of this kind further. I have appealed to the hon. member as a man of honour, but what has taken place this afternoon has shown the hon. member in his true light. We have seen the insolent exhibition he has made, and I leave him to bask

in it. I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PRIVILEGE (GERALDTON CASE)—AS PERSONS ON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

POINT OF ORDER—MOTIONS, NOW DISPOSED OF.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): Is this the proper time, Mr. Speaker, to draw attention to the Minutes of Votes and Proceedings? On looking at the Minutes they do not say how Mr. Moorhead's motion was disposed of yesterday.

THE SPEAKER: It has not been disposed of yet.

MR. LEAKE: There were two motions.

THE SPEAKER: The first one was not disposed of at all: it was superseded by the second.

MR. LEAKE: I was not in my place at half-past 7 last evening when the debate was resumed, but it is usual to show whether a motion is withdrawn or whether it is lost on the voices, or what has become of it. I think the Minutes are defective in that regard.

THE SPEAKER: The member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) moved a motion, which I put to the House. Then the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) moved an amendment, which I ruled out of order. The debate then proceeded on the motion.

MR. LEAKE: But that motion was not withdrawn or disposed of.

THE SPEAKER: It was not.

MR. LEAKE: Should it not appear on the Minutes?

THE SPEAKER: Not if it was not disposed of in any way.

MR. LEAKE: If the motion was not disposed of, it should be on the Notice Paper for to-night. I want to know what has become of that first motion. That motion does not appear on the Minutes as having been disposed of, and if it was not disposed of, there is a fault in the Minutes. The member for North Murchison moved that the member for Geraldton be now heard, and debate ensued. The next motion by the member for North Murchison was that the charges made by the member for Geraldton "constitute a reflection," etcetera.

THE SPEAKER: What is your point?

MR. LEAKE: I should like to see it recorded that motion No. 1 was rejected or withdrawn, or else that it should be expunged from the Votes and Proceedings.

THE SPEAKER: It was neither one nor the other. It could not be expunged, or it would appear that there had been no motion before the House, although a debate took place.

MR. LEAKE: Then the motion must be before the House now, and we must divide on it. I do not want the mistake to appear in the Minutes of Votes and Proceedings.

THE PREMIER: What object have you in view?

MR. LEAKE: To maintain a correct record of the procedure. I can assure hon. members I am not rising from any spirit of faction.

THE PREMIER: Who moved the motion?

MR. LEAKE: The member for North Murchison submitted two motions, the second being moved before the first had been disposed of.

THE PREMIER: The member for Geraldton had been heard, and on that the member for North Murchison submitted a motion.

MR. LEAKE: Excuse me: the Premier does not quite understand the position. It is now a question of putting things right in the Votes and Proceedings of yesterday; and I venture to submit that an examination of the records of the House will show that no motion has ever before been proposed and not disposed of.

MR. MOORHEAD: It was disposed of.

MR. LEAKE: No motion has ever been put before the House and not disposed of by rejection, adoption, or withdrawal.

THE SPEAKER: I think the motion was disposed of, because almost every hon. member spoke to it.

MR. LEAKE: Then the Votes and Proceedings should say so, and show how it was disposed of.

THE SPEAKER: The first motion was adopted by the member for Geraldton speaking to it.

MR. LEAKE: But the member for Geraldton does not adopt motions: it is for the House to do that. It is not for the member for Geraldton to determine the fate of motions, or if it were so I am afraid they would all be rejected in a very short time.

THE PREMIER: The member for Geraldton complied with the order of the House, and spoke to the motion.

MR. LEAKE: But the House did not make an order.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; the House did.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member (Mr. Robson) has never been heard yet. He spoke to the original motion, which was "That the hon. member for Geraldton be now heard in his place," etcetera.

THE PREMIER: He was heard.

MR. LEAKE: He was not.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; he was.

MR. LEAKE: The member for Geraldton spoke to that motion, but his explanation was not the result of anything that the House directed.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly it was.

THE PREMIER: We had passed the resolution that the member for Geraldton should attend in his place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): The proceedings of last night place the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) in a very false position. The motion before the House was that the member for Geraldton be heard in his place, and before the motion was put, that hon. member moved an amendment.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member (Mr. Robson) did not move an amendment, because I did not allow him to move the amendment he proposed to move.

THE PREMIER: It had been resolved at the previous sitting that the member for Geraldton must attend in his place, and he did so.

[Interjections by several members.]

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I must apply to you, Mr. Speaker, sometimes for protection from interjections.

MR. DOHERTY: Let the business go on.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In consequence of constant interruptions, it is necessary for me to repeat my remarks, and occupy a little more time than I otherwise should. The motion before the House was that the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) be heard in his place, and that motion was never put to the House.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; I put the motion to the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The question was never decided.

THE SPEAKER: I put it to the House, and after I had put it the member for Geraldton —

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Rose to move an amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Rose to move an amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And the Speaker ruled the hon. member out of order.

THE SPEAKER: I ruled him out of order; yes.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And when the hon. member rose to move that amendment, he made all the statements he had to make. Consequently, those statements were made before a decision had been arrived at as to whether he should be heard or not.

THE PREMIER: That was decided the day before.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We passed no resolution the day before.

THE PREMIER: Yes; it was resolved by vote of the House that the member for Geraldton should attend in his place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is a different question altogether. It seems to me that the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) moved an amendment on his own motion, and that we were discussing that amendment. I now ask whether the hon. member was in order in moving an amendment on his own motion.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then I contend that the whole discussion last night, with the further discussion to-day, is out of order. The member for Geraldton has never been heard.

THE PREMIER: We heard him, right enough.

THE SPEAKER: I must correct one statement made by the member for Central Murchison, who said that the member for Geraldton was merely speaking to the amendment. The member for Geraldton was not doing that, because before he had said many words I asked him what his amendment was, and when he told me, I ruled that it was not such an amendment as could be put. Then the member for Geraldton went on to make his explanation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No.

THE SPEAKER: The member for Geraldton could not speak to an amend-

ment which I had ruled should not be moved.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The member for Geraldton spoke to the motion.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; that was so.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member (Mr. Robson) spoke to the motion; yes.

MR. LEAKE: But the motion was not carried.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was never put to the vote.

THE SPEAKER: I do not see how the Minutes can be amended in any way. Read the orders of the day, Mr. Gale.

DEBATE RESUMED—GERALDTON CASE.

Debate resumed from previous day on the following motion proposed by Mr. Moorhead:

That in the opinion of this House the charges made by the hon. member for Geraldton constitute a reflection upon the honour of the members of the House, and that a select committee of seven members thereof be appointed to inquire into the truth of the charges.

MR. WILSON (Canning): When I moved the adjournment of the debate last night I did so, as I explained, with a double object; first, in order that the heat which was in evidence during the course of the debate, might be allayed; and secondly, that the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) might be given an opportunity to reconsider his position, so that if there was any way out of the unpleasant position, steps might be taken accordingly. I regret to think there is evidently no way out of the trouble, because the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) is, I believe, still of the opinion which he expressed in the House yesterday, and still considers his explanation is as far as he can go at the present juncture. Nothing now remains, therefore, to be considered except the question as to the form of the inquiry which must be held into these charges. I regret exceedingly that expressions have been used, either justifiably or under misapprehension, and that the debate last night should have caused such an exhibition of trouble and temper between the members for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) and North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) this afternoon. I do not think these charges and counter-charges—may say vulgar charges—of abuse thrown across the floor, can at all tend to the

ignity of the House, or raise us in the opinion of the general public. The whole incident is most regrettable. The form of inquiry suggested by the mover of the motion (Mr. Moorhead) is a select committee of seven members of the House, and great exception has been taken by previous speakers to that proposal. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) is anxious, as I understand from his remarks, to submit himself to any inquiry which this House may decide on, but by preference he would like to have the whole matter inquired into by an impartial tribunal. At first blush, I am with him there. I do not think that an assembly of Britishers could come to any other conclusion than that the more impartial the tribunal the better the result. Many speakers last night, I am sorry to say, assumed the attitude that evidence had been placed before the House with regard to these accusations, and that the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) had, to a certain extent, proved gross charges reflecting on the honour of members of the House. But the position I take up is that at present we have no evidence before us whatever. True, charges have been made, and, to some extent, an explanation has been given as to the reasons for those charges, but we have had no evidence either one way or the other. There have been accusations and disclaimers, and, therefore, it behoves hon. members to be very careful as to acting on the explanation which has fallen from the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson). We should not prejudge any man's case, but at this stage should merely look at it as a question as to whether there are grounds for suspicion. In that view, I maintain, as a member of the Assembly which comes under the charges made by the member for Geraldton, that if there is the slightest ground for suspicion, it is well these charges have been brought forward, and that some tribunal be formed to inquire fully into them. I have had handed to me, this afternoon, a telegram in connection with the appointment of the magistrate at Newcastle, which was one of the matters the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) referred to in his explanation. I may say, at once, that this telegram has come unsolicited, and, to my mind at any rate, it shows there is some ground for inquiry.

I will read the telegram, although I am not at liberty, not having obtained permission, to disclose the name of the sender.

THE PREMIER: That is not fair. Give us the name, because we do not want any underhand business here.

MR. WILSON: Hon. members, when they hear this telegram, will agree with me that I am perfectly fair in reading it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The sender saw the parliamentary report in the newspapers this morning.

MR. WILSON: The sender of the telegram offers to give evidence, so that his name will be made public in due course; and there can be no harm in reading his message, which is as follows:—

Re Resident Magistrate, Newcastle. Premier's reply incorrect. Appointment most improper. Pointed out to Premier at time by self and others. Plenty evidence available locally. Will support you in this matter. Myself and several justices indorse this.

MR. DOHERTY: Is that your bomb-shell?

THE PREMIER: That is "corruption," I suppose.

MR. WILSON: I do not say there was any corruption. I am here simply to-night to point out that there is evidently some justification for the remarks made by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), although I do not go so far as to support him in his assertion that members are "corrupt," or even that the Government are "rotten." I say, however, there is some justification for inquiry into the matter, and I am glad on this account the question has come before the public, and that an inquiry will be held.

THE PREMIER: Why not agree to an inquiry, then? It is all we have been asking for; but you do not want it.

MR. WILSON: Surely the Premier has had plenty of opportunity to make remarks in this House, and does not wish to gag me. If he does, I refuse to be gagged. I am going to have my say as well as he on any important matter that may come before this House. I reckon I can hold my own with the Premier at any time in public or private; I challenge him to contradict that; and he can hold an inquiry into it when he likes. The right hon. gentleman apparently values his own honour above that of any other member

of this House. He considers he is the only man with any honour and integrity, and this is how he exhibits it. I have not attacked his honour. I have told him I refrain from giving an opinion on this matter until the evidence is brought forth, and I think at the least it is bad taste, and against all parliamentary practice, to attack me in this manner across the floor of the House. There have been many statements made with regard to personal and political corruption; and although the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) stated very clearly last night that in his opinion there was no distinction between the two, I have thought over the matter very carefully, and have come to the conclusion that there is a difference between personal and political corruption. And when the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) rose in his place last night and distinctly stated he had never charged, and had no idea of charging, any member of this House or of the Ministry with personal corruption, I think that statement went a long way to relieve the minds of the Premier and his colleagues in connection with these charges. It appears to me that we may take the instance that has been quoted of the ancient speech of the Premier—"The spoils to the victors."

THE PREMIER: And what did the hon. member (Mr. Robson) say? He never heard the speech, and never read it. That was about as mean a thing as a man could do—to quote a speech he had never heard of, and had never read.

MR. WILSON: I heard the Premier last night admit the fact concerning that speech.

THE PREMIER: You were not known in those days.

MR. WILSON: No; it is a good job I was not known; but I am now, thank goodness, and perhaps the Premier knows me too. The Premier knows that if a responsible Minister of the Crown, and especially if the Premier of the country, goes to an electorate and offers to expend public moneys in that electorate in return for political support, that is political corruption.

MR. MORAN: Nonsense!

MR. WILSON: I do not say the Premier has been guilty of that.

THE PREMIER: You insinuate it.

MR. WILSON: But let that be investigated by the committee of inquiry. And for the right hon. gentleman to reiterate that these are all matters of ancient history is, I would say, no reply whatever to the charges. Ancient history! He says we were not known in those days: then what opportunity have we had to rake up the matters in question? It appears to me the hon. gentlemen opposite think this ancient history should not be raked up. We take this stand: if the actions of the Government have been in the past all that I believe them to have been, then Ministers should court an open inquiry.

THE PREMIER: We are tired of this parrot cry going on for ever.

MR. WOOD: Read paragraph 2 of the charges.

MR. WILSON: This is the first time I have spoken on the subject, or on the motion before the House; and why I should be charged with uttering a parrot cry, I do not know. It appears to me the right hon. gentleman wants all the parrot crying to himself: he is not prepared to let anybody else take a part in it. I heard, and saw with very much surprise, the letter written by the Inspector of Schools, produced last night.

THE PREMIER: I am not responsible for that: I never saw it before.

MR. WILSON: You are responsible for the heads of your departments.

THE PREMIER: Oh! Is that political corruption and dishonesty?

MR. WILSON: I am not arguing that there has been corruption; but I say that amounts to a ground for inquiry.

MR. A. FORREST: That letter was written after the statements of the member for Geraldton had been made.

MR. JAMES: That is a quibble.

MR. A. FORREST: It is not a quibble at all. You would like to use the letter.

MR. WILSON: The fact that this letter was written by Mr. Cyril Jackson after the date when the member for Geraldton made his charges does not, I argue, take away from the very grave charge and suspicion contained in the letter: it simply shows that a loose method has been adopted in some of the departments, and especially in this department.

THE PREMIER: Why, it was before the hon. member spoke. It was on the 4th

May—before he (Mr. Robson) spoke at all—that this letter was written. The letter has nothing at all to do with the member for Geraldton's statements made in February last. You are catching at a straw, like a drowning man.

MR. WILSON: If the Premier wishes to address the House, I will sit down.

THE PREMIER: Be fair, then, and I will not interrupt.

MR. WILSON: I wish to aid the right hon. gentleman in keeping his promise to court an open inquiry.

THE PREMIER: That is what we have been asking you to do all along, and you have been refusing. We will go ahead now.

MR. WILSON: The Premier will go ahead when I have finished, and not till then. He charges us with burking inquiry. I repudiate such a charge: it is absolutely untrue.

THE PREMIER: Then what is all this discussion about?

MR. WILSON: And in support of my contention I will remind hon. members that the member for Geraldton brought forward an amendment in which he courted the fullest inquiry, and asked for an impartial tribunal; and at the present time we are discussing the form of tribunal which is to hear the charges. The Premier says everything we say on this (Opposition) side of the House is disagreeable. Well, whose fault is it if it be disagreeable? The attitude he takes up, as shown by the base attacks he makes on the Opposition when they presume to stand up in their places and ventilate what they consider of importance, and possibly a public grievance, is that they are to blame for the disagreeableness. We have made no party question of this. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Oh, Oh!] I have simply to refer to the speech of the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), made last night, to show that what I state is absolutely true. This has been no party question whatever, and when the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) also spoke, can anyone say his was a party speech?

MR. HIGHAM: The rest of the speeches were.

MR. WILSON: And every member of the Opposition has spoken, I think, in favour of a full inquiry.

MR. HIGHAM: Never. Not one, with the exception of the two you mentioned.

MR. WILSON: As I said before, the debate appears to me to have melted down to a question of the form of the inquiry. That the matter should be inquired into is, I think, the desire of everyone in this House. It is against the interests of the House, against the interests of the country, that grave charges of this sort should hang over hon. members for any length of time; but I say to hon. members: Will the select committee have that effect? I venture to say it will not. [MR. HIGHAM: Why?] I venture to say the select committee sitting on this question and taking evidence will delay this matter for the next two or three months: it will be impossible to get through the evidence in connection with this inquiry if a select committee is to sit upon it. And I would suggest that we support the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) in his proposal that the question should be decided in open House by the members as a whole, and that their decision should be given on the charges brought forward.

MR. HARPER: Would you bring the witnesses into the House?

MR. WILSON: There cannot be the slightest doubt, and I think the Premier will now admit this, that the opinion of the member for East Perth (Mr. James), that there is a spirit of unrest and uneasiness throughout the country, is true; and I say the sooner we get to work to allay that spirit of unrest and uneasiness, if we can, the better it will be for all concerned. I hope any speakers who follow me will endeavour to deal with this matter dispassionately, as I have endeavoured to deal with it, despite the interruptions of the Premier. I have endeavoured to put forward my opinions in as calm and quiet a manner as possible, although the Premier's interjections are always calculated to lead one off the true track, and to cause one's temper, perhaps, to get the better of one's judgment. However, I repeat my contention, that if this House can deal with these charges, the better it will be for all concerned, and the more quickly will the matter be settled. If not, I certainly say I would support that amendment which was unfortunately ruled out of order—that an impartial, open, and public tribunal should be appointed to inquire into the whole question.

MR. MOORHEAD: What is a tribunal?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): After what has been said by almost every member of this Assembly, I think the majority of the members present are determined, and I think rightly determined—

MR. JAMES: To whitewash themselves.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That this matter shall be thoroughly inquired into. I, for my part, have nothing whatever to fear from any investigation; and I am only too glad when I find the opinion of the majority in this House in favour of having these charges investigated by a select committee. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat points out it is necessary that the charges should be investigated. With that expression of opinion I thoroughly agree; but he also points out, and there I differ from him, that a select committee is not a tribunal sufficiently impartial to decide this question between the accuser and the accused. To show how utterly impossible it would be for the whole House sitting as a committee to inquire into this matter, I should like to point out to the hon. member that the matter will have to be determined by evidence. The member who makes the charges will bring forth his evidence. Just fancy that procedure being taken by the whole of this House! All the witnesses would be brought in before the whole House, every hon. member having the privilege, if he chose, to cross-examine and re-examine each witness. Why, the investigation would be carried on till the crack of doom, and that would be the most effective way of delaying the proceedings; whereas the procedure always adopted in cases of this kind is to appoint a select committee fairly representing the opinion of both sides of the House, to investigate the matter. The committee hear the evidence brought before them; that evidence is reduced to writing; it is printed; it is circulated, not only amongst the members of the House, but throughout the whole community; and the grand bar at whose decision, I take it, every member of this House must bare his head, is not so much the House itself, but it is the bar of public opinion outside; and that is why I say, inasmuch as it is utterly impracticable to investigate this matter in the House sitting as a committee,

it should be investigated by a select committee. The hon. member points out that since making these charges the member for Geraldton has explained that he does not impute any personal dishonesty or corruption to the members of the Government, or any member of this House. Of course it is pleasing to hear that, because the public, on reading what the hon. gentleman said at that unfortunate meeting at which he made that speech, must have had only one opinion, that being that the members of the Government were a corrupt body, and I take it that meant that we were unworthy to sit on that moment in this Chamber. The hon. member states that he does not wish to impute that we are personally corrupt, and I take it, politically corrupt; and in the face of that I want to know what there is left. The hon. member says: "I do not impute any corruption or political dishonour to you, but still I repeat the charges." That is the state of the case. No matter what may be the mental reservation the hon. member who uttered the language had, we are not concerned about that at all. He may have had it in his mind, as he stated here on the floor of the House, that he did not impute any political dishonesty or corruptibility to the Government or any member of the House. That may be his mental reservation, but I take it that we are to judge of the utterance in the ordinary way, and ask what is the ordinary meaning that attaches to the language as it has been expressed and published. One member on the Opposition side of the House has pointed out how that language has been interpreted by the Press on the goldfield. How could it be interpreted in any other way by any organ? It necessarily does mean political corruption, and of that character that thoroughly unsuits any man to remain a moment in this Chamber if the charges be true. That being the state of the case, I think the sooner we get the select committee the better. But before I sit down I would like to point out to the hon. member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), who read a telegram in the Chamber this evening referring to the appointment of a police magistrate at Newcastle, that that appointment was made, I believe, about three years ago. If that was one of the

charges the hon. member for Geraldton had in his mind when he made the accusations, how is it he sat in this House during the whole of last session and never said a word about it? I take it that this instance is, as has been tersely said of others, like a straw. A man who finds himself placed in a position he never expected to be in tries to cleave to something in order to extricate himself. It would have been far better had the hon. member gone on the straight course, and I am sure if he had acted on his own judgment, he would have done the right thing. Had he proceeded so far as to acquit the Ministry and every member of this House of political corruption, he would have followed it up by unconditionally withdrawing the charges made by him against the House.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): It is not my intention to add to any great extent to the length of the debate, which for great quantity and bad quality has never been exceeded in this House. The only gain the House, or indeed the public who have attended in such large numbers to hear the debate, can have obtained from it is a collection of gems of parliamentary expressions which have fallen from members, I regret to say, on both sides of the House. As far as I am personally concerned, I must first of all congratulate the hon. member for Geraldton upon the manly stand he has taken up. That member spoke, I suppose, as his belief guided him.

THE PREMIER: Under advice.

MR. KINGSMILL: I would like to explain to the Premier that I was referring to the hon. gentleman's action on the first occasion.

THE PREMIER: Oh, I beg your pardon.

MR. KINGSMILL: The first occasion on which the hon. member made these charges, he made a charge which, boiled down, practically amounted to saying he believed the Government to be rotten and corrupt; very nasty expressions, but still I believe they were the expressions used. He has had an opportunity in his place in the House of either standing to those expressions or withdrawing them. I take it he has chosen to stand by them, and it now remains for this House, acting constitutionally—and when I say acting constitutionally I may mention I have taken the advice of members

who have spoken who know a great deal more about constitutional procedure than I do—to call upon the hon. member to explain these aspersions before a tribunal appointed by this House. The House, generally, has also been informed that the only constitutional tribunal that he can appear before is a select committee of the House. If that be the case, such will have to be accepted. It is useless, I suppose, to pass any strictures upon the goodness or badness of the constitutional procedure. The constitutional procedure is fixed, and we shall have to abide by it. The one thing I regret is that, if both sides of the House have expressed their willingness to accept this method of trial of the hon. member for Geraldton, if I may so call it, so much of the valuable time of this session which was to have been devoted to the great subject of federation has been taken up in the manner it has been in this debate. There is also another circumstance I regret very much, that being the attitude taken up by the Premier on this occasion. The right hon. gentleman not only to-day, but several times yesterday, accused the Opposition, as a body, of wishing to burk inquiry, which amounts, I take it, to dishonourable conduct just as much as the charges the hon. member for Geraldton has levelled against the Government. For my part I altogether wish to disclaim that this is a party question. Occupying as I do the position of junior whip to the Opposition, I may be supposed to know what the counsels of that body are, and I can declare freely and fully—I hope that what I say will have the credence of hon. members opposite, for I think that during the time I have been in the House they have had no reason to disbelieve me [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—this has absolutely not been a party question. I walked into this House yesterday without the least idea of the attitude the member for Geraldton was about to adopt; and, as I say, having heard his statement, I can only congratulate him on the position he has taken. As far as I am concerned, I simply support the motion.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): If I were the only member in the House, I should be glad to again reiterate my protest against this matter being dealt with by a

tribunal consisting of a select committee. It does not worry me to consider the procedure of the House, because I see that the procedure of every Parliament seems to mould itself according to circumstances, and I have a distinct recollection of an important case which cropped up in Victoria where charges were made against the Government. I do not know whether the word "corruption" was used, but the statements amounted to charges of corruption and favouritism in reference to some land at Mount Macedon with which Mr. Syme, the editor of the *Age*, was mixed up. A charge was made by Mr. Madden, and the matter was referred to Mr. Justice Williams, who was regarded as an impartial tribunal entirely out of the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The House disapproved of that afterwards.

MR. JAMES: I need hardly point out to intelligent men that before the matter could have been referred to Mr. Justice Williams, a motion must have been passed by a majority of the House. It was referred to Mr. Justice Williams for that gentleman to give a report.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Government did it in recess.

MR. JAMES: Pardon me, the charge was made.

THE PREMIER: I do not think the charge was referred to Mr. Justice Williams.

MR. JAMES: According to my recollection, it was referred by the House.

THE PREMIER: The Government appointed a Commission, I know.

MR. JAMES: Then why did not the Government here, who were so anxious to defend their character that they allowed the matter to be brought forward in this particular session, convened for the purpose of dealing with the federal question, adopt a precedent which they had immediately before their eyes.

THE PREMIER: It was very much disapproved of.

MR. JAMES: I heard a junior member of this House speak of constitutional procedure, but I have far greater respect for constitutional authorities in Victoria than the constitutional opinion of the hon. member (Mr. Moorhead). People very often read things and do not grasp their meaning. There are great constitutional authorities

in Victoria; I venture to think as great as the member for North Murchison. The course followed in Victoria in the case I mention was adopted apparently by a Government very anxious to vindicate their character. I only wanted to refer to this question for the purpose of pointing out that it is absurd to say the only thing we can do is to have this referred to a select committee. Is there an instance known of a charge being made against the whole House of being corrupt, as has been suggested here, and the House referring it to a committee to decide whether the charge was or was not well founded. I can quite understand a charge made against a specific officer, who occupies a position in Parliament, being referred to a select committee. Such a person or persons would not vote upon the question, nor would any of the persons charged take their seats upon the select committee. There you would have a select committee perfectly and entirely independent, but no one can suggest that in a select committee we may appoint in connection with this will be entirely independent. The majority of the select committee will be appointed by the Government. We know well enough the Government have chosen the three members of the Opposition who will be placed upon that committee, and the committee will reflect entirely, or to a large extent, the views of the Government. I am certain any member placed upon that committee will discharge his duties conscientiously; but, however anxious he may be, no man can entirely free himself from the bias which must arise in connection with a matter like this. Any one who feels so strongly as the member for North Murchison must have felt cannot be unbiassed. He departed from his usual custom and displayed a feeling of vindictiveness.

THE PREMIER: You ought to be ashamed of yourself to say it.

MR. MOORHEAD: I do not mind.

MR. JAMES: The hon. member for North Murchison, who was called upon to bring this matter forward, indulged in the strongest language in placing the question before us. He did not place the question before us in all its clear issues, but really by a lot of legal subtleties, and getting hold of this document, trying to

he could to represent the document as a reflection upon the conduct of this House. Quite apart from that the hon. member, however desirous he may be to do justice—and I say willingly he would wish to do justice in this case, and would be most conscientious in the discharge of his duties, as would any other members—must admit that he would be open to bias.

THE PREMIER: What are you?

MR. JAMES: I also am subject to it. I say again what I said in connection with the Federation Committee, I had a strong feeling, and I would not sit on that committee, nor would I sit on this committee.

THE PREMIER: We will not have you, to start with, if we can help it.

MR. JAMES: That is the idea; you are going to have a committee to whitewash yourselves. I say at once I should not sit on a committee like this. I am too honest for you and too outspoken. That is the trouble.

A MEMBER: Since when?

MR. JAMES: Any committee formed in this way will not carry conviction to the minds of the people of this community. That is realised by some members, who have tried to meet it by saying it does not matter what their opinion may be, the public will read the evidence; but they do not seem to realise that the public will read the evidence and give their verdict at the next election. In the meantime the committee will have reported, the hon. member will have been punished, and the jury will not have had an opportunity of reading the evidence. I enter my protest against this matter being referred to a select committee, which can only result in one way, the committee coming into this House with the triumphant vindication of their own honour. The member for Geraldton wants another tribunal; we want another tribunal; but members on the other side say that the determination of the question rests in their hands, and their hands alone. This question, if it is so important, ought to be sent before an independent commission, in a similar manner to the Parnell Commission, on the *Times* charges.

THE PREMIER: That had nothing to do with Parliament.

MR. VOSPER: An Act of Parliament was passed to constitute the Commission.

MR. JAMES: The same thing can be done here. We want it done, the member who has made the charges wants it done, and the country wants it done, and in fair-play it ought to be done. It is not right that the House should be the judge to say whether the accusations are well founded or not. If we want to carry conviction to the people we ought to have an independent tribunal, and we have been trying to obtain that. We want the people to realise that the Government have refused that tribunal. They say: "We will have the appointment of a committee, and we will pack that committee."

THE PREMIER: That is just worthy of you!

THE SPEAKER: Perhaps it is as well I should quote what is the rule, according to *May's Parliamentary Practice*. The hon. member (Mr. James) quoted what had been done in Victoria. I recollect the case very well, but not the procedure. But we are not bound by the practice of Victoria: we are bound by the practice of the Imperial Parliament and the practice laid down in *May*. I have consulted other authorities, and they confirm this statement. *May* says:

Whatever matter arises concerning either House of Parliament ought to be discussed and adjudged in that House to which it relates, and not elsewhere.

MR. LEAKE: In the House?

THE SPEAKER: Not in the House—it does not mean that—judged by the House.

MR. JAMES: That does not prevent our passing any legislation we like.

THE SPEAKER: The House can pass what legislation it likes. The Parnell Commission was not appointed in reference to charges made against the House.

MR. MOORHEAD (in reply as mover): I desire to make one or two observations as to the remarks made by the learned and courteous member who has just spoken.

MR. JAMES: The hon. member has spoken twice on this question.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member's motion was the original and substantive motion, and he has the right of reply.

MR. MOORHEAD: I am not surprised at the interruption of the hon. member, because in this as in other matters he is to be seen for a moment, a

few remarks drop from him, and when the reply comes forth from those attacked, he is generally absent from his place. I desire to make one or two observations as to the expressions which have fallen from the hon. member, in which he charges the Government with endeavouring to pack the committee, in other words, that the Government have lent themselves to attempt to procure a verdict by means unworthy of members of the House. In other words again, the charges laid at the door of the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), which he is here to justify, and in which he may be able to justify himself for all I know, have been adopted with a tenfold force by the member for East Perth (Mr. James). I wish to offer one or two observations on that. Allegations have been made freely that in one sense I am acting as the puppet of the Government; in fact, the gentleman who acts as the corner-man of the troupe clearly charged me with that. May I thank the hon. member, who really relieved the monotony of the debate by the amusing speech which he made last evening, and which in the opinion of hon. members opposite reduced the whole proceedings to a farce. The names of the gentlemen who are to be proposed were not suggested by the Premier: they were drawn up by myself and my friend on my right (Mr. Moran). The original list was then altered and handed to one of the whips, and subsequently to the gentlemen on the other side. At once the suggestions were adopted as to who should form the members of the committee: no objection was offered by me.

MR. VOSPER: That is not correct.

MR. MOORHEAD: Even in spite of the sanctimonious expression of the leader of the Opposition, it is an insult for members who sit on the other side of the House to say it is a packed committee. I have only one or two other remarks to make, and they are practically to the effect that it would be a mistake for the House to attach importance to the observations of the member for East Perth (Mr. James). To listen to him we might conclude that he is the only constitutional authority in the House, and the only logical speaker; but when we examine his remarks we find they are mere assertions. The hon. member hops about from twig to twig, and then

perching on one he comes to certain conclusions which he styles an argument. I defy my friend to point to a single precedent to ask the House to go outside its precincts and select a body to judge the members of the House.

MR. JAMES: You cannot point to a case in which there was a general charge against the House.

MR. MOORHEAD: It is not a general charge: it is a charge against a portion of the House, a charge against the Government, of political corruption and rottenness; not such corruption as the hon. member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) tried to make us believe it was, by reason of an attempt to bribe a constituency before an election, but the rottenness and the corruption attributed to an attempt to bribe members. Anyone who can read the Queen's English cannot fail to gather the intent of the charge. No precedent can be found, even in the elastic imagination of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), for the appointment of a body outside of this House. The Parnell Commission was of a different character altogether, and the case mentioned by the member for East Perth (Mr. James) is not of the same character. Mr. Justice Williams was appointed merely to inspect the records of documents; but here we are asked to appoint a tribunal to examine witnesses about charges made against the House.

MR. JAMES: Mr. Justice Williams was appointed to examine witnesses, and Mr. Madden refused to give evidence.

MR. MOORHEAD: I am afraid I cannot accept the assertion of the hon. member. When he made it first he told us that a Commission was appointed by the House; subsequently we found it was appointed during recess, by the Government; and the House in the assertion of its prerogatives and its privileges dissented from that, when the House met. The proper course, and the only course, is the appointment of a committee, and I say it will be unconstitutional to go outside the House for the appointment of a body to try such charges as these. The assertion that the committee has been packed cannot be accepted. Not alone are the Government charged with being corrupt and rotten, not alone are members charged with having received bribes, but the entire members of the House are

equally bad with the Government themselves. Personally I have no animosity against the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson). I cannot go exactly so far as to say that I hope he will come out of this inquiry with flying colours, because that practically would mean the disgrace of, not only the Government, but of every hon. member; still I do hope the hon. member will accept the suggestion of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), and before the inquiry terminates he will retract the charges.

Question—that a select committee be appointed—put, and passed on the voices (no dissent).

POINT OF PROCEDURE.

A ballot having been taken,

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): Before you declare the names of the persons elected, may I rise to a point of order?

THE SPEAKER: I do not think so.

MR. VOSPER: Supposing I rise to a point of order, which, if upheld, may invalidate the whole election?

THE SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

MR. VOSPER: It is simply that we have been following the wrong procedure entirely in appointing this select committee. On this I refer you to page 381 of *May's Parliamentary Practice*, by way of proof. If you will hear me for a moment, I will read an extract.

THE SPEAKER: What edition of *May* do you refer to?

MR. VOSPER: The edition I have here is the tenth, edited by Palgrave and Bonham-Carter; and if I may, I will read the extract to the House, as follows:—

A committee upon a matter of privilege may be appointed and nominated forthwith without notice; such a committee having been held not be governed by any of the orders applicable to the appointment and nomination of other select committees. The nomination of select committees has in special cases been intrusted by the order of the House to sources other than its own decision. For instance, the House has appointed certain committees by ballot; or has named two members, and appointed the rest of the committee by ballot; or, having chosen 21 names by ballot, has permitted each of two members nominated by the House to strike off four from that number; and the House habitually resorts to the committee of selection for the nomination, either wholly or practically, of the members of select committees.

That extract refers to select committees on matters of privilege, and we are told by this great authority on Parliamentary procedure that the House of Commons "habitually resorts to the committee of selection for the nomination, either wholly or partially, of the members of select committees." Then again:

The committee of selection has also been empowered, 20th May, 1892, to divide a select committee into two committees, and to apportion between the committees the Bills referred to the original committee.

Then on the matter of privilege as laid down on page 383, we read:

Upon a matter of privilege, or to fulfil the orders or the intention of the House, committees are appointed and nominated forthwith without notice.

I contend from these extracts that we are not following the practice of the House of Commons, though all along there has been an intention of following that practice. If it be the intention to follow the practice of the House of Commons, we are distinctly out of order in balloting for the select committee in the way we have done.

THE SPEAKER: We are not bound to follow the procedure of the House of Commons, when we have Standing Orders of our own on the question. In the first place, it would be impossible to carry out that procedure, because we have no such thing as a committee of selection in this House.

MR. VOSPER: According to *May*, you can appoint a committee of selection now.

THE SPEAKER: Not a committee of selection. Such a committee in the House of Commons is appointed at the commencement of the session, and the duty of that committee is to select members of committees, and to do various other things in the House they are appointed to do. In this case we have our own Standing Order, setting out the way we shall appoint select committees, and these orders are not overridden by the practice or proceedings of the Imperial Parliament. The members who have been appointed on the select committee are as follow:—Mr. Harper, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Kingsmill, Mr. Quinlan, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Wood, and the mover (Mr. Moorhead).

MR. MOORHEAD: I move that the committee be empowered to call for persons and papers, and to sit during any recess.

THE SPEAKER: Does the hon. member say "any recess."

MR. MOORHEAD: Any recess.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member means during any adjournment.

MR. MOORHEAD: Yes; during any adjournment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I desire to move an amendment. I suppose I can. I think it has been the general feeling of the House that these proceedings should be open to the Press; and our Standing Orders will not permit the select committee to admit the Press, unless ordered by the House so to do.

THE SPEAKER: Let me put the other question first: you can then move that one.

Question—that the committee have power to call for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House—put and passed.

MR. MOORHEAD moved that the committee report this day week.

Put and passed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the sittings of the committee be open to the Press.

MR. WILSON seconded.

Put and passed.

ELECTION RETURN—DEGREY.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt of a telegram from the Returning Officer for the DeGrey electoral district (the seat having been vacated by the resignation of Mr. E. T. Hooley), informing him that Mr. Leonard Hawthorn Darlôt had been duly elected, unopposed.

RETURN—MINING LEASES SURRENDERED.

On motion by Mr. GEORGE, ordered:

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return, showing full particulars of each and every lease the surface rights of which have been surrendered by the leaseholders to the Government, during the last five years, at Kalgoorlie, the Boulder, and the surrounding districts, within a radius of five miles; such return to show the conditions and compensation, if any, under which each lease was surrendered.

MOTION—RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATIONS, OFFICIALLY TO RECOGNISE.

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle) rose to speak to a motion of which he had given notice, as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the refusal of the Commissioner of Railways to

officially recognise associations of Government railway employees, organised for the instruction and benefit of their several grades, and intended through their officers to act with and through the departmental officers as a medium for the satisfactory settlement of all disputes of a general character, is and will be detrimental to the best interests of the colony.

He said: In rising to speak to the motion, I shall not say much at the present time, except to justify myself and the other members representing Fremantle and Perth constituencies who have taken part in this question, and who desire to see the Commissioner of Railways recognise his employees' associations. If this be done, we believe good will result, not only to the Government but to the department. After consulting with these railway men to-day, as I have done, and realising the complications that will ensue if this motion be pressed—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What complications?

MR. HIGHAM: I think you Oppositionists and your organ have clearly shown what complications are likely to arise.

MR. GREGORY: Who blows the organ?

MR. GEORGE: Which organ?

A MEMBER: The *Sunday Times*.

MR. HIGHAM: After realising that the pressing of this motion at the present time is likely to lead to complications and to involve side-issues altogether apart from the question, I can only announce that I, in common with the other members interested, have consulted with the railway men to-day, and I hold here their permission to withdraw the motion.

MR. GEORGE: Their permission?

MR. HIGHAM: I say "permission." If I had not their permission, I, being the mouthpiece of these men, would be prepared to go on with it. Notwithstanding the fact that I used the words "their permission," there is no man in the House who is politically freer from that railway influence than I. If any man in this House has more to gain by moving this motion than I have, I should like to see him rise and say so.

MR. GEORGE: More to gain?

MR. HIGHAM: I mean less to gain.

MR. WILSON: What letter have you received?

MR. HIGHAM: Here it is, written by the two official representatives of the associations. So far as the unions are con-

cerned, politically they do not affect me in the slightest. None of their members, or certainly not more than ten or twelve of them, are my constituents; and by advocating their cause I am likely to lose more support than I shall gain. On the other hand, anyone who has watched my actions in connection with this matter will realise that I have taken an interest in the question for the last two years; that last year I, in common with the other members for Fremantle, approached the Commissioner of Railways and advocated the recognition of these associations; and on that occasion we secured their provisional recognition for twelve months. The Commissioner has since seen fit to withdraw that recognition—why, I do not know; but I realise that in so doing he has made a false step. I do not intend to go on with this motion. I have no desire to waste the time of the House over it. The Government must realise that these associations must be to a certain extent recognised; and from that recognition benefit will accrue, not only to the department itself but also to the men. In a railway department employing something like 5,000 men, 3,000 of whom are in these unions, the Commissioner must realise it is absolutely impossible for the men employed to approach him individually in all cases where they have differences with their superior officers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government House ball-room would be required to seat them.

MR. HIGHAM: I crave permission to withdraw the motion, feeling sure the Government will, on reflection, realise that the claims of these two associations, and of the other association of railway employees, will meet with due consideration during the recess. I do not want to complicate this matter with the Federation Enabling Bill, or the other motions that have been dragged into the question.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

At 6:30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate on motion for second reading resumed from previous Thursday.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): There seems an air of sweet repose about the Chamber, after dinner to-day, like a calm which precedes a great storm. I am sure the House will join with me in expressing a certain amount of joy that we have got through a very troublous and objectionable period in our history. Having taken such forcible means to vindicate our own personal honour, we approach a subject of perhaps more vital importance to this colony at large than the question whether any or every member of the House is not all he should be. Although this great question of federation will affect the destiny of all persons in this colony as long as they shall live and their children after them, and we are almost safe in saying for generations to come, I regret that such an amount of interest has not been shown in this House by the federal leaders as one might have expected. I regret also that outside the House this question of federation or no federation has not yet been considered by the people. We have made vain attempts to get the federal leaders in this House and outside to take a national stand. This country has been doing very well under responsible government during its few years under that régime, and now we are asked to make a mighty change, an overwhelming change, a change from absolute autonomy to absolute dependence upon the will of others, for that is what it amounts to. That will may be a good one, and I do not say it will not be so, but I assert that we are asked by the federal party in Western Australia to make a violent change—a change at once from responsible government, carrying with it all the responsibility of a sovereign State, a State which is sovereign over its own revenue and its own taxation. After all, that is the only sovereignty a people can have. If we lose the sovereign rights over money and taxation, our independence is gone for ever. We have in vain asked the federal leaders in this Chamber and outside it to come forward and tell the people what they will gain by federation. We have heard any amount of stormy discussion, both inside and outside the Chamber, as to the abhorrence of withholding the referendum, and, truth to tell, that storm is not yet quelled, nor will it be quelled unless we take that great step

of having a vote by the people. So that, as I said once before in this Chamber, we shall have a vote carrying with it a vindication of what has been done, we shall have a vote perhaps striking against the Government, carrying with it, as Mr. Councillor Draper stated in the Town Hall the other night, the conviction that it was dealing a death-blow at the food duties under federation. I propose this evening following on what I said the other afternoon, to absolutely, as far as I can, and to my satisfaction, and I hope to the satisfaction of every member in this Chamber and the country, to take away every cry from the federal party, and leave them bare, with the position that they rely on the popular cry to vote for federation without the people inquiring into it at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do not be so cruel.

MR. MORAN: I shall not be cruel, but I shall be just. I hope the hon. member will accept the challenge; I hope the federal leaders will debate this question of federation or no federation. I challenge hon. members to debate the question with me, the merits of federation, for and against federation. We have never heard the leader of the Opposition give one reason why Western Australia should join federation, and I shall wait for some reason from him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You will wait a long time.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member is incapable of dealing with the question, except we leave him in the position of proving that for a long time Western Australia will gain nothing from federation. The federal leaders on the other side have never told us what Western Australia is going to gain from federation. The federal leader mentioned one word, almost in an awe-inspiring tone: he said, "Look at defence," and then he passed on. I will mention the word "defence," and try to prove that it is almost a farce.

MR. LEAKE: When was I arguing in favour of federation here?

MR. MORAN: Never: the hon. member never argued in favour of federation: he declaimed. So far the hon. member has been quite content to allow himself to be carried as the figure-

head of the referendum movement. He has never allowed his gentle learned knowledge to consider if federation would lead him beyond the federal movement.

MR. GREGORY: Is not this your first argument?

MR. MORAN: If it be, take a note of it, and try to upset it. I court debate.

MR. LEAKE: Court or burk it?

MR. MORAN: Burk, or Guinness, or Jamieson, if you like. We will have a little debate as to the merits of federation, if you like. On the Address-in-reply we inquired what virtue there was in the cry of the federal party that there was no precedent for the Parliament to interfere in matters, after delegates had gone to a Convention and agreed to a constitution. There is no precedent or reason for anyone to state that Parliament is bound by any decision come to by delegates, and the people are not bound by the decision of the delegates, because they did not elect them. We can inquire, cut and carve, just as we like, those who are willing and able. We inquired whether Parliament should take steps to safeguard this colony. We inquired last year whether it was too late to alter the Bill as proposed by the Premier, and a majority of members of Parliament, and we arrived at a conclusion that it was not too late to alter the Bill. Those who prevented the alteration were the federal party, aided by its leader, the member for Albany (Mr. Leake). There were a few on the other side who said that the Bill might be altered. The day after I moved the Address-in-reply, Sir William Lyne, the Premier of New South Wales, expressed his wonder that the Imperial Government did not alter the Bill to include Western Australia's amendments. Sir William Lyne said he had expected that the Bill would be altered in some particular, in the matter of the appeal to the Privy Council and the Western Australian amendments. Therefore Sir William Lyne would not have objected if the Imperial Parliament had altered the Bill, and the Imperial Parliament would have altered it if what Mr. Chamberlain has said is true. That stage has passed and gone. There is almost a unanimous opinion on the floor of the House that the Bill should go to the people. On the Address-in-reply I endeavoured to vindicate the position of Parliament. There are some

prominent party cries that the federalists use to induce Western Australia to come into the federation. What are those cries? I shall lay them out in proper order, and number them so that they can be replied to by the federal leader or by his party. The first cry which the federal leader uses always outside the House when he speaks on the question, and which is always used by every other federal leader in Western Australia, is "Come in now or you will suffer: you will never get the same terms again." This cry is always used everywhere, "You will never get the same chance again," and we are almost threatened by the Premiers in some of the colonies in the East that Western Australia will never get the same terms again. We have inquired whether there was a precedent in Canadian or American history to justify such a cry. If the other colonies are going to penalise Western Australia because we will not accept their will, that is all the more reason why we should not put ourselves into their power. If the federal love is going to dry up so soon, we should keep out of federation. If we are to be tangled, if the Federal Parliament is going to pursue the same tactics and be deaf to the just requests of this colony, then we had better keep out of federation. The second cry is this. The federalists say, "To stay out now is hostile to Australian federal union." The federal leaders always say that. When the Premier has said that he is a federalist, and when the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) has said the same, the federal leaders have replied that there is only one particular brand of federation, and that is the brand which was manufactured by the delegates sent by Western Australia, sent over to the Conventions without the consent of the people of Western Australia: that is the proper brand.

MR. LEAKE: It is the brand that has been manufactured by the whole of Australia.

MR. MORAN: By the whole of Australia! What has that to do with Western Australia?

MR. LEAKE: We consider ourselves part of Australia.

MR. MORAN: Whether we go in or remain out of federation, we shall still be part of Australia. If the other parts of Australia federate, we shall still be part

of Australia. Canada manufactured federation, but Prince Edward Island got different terms from the others, and British Columbia got different terms: why should not Western Australia? Is there any reason why the people of the colony should vote "no" on the Bill? Is there a shadow of argument to prove that we shall suffer if we do not federate? Is there any argument that if we go into federation subsequently, if we wait ten years, that Western Australia will lose? Western Australia must and will lose by entering the federation now: she will not, and cannot, lose by remaining out of it. When I say she will not and cannot, I will prove it, because we must now assume the lead in the matter, for the federalists will not put before the country their arguments in favour of federation. When the colony is asked to adopt a new state of things, it would seem to be the province of those who urge this to give reasons for it. I propose to give a few reasons against going into federation. The first and foremost is the question of defence. What is there in the question of defence? Let us premise our inquiry by stating that there has been no federal union accomplished in modern times at the bottom of which was not the question of defence. Absolutely the cause of the American Confederation, primarily and absolutely, was the question of defence. Everybody knows that after the War of Independence those States were almost scattered fragments, standing forth against the world as independent States, cut off from the mother country. They considered that if they did not combine for defence purposes they would be disintegrated and handled roughly by the other powers; therefore, they united for defence. If anyone wishes to see the case of the United States in the same arguments, let him read the early chapters of the *Federalist* as published in those times, putting forth the reasons for federation very strongly and conclusively, and they remain to-day as a standard work. Take the case of Switzerland, surrounded by strong powers on all sides. Take the case of Germany: that country federated to keep herself from being crushed out by strong neighbours around her. Austria is another instance of that. But all these instances are apart from the British Constitution.

I now come to Canada, and it may be said we are in the same position as Canada. Is that so? I say it is not. Canada federated, for what purpose? Primarily for defence, to enable her to resist the encroachments of a powerful neighbour, the United States: a young, flourishing, and ambitious republic, always encroaching on her rights in some way or other; and it was thought necessary that, as the British navy could not protect Canada on her land borders, and as Great Britain could not keep a standing army in Canada, to prevent invasion Canada must federate for defence purposes. We all know too that Canada was always in a turmoil of trouble over three things. In her own borders there were two nationalities, the French and British, and in the neighbouring waters there was always the fishery trouble between herself and the United States. When Sir John Macdonald so ably advocated federation for Canada, he gave his primary reasons, which may be discovered from his biography and the history of the time. The third reason was: "Unless we federate, we will never be able to present a front as a great and powerful, almost a separate, nation under the British flag." The principal reason why Canada federated was the presence on her land border of a powerful and ambitious neighbour, who would not scruple to take advantage of the chance of acquiring more territory. I want to ask the federal party, in dealing with this question of defence, whether there is a single instance I have quoted which is analogous to the position of Western Australia, and what we could hope to gain in the way of defence by federation. To begin with, Western Australia is not like the United States, an independent country. We are a colony with responsible government, and part of the grandest and greatest federation the world has ever seen, namely the British Empire. We are part of Australia, and we hold at our command, in the love and protection of our mother country, the services of every British warship and the life of every British soldier in defending our rights. The navy could not defend Canada on her land border; but we have no land border where a powerful neighbour is threatening us. Where is there any danger to Western Australia from a land invasion of

any kind? The position of Canada and the position of Western Australia are not analogous. Where, then, is our only danger? The only danger from which we could possibly suffer would be an invasion or an attack from across sea; and now I propose to analyse what help federal forces would be to Western Australia under the Commonwealth Bill. I hold that while "Britannia rules the waves" we do not want the assistance of anybody else, because the British fleet protects British interests wherever the British flag flies. What help from federal forces could we hope to have? It is absurd to imagine New South Wales putting her 100-ton gun into commission to repel a Russian invasion on the Western coast of Australia. Imagine the futile attempts for many years to resist the invasion of any naval force! The idea is absolutely ridiculous, and cannot be contemplated for a moment; therefore, we can hope for no protection from the Eastern colonies by water. But the federal advocate says—and this is his most powerful argument—that it has been proved in South Africa a regular infantry force can repel a terrific number of troops invading the country. That is quite true; and why is it true in South Africa? One of the greatest feats of people untrained in arms has been the resistance of the Boers to the British army, and that resistance contains one of the greatest of object lessons, as showing how a patriotic people may resist a military people. And why was that resistance possible? To begin with, the South African Republics are together, and the people were crossing the borders every day. There is no natural boundary between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal: on the contrary, the two States are traversed by road, railway, and river. They were able to send troops from Pretoria and Johannesburg right down to the doors of Cape Colony in one or two days by railway and by road, because all along the country is civilised, fertilised, and well watered, and where the country is not well watered, there is the "iron horse" to carry troops. But does that hold in Australia? The Eastern colonies are linked by river, road, and fertile country; and Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria could concentrate their joint troops inside two days wherever they

wanted to, as was done by the Boer Republics. But what is Western Australia's position? Could the Eastern colonies send a single soldier to repel an invasion of Western Australia? They could not send one, and nobody contemplates that they would attempt to pour a column of infantry across the Australian desert.

A MEMBER: They could not do it.

MR. MORAN: They could not do it; and the Premier knows well that nature has placed an impassable barrier throughout this country, so far as defence is concerned; and since we cannot be helped by land by the Eastern States, how can we be helped? We do not want their assistance by water, so long as the British navy is afloat; and if the British navy cannot defend us, how can the Eastern colonies do so? That is the position in reference to defence. I want to know what is meant by this "combined defence" of the federalist, because I think it means nothing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It means a beginning.

MR. MORAN: A beginning and an ending in the same place; but why try and delude the people of this colony into the supposition that the defence argument is a good and valid reason for federation? I do not object to the argument, all things being equal: it might be an advantage to have the whole force of Australia under one leader; but, in speaking to leading military men—and I have consulted them in Western Australia—I find they say it is quite possible to have one military service under one head without federation. We see to-day Australian troops fighting side by side in South Africa. They are Australians just as much as they would be under federation. And why? Because they are Australians first and Britishers afterwards, and if Western Australia stands out of federation, these men will be none the less Australians or British. But here comes in the federalist, who says, "Ah! but if you go into federation we will build a federal railway line, and give the means of defence." If that be done, then my argument is undermined. When the Federal Parliament decides to build the intercolonial line, my argument is gone. If it be undertaken to build this railway, all

things being equal, Western Australia will go into federation on the same terms as the other colonies. But when the federalist says we are going into federation with advantage, I tell him he is asking us to go into federation under the greatest disabilities, notwithstanding Mr. Holder's promise, because this colony is prohibited from any connection by land with the Eastern colonies. The desire is to link the two parts of the continent together, and yet provisions are placed in the Commonwealth Bill whereby the life-blood of federation is cut off, and cannot percolate from the Eastern colonies to Western Australia. That is because of the anomaly in the Commonwealth Bill, an anomaly found nowhere else, namely that the whole of the Western Australian seaboard shall be cut off from the Eastern seaboard, excepting with the goodwill of a jealous neighbour; and South Australia has always been a jealous neighbour to us. We have the promise of Mr. Holder for what it is worth; but I have said before, I regard the promises of a party Government as worth nothing. That is not because the Governments do not intend to keep promises, but because people turn Parliaments out, and no Government are bound by the promises of their predecessors. The Federal Bill really provides that Western Australia shall be cut off from the Eastern seaboard, unless South Australia promises to allow the construction of an intercolonial railway; and yet federalists, in a rude and abusive tone, always ridicule the people in this part of Australia because they are not enlightened enough to see the advantage of federation. The federal leaders of Western Australia do not appear capable or able to judge of the destinies of any colony. The pronounced leader of federation here is a man of no experience, who has no interest in the colony, and has only crept up by means of a little popularity in order to make himself known in the future.

MR. GREGORY: Why did you not oppose federation publicly before this?

MR. MONGER: The hon. member never had an opportunity.

MR. MORAN: I have spoken on this subject in this House on many occasions, and always against federation.

MR. GREGORY: But you have not done so outside.

MR. LEAKE: The member for East Coolgardie speaks so much that nobody cares to listen to him.

MR. MORAN: Thank you! People do listen, though I know there are some who do not care to listen. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) speaks much in the House, but I flatter myself hon. members are always very willing to listen to a speaker who takes the trouble to read up his subject, and knows what he is talking about. We have not, however, had the opportunity of hearing the member for Albany on federation yet; and I tell him he does not know the Federal Bill or the a-b-c of federation. He has not read the constitution of any Federal Parliament, and I should be glad to meet him in the Town Hall in Perth, and there argue the matter with him at any time. I tell him that this colony should not federate, and I will dare to rebut his arguments, even before his own picked audience. The hon. member (Mr. Leake) has lived on his popularity so far, but he has never read his subject up. As to the question of defence, it will be admitted that we, as a colony, are gaining nothing whatever by federation; but if the the whole of the Eastern colonies, who are linked together, will give us an undertaking they will build the intercolonial railway, I will be content. I am not content, however, with the terms of Mr. Holder, or of South Australia. We ought not to go into federation until the Federal Parliament has passed a Bill and undertaken to start an intercolonial railway as soon as possible. I do not want a tentative power given to the Federal Parliament to do so; because how could we go to the Eastern colonies if we happened to be invested by sea? We would be cut off altogether.

MR. LEAKE: We could pay our fares.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member's cheap sneers are worthy of their origin.

MR. LEAKE: I am referring to cheap railway fares.

MR. MORAN: Oh, we know all about that. The hon. member (Mr. Leake) should attend to his own kitchen before he starts cleaning mine out, because I have no doubt his kitchen would take a lot of brushing and whitewashing. We heard much about the question of defence, with much theatrical effect, from the leader of the federal party the other night. But we are now looking at the

question from our own point of view and perhaps the hon. member will give us his point of view during this debate or in the Committee stage, because I am anxious to argue all the points at length if the hon. member wishes. There is one other argument that we in Western Australia ought to take notice of. It spoke against federation, with all earnestness and due consideration, at a time when I knew it would probably be more advantageous for me to take the popular side and howl for federation. But still I see no harm in accepting the verdict of the people in reference to my action in this matter, because we know that justice will prevail in the end, and that those who pointed out the danger of going in and the advantages of stopping out, and the reasonableness of supposing we could get better terms, will get the due, perhaps not for years to come, but they will get their due some time. There is one other great argument which the federal leader used throughout the country, and it is an argument which I am sorry to say, was repeated lately by the member for West Perth (Mr. Wood), and I was sorry to hear the hon. member repeat the argument because, after all, it will not bear the test of examination. I propose to examine it. It is a powerful argument to use if it can be vindicated. The federalists say, "Look at your isolation: you will be left in a state of isolation if you do not join the Federal Commonwealth." I deny that *altogether*. I say there is not a scintilla of evidence to show we shall suffer any isolation whatever. On the contrary, Western Australia to-day is the most independent colony of the whole Australian group. [SEVERAL MEMBERS HEAR, HEAR.] Isolation can never come to a prosperous young colony whose gold mining industry is developing as ours here. There cannot be isolation in countries like British Columbia. In Klondyke even in the frozen, arid region of the North Pole, there cannot be isolation where gold is. That place has been invaded by the world's bravest and most adventurous spirits. Victoria could not be isolated. When the father of the leader of the Opposition and a great many of our fathers came out to the gold rush of the early days, what brought them there? Did they study what the

country was? Did they ask questions about the price of meat and the price of bread? No; they said, "It is a gold country; let us go to the gold country"; and they went and lived happy and prosperous. The history of New South Wales and of my own colony of Queensland is the same. They all had their passport to prosperity: that prosperity was born and nurtured in the adventures and the success attending those who came to look for the gold which was so plentiful in those colonies, and which is even more plentiful in Western Australia. What do we care if every man in the Eastern colonies said he would isolate Western Australia entirely? What harm would it do? I have no patience with the man who talks of isolation. I come from the East, and all my people are there still. Will they think any more or any less of me because I do not go into federation? It is absurd. We shall live under the same laws; we shall be Britishers still; and we cannot be isolated whilst we can honourably by our own industry continue to develop the resources of our own country. Population will inevitably come to us; and no one will come from the East unless he expects to better his position in the West. That is a certainty; and if, under federation, a man finds the prospects of Western Australia waning by reason, for instance, of a decreasing revenue, he will stop in the East instead of in the West. Probably, also, if he finds Western Australia is holding aloof for a time, and that she is not willing to nip her early prosperity in the bud, wants a few more years of responsible government, such as Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia have had, to give her infant industries a chance, probably people will then say, as I have heard many of them say, "Give us a young country with some life in it." And I maintain, in reference to this threat of isolation, that the man who uses it is either absolutely incompetent to judge of the situation or has no knowledge of history at all—has no knowledge of colonial growth; or else he is using the threat with the deliberate intention of fooling the people of Western Australia. Should Western Australia not federate, not one vessel the less will come to our ports; not one telegram the less will arrive here; not one man the

less will stop away because we do not federate; and the German mail steamers, which found their advent to Western Australia so profitable, will not trouble themselves one tittle because Western Australia has not gone into the Australian union. They will continue to come and to do the good business they are doing at the present time. I have the profoundest contempt for the individual who uses the term "isolation." Let it be widely known to the people of Western Australia: they cannot be injured at all. I say they cannot be injured. Firstly, to place it upon its highest basis, surely the Eastern colonies are not going to show the world a lesson by penalising a small State for not coming in? Surely they are not going to display such an anti-federal spirit by endeavouring to hurt us. Is that the sort of federation you want us to go into? Are these the people with whom you wish us to join our destinies—people who will prevent the mail steamers calling at our port, and who will do all in their power to hurt us? Why, if that be true, let us have nothing at all to do with them, if they will penalise me because I cannot just yet see things in the same light as they see them. But let us take the worst view. Supposing they should try to penalise us, I await with deep interest the argument of the federal leader—if he can get one—as to how the Eastern colonies can make us suffer in any way by reason of our isolation. How are we going to suffer by isolation or neglect? I know this is one of the federal cries at the present time. But let the people of Western Australia know that they can gain nothing from defence at the present time; nothing whatever. It is a mighty cry without the faintest tittle of meaning. And let them know that the man who holds the threat of isolation over their heads, like a mailed fist, is a bully who will not fight when the other man puts his hands up, or else he is a man who is not capable of leading a dog-fight, let alone a federal movement. I want to keep as closely as possible to these alleged advantages, because I hope for a very exhaustive examination of the Federal Bill, not perhaps with the view of altering it—that is not my object at the present time, and I have dropped that argument.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is it not the Enabling Bill that is before the House?

MR. MORAN: Oh, yes, my very dear and learned friend; and the Enabling Bill—you have not perhaps noticed it—has the Federal Bill behind it. I know the hon. member has never noticed the Commonwealth Bill; but I can assure him it is here, and, being a schedule of this Enabling Bill, of course we are empowered to discuss it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I know as much about it as you do.

MR. MORAN: Then the hon. member displays the wisdom of the owl by keeping silent about it. His address on federation to the people of Cue was a masterpiece which ought to be stamped on green hide and hung up in this Chamber as a monument, as a glorious example of "how not to say it." I take this position: I say the federalists' two cries are rotten cries: they will not bear investigation for a moment. There is nothing in either of their cries to be afraid of. And now I come to this position: I want to ask the people of Western Australia to look calmly with me into this. I want them to forget the referendum, to turn with all seriousness to the great question of the vote. I want them to forget there is a Forrest Government in Western Australia, as so many of them will not forget.

MR. LEAKE: They are not likely to forget that.

MR. MORAN: I think there is one thing they will be less willing to forget if it ever happens, and that is if the hon. member ever occupies the Treasury bench; they will never forget that, if it happen. There may be a chance of their forgetting the existence of the Forrest Government, because we very often forget those who are of most benefit to us. But we come to this position: I want the people of Western Australia to think with me in this wise: Are we necessary to complete Australian union? I say we are. We are necessary to the other colonies, and they are not necessary to us. That is the position, that is the high stand I take on this matter, and that stand I will defend. We are absolutely necessary to the Eastern colonies to complete Australian union, and they are not necessary to us just yet. We can do very well without them, but they cannot say they have complete federal union unless Western Australia comes in. Therefore, as soon as they are federated, and big, and rich,

and generous, and as soon as we are necessary to their union, surely they will make some small effort more than they have made to get us to come in. I ask the people of Western Australia to believe that by remaining out they will suffer nothing, and that the Federal Parliament will be the first to approach them with different terms, with a view to securing their inclusion in the Commonwealth. I believe this, and for this reason—one or two reasons will suffice. As I said, no Australian union can be complete if one-third of Australia is out of it. It is an anomaly to talk about federal defence whilst Western Australia is not being protected by that Australian defence force, whatever it may be. I am presuming now on the absence of the British fleet. I am talking now of the rising nation in the Southern seas which wants to look after its own destinies, although it is still desirous of being a portion of the British Empire, and loyal to the flag. I want to presume for the present that the entanglements of the British navy in some distant part of the world render it necessary for Australia to second the efforts of Britain to repel any invasion of any kind whatever. And what do we find? The Eastern colonies can never do this with safety until they have the whole of the Australian coast under their supervision. That is their lookout. They must do it. Well, we have in the North of this colony rich country bordering on those very peoples and races—coloured people, the Japanese and Chinese—from whom danger may be apprehended at a time not very far distant. And we are bordering in the North very closely on North Queensland and South Australia. Therefore whatever is a danger to us must be a danger to the whole federal union. And who suffers the greater danger? Why, of course, the Eastern people, who have very much more to lose than we have. Four millions of people will surely do a little to help 170,000, and to get them to bring their territory into the federal union. And why will they do it? Because they have so much more to lose. Let there be no danger anticipated with the federal union. It is said they will treat us with contempt. They will do no such thing. They are shrewd enough to know that Western Australia must

ultimately come in ; and I hope we shall be shrewd enough to know that we must be given a fair deal ; I think we are shrewd enough to recognise that a fair deal will be given. I do not ask for one single advantage over the Eastern colonies. All I ask for is a little time to get on with our enormous public works policy, a little time to link our distant parts together ; a little time to complete our great public works at present in course of construction : and before we can do that and go in on a sound financial basis, we must have independence for our customs duties, for our revenue ; we must at least give away nothing which we cannot afford to lose. In a few years—five or six, or I should hope ten years—Western Australia will have reached this position : she will have completed her great public works scheme ; because her railways now go North and South, and East throughout the land, and throughout good land too. But they are only tracks through the bush ; they are only bridle tracks ; they are not populated. But we are nearing the completion of our railway system at present. Now is the time to build up the land along those railways as a self-supporting and producing area ; and I maintain we cannot do that without a little judicious protection, a little free-trade, a little watching and a little care—here and there the witholding of another in some particular ; but we ought to have the control of our own destinies until we have the colony up to the stage of being able to produce all she requires for her own consumption. That is the stage at which I wish to see Western Australia. Up to that particular stage when she becomes an exporter, when she is able to send something to the Eastern colonies which she has not got now, up to that stage we want our independence ; and if we federate at the present time, this we know quite well : we have to give away a great part of the money that is gathered through the customs. At the very best, we have to give away what we want ourselves. Forget for one moment the effects of intercolonial free-trade in Western Australia and the loss of revenue, and still we have to give away some of our customs duties. What has been the principal war-cry of the leader of the

Opposition throughout the country, and also the principal war-cry of the late leader of the Opposition ? There is a sort of duality at the present time, and I do not know who really is the leader. What has been the ground of their attack on the Forrest Government for a number of years past ? What have they been crying from the housetops of Western Australia ? They have been crying out that Western Australia is hopelessly in debt, that the Forrest Government have plunged the colony into such expenditure that she is in debt head-and-heels ; and yet they calmly and deliberately, in the same voice, go to the people and say, " Yes, we are hopelessly in debt, but we will rob Peter to pay Paul "—Paul being in this case the Eastern colonies, and Peter being Western Australia. To put the finances of Western Australia in order will take this House all it can do in the next three or four years. I hope the Premier will not call me a pessimist, but I hold that it is going to take Western Australia all she knows to pay her way and put her finances in a good position, without giving anything away to anybody in another part of the world. Keeping out of federation and retaining her customs duties, not losing a penny of them, it will take Western Australia all she knows to keep a sound financial position. Have we not embarked on a public works policy, and have we spared money to give facilities to everyone deserving them in Western Australia ? It must be said of this House and Parliament that we have not spared the finances of the colony in bringing people together. I say to Western Australia, and particularly the people on the goldfields, the people in Perth, and the people engaged in the farming interests, that if Western Australia gets into financial trouble through going into the federal union, every man and woman in Western Australia will suffer, because the federal union will not give a penny-piece to pay your debts, for they cannot. Supposing the Federal Parliament guarantee the financial position of Western Australia, which we know the Federal Parliament will not do and cannot do for many years, for it will take them all their time to pay 20s. in the pound—supposing they say they will guarantee Western Australia financially, our landlord will be removed from London to near Sydney, and

I do not know that we should benefit, because the London men leave us our customs, but the Sydney man says, "No, I want you to eat my corn, I want to insist upon your using my mining machinery, and on your taking my boots, because we will make you pay the debt." What is the position? Under federation we will lose our customs duties, because, bear in mind, the five-years sliding scale is an abnormal provision. To go into the constitution with such a provision as that would disgrace the constitution for evermore. That sliding scale business carries no protection at all after the first one or two years. Why do I say the sliding scale is no protection? Why do I call it an abortion? It is self-destroying: it carries the very elements of its own destruction. The leader of the Opposition knows there has never been a case in British constitutional history where the tariff or customs duty has been fixed years ahead, like that. We know that when a tariff amendment is introduced in the British Parliament it takes effect on the night it is introduced. Why is that? So that the alteration shall fall upon everyone at the same time, and that trade may not be hurt by it. The sliding scale takes off one-fifth of the duty after the first year. Fancy the operation of it, and the ridicule of it!

MR. LEAKE: We are not bound to take it.

MR. MORAN: That is a very happy and most learned remark. I thank the hon. gentleman for saying we are not bound to take it, for that shows he must have read the Federal Bill. I only want to "draw" the hon. member, because we know that when he is drawn he is generally interesting. Supposing we have a penny duty on something: at the end of a year it will be four-fifths of a penny; at the end of the next year three-fifths; at the end of the following year two-fifths; and finally one-fifth. Did ever anyone see such a disgraceful clause issue from the brains of a federal delegation, including our own lawyers who accepted it? Did anyone ever before hear of such a thing being accepted by sensible people? I am not sparing the glorious and noble ten who fought against the best interests of Western Australia in this case. I am not sparing them at all. What will be the verdict of posterity? In the first

place a provision like that is a blot upon any constitution, and has no right whatever to be there. Among commercial men it will stamp those delegates in future as a pack of fools, or fools on one side and rogues on the other. There are the two positions: those who gave are either a pack of fools, or else they knew they were fooling those who accepted. That is unworthy of any great federal leader. Whether it be either the one or the other, it is disgraceful to be fooled in the matter, and a bigger disgrace still to juggle people out of their rights. I repeat that the provision of the five-years sliding scale is a clause which is a disgrace to the constitution; it is a disgrace to the men who gave and the men who received.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was accepted by your leader.

MR. MORAN: I have no leader on federation. Yes, I have a leader; my own intelligence and common-sense being my leader on the question of federation. I hope to lead the Premier on some phases of the federal question, and perhaps he will lead me on others. This is outside party leadership altogether. I should be very glad to follow the Premier if he would take up a strong stand against federation.

THE PREMIER: Would you like to follow the leader of the Opposition?

MR. MORAN: I would like to follow him because I know he would leave most of the good things to me. I want to speak more particularly through this House to my own constituents in Kalgoorlie and the goldfields. My hon. friend the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) will say "Why do you not speak from the platform up there?" Listen! I am going to make a candid confession: you may not believe it, but I am much better received here than there at the present time; and do not blame me if I wish to speak where I can be heard. I frankly and freely confess that I never met an audience I am afraid to face, if they are "game" to give me a hearing. I have met the biggest and rowdiest audiences that have been met by any member of the House, and I am, I say, afraid of no audience, if people will be reasonable, and interested agitators will not work them up to a frenzy and say, "Don't give that man a hearing: he is an anti-federalist."

I want the people on the goldfields to know this, and from my place I ask if they are game enough to give a Britisher fair-play on this question. If they are, let them say so, and I will be with them at once. If they are game to act as Britishers, as Australians, and to listen to me, I am willing to go and address them in every possible centre I can. Let me say that in my opinion the goldfields will suffer just as much under federation at present as any other section of the community in Western Australia.

MR. MONGER: More so.

MR. MORAN: I do not say that without proving it. I never say things I do not try to prove. The leader of the Opposition should watch the course of my argument on this question, for he is interested. On the goldfields we have a large population engaged in one industry, and one industry only. They produce one commodity, that commodity of course being gold, the only mineral. Gold is worth the same in every market in the world, not rising or falling as the tariff rises and falls: its standard value is the same. The mines on the Eastern goldfields in my electorate, and largely in all the others, are owned by external capitalists. They are not—and I want this to be particularly noted, because it is an argument that takes a lot of getting over—owned by capitalists who are merely external to Western Australia, but by capitalists who are external to the whole of Australia. They are owned by British capitalists. The capitalist gets £4 an ounce for his gold. I am taking an arbitrary amount for the sake of argument, and £4 an ounce is about the price: it is worth that as a standard value in Western Australia and in London. It is produced at so much cost, and is worth so much an ounce. On the other hand are the whole of the people. There is a capitalist, a mine owner, and all the profit he gets goes into his pocket in dividends in London. It goes away from Western Australia, and we hear no more about it. It may come back in future investments or it may not. Kalgoorlie turns out yearly hundreds of thousands of pounds in dividends. What is the position of the mine owner? On the one hand, £4 an ounce is paid for the gold, and he says it is costing him £3 10s. to get that ounce of gold in Western

Australia, and therefore he only gets 10s. profit. The profit is really bigger than that, but I take this sum for the sake of argument. Every political move, every movement in Western Australia, every operation in the government of this colony which forces down the cost of getting that gold by any means whatever, benefits not Western Australia but the mine owners. Every sixpence the mine owner gets by forcing down the price of labour products on the one hand and the cost of labour on the other, goes to London. I say to the miners in the drives and levels of the Great Boulder and every other mine in Western Australia, that every threepenny-bit saved by federation in the production of gold in Western Australia goes not into their pocket, but into the pockets of the big mine owners who live elsewhere.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That will be the effect of the great water scheme.

MR. MORAN: I want the leader of the Opposition to follow me in these assertions, because they are grave questions. Here we have a clean problem to work out, and there are no ramifications. Under federation the mine owner hopes to reduce the cost of the working man's food—by how much? By the paltry food duties that hold in Western Australia. What are they? Are they one shilling a week to the working miner, or are they two shillings? If they are two shillings, what will the mine owner do when he can see his way clear to manage it? He will reduce wages. Wages will come down, not one shilling or two shillings, but ten shillings, and that will be made possible by the very men who howl for keeping up the standard of wages in Western Australia. I repeat that the working man will lose ten shillings, because, when they start, the mine owners will not reduce by odd shillings. The miner will lose ten shillings, and gain two shillings in regard to the cost of food, whilst labour will be taken from farming at Beverley, because the farmer will not be able to compete against the other colonies; labour will also be taken from the factory in Perth, because boots will be made cheaper in the Eastern colonies; also from the timber industry, and the agricultural industry. The boot-maker or the carpenter will be no longer required. Men will not be required to

build factories: these people will go to the goldfields at Kalgoorlie. So not only will the miner lose a portion of his wages, but he will find all around him a hungry army, turned loose by the patriotism of those who are afraid to stand out of federation till the West Australian industries are fixed upon a good basis. He will have that to compete with as well. That is the position of the gold-miner, who is doing well at the present time. He is in a country where wages are high, and where food is, perhaps, a little bit high in price, but it is nothing to be compared with what the position will be if we have federation. The English capitalist is the man who is watching federation, and he wishes to bring the wages down to the level of the wages in the Eastern colonies, because it will mean 5s. or 10s. more profit to him in London. That is what federation must do and will do. Why? It resolves itself into one question. In a young colony like this, with such a large area in its raw state, there are heavy burdens to bear, and we must adopt, in my opinion, as it has always been adopted all the world over, a wise and judicious form of holding our revenue as a balance against the flood of outside and older countries, and the new industries inside. I do not believe in running protection-mad, like Victoria did, nor do I hold allegiance to the school of politicians who say that Victoria suffered altogether through protection. I say that to-day, under protection, Victoria has a large and well trained army of artificers and mechanics, and that colony is going to run riot over the whole of Australia, because protection has given her factories, although they are a bit idle at present, yet in Victoria there are trained artificers and workmen ready and waiting to pour their goods all over Australia. What has Victoria to thank for that? Its wise protective policy in its young days, when that colony taught the young people to learn trades. In Western Australia we shall not be allowed to do that under federation. We are asked, after nine years of responsible government, to place ourselves in an inevitable position, so that we cannot give a single bit of help to the agricultural industry, or any other industry in this country. Let me speak to the people of Perth, where the inhabitants

are gathered together in large numbers and are earning their bread by working in small factories. What is Perth living on? What is the capital city going to live on? What are our sons and daughters going to get? What are they doing now? Taking in one another's washing? What are they doing? They are enjoying a little of the prosperity of Western Australia; they are enjoying a little that is cut off the capitalist's dividend. They are making boots, I hope, for the miner the clothes, I hope, for the miner, and sundry other little things in the factories and doing other works which I hope to see, under wise protection for a few years grow into large industries. I want Victoria to give to Western Australia the same chance that it had. I want Victoria to know that it has grown into full age, and has trained its sons and daughters in the methods of carrying on factories. Victoria is fully grown now, and Western Australia after all is but a babe. Let the people of the goldfields ask themselves what will be the value of federation if wages go down, what will be the value of federation to Perth if it shuts up her factories? Some people are always "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds." They are always willing to knock at the door of the Government, to go with deputations asking aid for some small industry, and with the same mouths the day after we find them on federal platforms asking for the power to come in and prevent the Government from doing what they asked only the day before. Do these men think they can fool themselves? Can they fool their own workmen? Is the workman to be fooled in this way? Is he going to quarrel with his own bread-and-butter for the shadow of something which means no federation for Western Australia at the present time, because there can be no federation unless we are bound together by railway communication. If we wait for a few years we may be in a position to say that we have a farming population in Western Australia producing a little more than we can use, that we have factories in Perth which can compete with Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Why? Because the food which the people require will be grown right here, and we are not dependent on the Eastern colonies. That is the position

I want the colony to be in before we federate; and when anyone tells me I am behind the times, that I am unworthy to be an Australian, I tell him that he does not know what he is talking about. I am after all a Britisher; after all I belong to the greatest federation, with the union-jack floating over us always. We are surrounded by an invincible British navy, which the world cannot break up at the present time; but we can get no help from our weaker sisters yet. What can happen to us? We may be put into the ring with a terrier, and we may be the kitten, and I can assure you the kitten will get the worst of it. In conclusion, let the people of Western Australia be not carried away by any ill-feelings: let them be able to forget that there is a Forrest or an Illingworth in the colony. We can do without either of them; we can find men to replace either of them, but we can never find anything to replace our sweet independence and liberty. If we struggle on a few years longer so as to build up the industries in Western Australia, we shall be able to hold out the hand of brotherhood to the rest of Australia, and say we are Australians. Remember that federation is not a day old. It started 20 years ago, and it has taken those 20 years to get five colonies to come in: cannot we wait a little longer for the sixth? What is another ten years in the life of this great continent? It is a great deal to this young and prosperous colony, which has everything that nature can give it to make it great. The colony only wants independence for a little while; it wants wise government, and a little assistance to encourage our industries so as to make us fit, willing, and ready to stand side by side with the sister colonies. (General applause.)

Mr. HOLMES (East Fremantle): I have no desire to prolong the debate on this subject, but I should like to express my opinions on federation, and also on the way in which the question has been handled by, shall I say, my delegate, the Premier. Since I came into Parliament the Premier has had the matter of federation in hand, and has been acting on behalf of the people of this colony, and, in my opinion, he has handled the question very badly. I can say we are all of us federalists, not at any price, but on

fair terms and conditions. I consider that it was the duty of our delegates to obtain those terms and conditions. I have no hesitation in saying that federation under the proposed Commonwealth Bill does not sufficiently protect the interests of Western Australia. I am not voicing opinions of my own, but they are the opinions of the leading statesmen and statisticians in Australia, and I am backed up by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Therefore if I err in my statements I err in very good company. When I come to consider what might have been done for Western Australia, and what has been done, I must either blame or pity those who have been acting for Western Australia for the hopeless mess they have dragged us into. I blame the delegates, and I say the delegate whom all of us looked to for everything in this matter was the Premier himself. I blame him for having undertaken to protect the interests of Western Australia. Of course it may be argued he was not asked or instructed to act on our behalf; but that makes the position all the worse. He assumed to act for us in this all-important matter. I pity the colony also for being compelled to federate under the proposed Commonwealth Bill, which, it is admitted by the leading statesmen of Australia and the Secretary of State for the colonies, does not protect the interests of this colony as it should do. The conference of Premiers was the place where the Bill was finally decided, and we find the Premier there agreeing to a measure that was, in his opinion, an ideal Bill, which safeguarded the interests of this colony. We find him agreeing to submit the Bill to the people of this colony for their ratification; but, at a later stage, we find him making a speech in St. George's Hall, Perth, and, still of the same opinion, recommending the Bill to the people and revelling in the honour and glory that would attend its accomplishment. At a later stage still, we find the Premier making all manner of erratic statements to the effect that the Bill did not sufficiently protect the interests of the colony; and these statements were made without any apparent explanation as to why he had agreed to the Bill in the past, and had now decided to alter his opinion. When he was introducing the Enabling Bill a few evenings

ago, he made a statement to the effect that we would be able to live under federation, and probably would flourish, but during the first few years there would be a great many disappointments. The Premier had no hesitation in saying that we ought to have had better terms; and that is an admission by the man who was acting on our behalf. I do not know if the people of the colony will be satisfied with the action of their delegates who attended the Convention, considering the latter might have obtained any reasonable conditions. At the Convention the suggestion was made, I believe, to treat this colony liberally; but then the Premier, as our representative, said we were not paupers, and were prepared to stand side by side with the other colonies under the Bill that was proposed. Continuing on the Enabling Bill, the other evening the Premier expressed the opinion that federation would make no marked difference in Western Australia, and that we would be able to work out our destiny as heretofore. If that be the case, where was the necessity of demanding the amendments we have heard so much about? Where was the necessity of the appeal to the Secretary of State to recommend these amendments? Why send Mr. Parker to London to obtain amendments in a Bill which would make no marked difference to the prosperity of Western Australia? On these points, I contend some explanation is necessary. Owing to the manner in which this important subject has been treated, and dragged from pillar to post, the people of this colony have become the laughing-stock of the Eastern colonies, and of the civilised world. The Premier, speaking the other night, went on to say, at the eleventh hour, that it was a pity the federal delegates did not know as much at the Convention as they did now, and that, had they known, there was not the slightest doubt they could have got everything they asked for. I contend that it was the duty of the delegates at the Convention, when entering into a contract and a deed of partnership for the people of Australia, and when they were drafting a Bill that was to be submitted to these people, to have known what to ask for, and they should have insisted upon having what they considered Western Australia was entitled to. Once having asked for

what they considered Western Australia was entitled to, they should never have committed this colony to federation on any other conditions. The Premier further said that we had nearly succeeded at the last moment; that it was found the right hon. the Secretary of State "was on our side and regarded our requests as reasonable." Of course, our requests are reasonable. We all admit that the transcontinental railway and fiscal freedom for five years were very reasonable requests. But the requests were not made at the right time. The time to make such requests was at the Conference of Premiers, before 95 per cent. of the people of Australia had committed themselves to the Bill to which the Premier has agreed. I repeat that that was the time the concessions ought to have been asked for, and the time when the concessions would have been granted. Further, the Premier stated that we should have had ten-years fiscal freedom and the transcontinental railway as well. Of course we should, and my complaint is we did not get these terms as one of the conditions of the Commonwealth Bill, because they could have been obtained at the right time and at the right place, and it is absurd to come here and apologise for what was not got at the Conference. I think it is admitted that when this sliding scale was granted, it was expected to act as a magic wand; and having obtained that sliding scale, it was considered we wanted nothing else. But, if I am allowed to express an opinion, I would say the sliding scale when applied to Western Australia, or indeed any part of the continent, would be found to be entirely unworkable. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) has dwelt somewhat on these points, and therefore there is no necessity for me to labour this part of the question. Further, in introducing the Enabling Bill, the Premier said that if we took a vote on the present electoral rolls, it would be a good sound expression of public opinion; but, immediately afterwards, we find the Premier sliding—I do not know whether he brought the "sliding scale" into requisition or not, but he did slide round and express the opinion that every adult male and female in the colony who had been resident here twelve months should be

entitled to a vote on the federation question. In that I agree with him.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I do not think the Premier has ever said anything to the contrary.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier expressed the opinion, when introducing the Enabling Bill, that if we took a referendum on the present electoral rolls it would be a good sound expression of public opinion, and I have no hesitation in saying it was the intention of the Government to take a referendum on the present rolls. But, when the Government found that members on this side of the House and the people of the country would not stand that proposal, the Government "climbed down," as they usually do.

MR. DAVID FORREST: That is your opinion.

MR. HOLMES: I express my opinion, and hope the hon. member will also express his opinion, because he has not done so up to the present.

MR. DAVID FORREST: He will do so later.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier concluded by saying that he would not describe the Bill as a bad Bill, or say the electors were not competent to deal with it, because he believed that in the mass of the people there was wisdom. That is what hon. members on the Opposition side of the House have been saying all along. As an anti-federalist, I have always been opposed to the Commonwealth Bill, and I believe that had the people had an opportunity of voting on it at the right time, when it was a question of federation and not a question of the downfall of the Forrest Administration, as it is to-day—if the people had had an opportunity of voting at that time, they would have rejected the measure, and the anti-federal object would have been gained. I will tell the House why that is my opinion. If the Bill had been referred to the people when the Premier performed his first somersault and discovered the measure did not sufficiently protect the interests of Western Australia—if the vote had been taken when the Premier was a power in the land, which he is not to-day—and if then he had expressed his opinion that he had been outflanked at the Federal Convention, and that the delegates had got the best of him, and that he had not discovered the

fact until he returned home and was told by the editor of the *West Australian*--if the Premier had made a statement to that effect, I honestly believe the people of Western Australia would have rejected the Bill, and the representatives of this colony would have been able to negotiate terms on a proper basis. It is the duty of the Premier, who has this matter in hand, to explain to an anxious public, who wish to be enlightened, why he has altered and tacked about in this manner, and exactly where he is to-day. The people do not understand his position or their own, and the least we might expect of him is that he should explain his explanation. We have had from the Premier himself that at the Premiers' Conference, Mr. Reid said, in effect:

Gentlemen, I am instructed to federate on the following terms and conditions. Unless these concessions are granted to New South Wales, then I have no time to spend here, and cannot negotiate further.

Needless to say, South Australia and Victoria, anxious to federate at any price, agreed to those terms and conditions, and Mr. Reid, having got all he wanted, agreed to federate. If our delegate had followed Mr. Reid's example, and said he wanted the transcontinental railway, and that five-years fiscal freedom was necessary for protecting the interests of Western Australia, there is not the slightest doubt Victoria and New South Wales would have consented. There is no doubt that was the right time to make the bargain, and the later attempts to amend the Bill, after 95 per cent. of the people of Australia had agreed to it, have proved fruitless, as we always believed they would. As I said, when we contemplate what could have been done and what has been done, some of us might well say, "Save Western Australia from some of her political friends." We have from the Premier an admission that he was pushed one way by the Premier of New South Wales, and we know he has been pushed another way by the editor of the *West Australian*. We have him riding on the box-seat, with his amendments nearly achieved. He has led the people to believe he had a trump card in his right hand; and suddenly we find him toppled over in one blow, and that blow struck by no less an authority than the Secretary of State for

the Colonies. I say the opportunity was offered at the Premiers' Conference to make those amendments. The opportunity was offered, but the man was wanting. The Premier has often said: "If you want a monument of the present administration, look around you." In the course of a few years the possibilities are that the Premier will have an opportunity of saying: "If you want a monument of what I did at the Federal Conventions, look around you"; and I hope he will be pleased with the result, and that the people of Western Australia will also be pleased with what has been accomplished. For my own part, I express the opinion that the result will neither be satisfactory to the Premier nor to the people of this colony. There is no reason whatever why we should not have got everything reasonable and everything that was asked for. Our delegate was backed up by the people of the country; he had in Western Australia an asset equal to any of the Australian colonies—rich in its agriculture, rich in its pasture, rich in its mineral wealth, rich in everything except, perhaps, in its political genius. We got practically nothing. We got what was offered to us, and no demand was made, or if the demand was made, no determination was shown to insist on our demand being complied with; consequently we got a Bill that is entirely unsuitable to Western Australia. If, when the Premier performed his first somersault, he had taken the people of this colony into his confidence, if he had relied upon them then as he seems to rely upon them to-day, there is not the slightest doubt the good sense of the people would have prevailed, and we should have then been able to approach the Secretary of State for the Colonies with a mandate from the people. The Secretary of State has admitted that we were entitled to special terms and special conditions.

THE PREMIER: Well, your leader would not assist us in getting them.

MR. HOLMES: I always understood federation was not a party question.

THE PREMIER: It is not easy to distinguish a man from his followers.

MR. HOLMES: I am making an anti-federal speech, and my leader is a federalist.

THE PREMIER: Then pitch into him a little bit for his actions.

MR. HOLMES: The Secretary of State for the Colonies has admitted that Western Australia was entitled to certain concessions, which she could have obtained at the right time and place.

THE PREMIER: We ought to have had them.

MR. HOLMES: And you should have obtained them at the Premiers' Conference and the other conferences, when the opportunity offered.

THE PREMIER: Pitch into your leader; he did nothing.

MR. MITCHELL: They (Opposition) have no leader now.

MR. HOLMES: It was pointed out from this side of the House by the federal leaders.—

THE PREMIER: Who are they?

MR. HOLMES: The right hon. gentleman knows them as well as I do. It was pointed out by the federal leaders—and they have been right for once, I think, and the Premier will admit—that it would be impossible to amend that Bill after it had once been submitted to the people of the Eastern colonies, without further referenda being taken in the Eastern colonies.

THE PREMIER: But it is being amended now, for all that, in the old country.

MR. HOLMES: I am not going to be led off the track.

THE PREMIER: But you know that fact.

MR. HOLMES: It is being amended, and there is not the slightest doubt it would have been amended to suit Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: Yes; if we all had joined together, we could have had it amended.

MR. HOLMES: I am with the Premier there. If we had all joined together we might have done it; but the whole of the people in Western Australia were concerned in this, and the whole of our people should have joined together and made that demand. As it is, there have been too much Premier and not enough people.

THE PREMIER: What about your own leader?

MR. HOLMES: The Secretary of State for the Colonies has said we were entitled to certain concessions; but his position was that we had our Premier

seeking to amend a Bill to which the same Premier had originally agreed; and the Secretary of State had also the people of Western Australia, or a large proportion of them, crying out, not for federation, but for the same right that their friends in the East had had, to say "yes" or "no" to the Bill. That was the position of the Secretary of State. He had the people of Western Australia overridden, and the Premier on the box-seat. The Premier had no mandate from the people. If our people had refused to federate, as they would have refused at the right time and place, if the Premier had taken them into his confidence and described the faults in the Bill, then the Secretary of State would have been able to say to the delegates from the Eastern colonies: "I am anxious that Australia should federate as a whole." The Premiers themselves admitted that we were entitled to special concessions; and the Bill could have been amended in the interests of the people of Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: Well, blame the Federal League.

MR. HOLMES: The Secretary of State could have amended the Bill; and I feel confident, if he had done so, the people of the Eastern colonies would have agreed to Western Australia's coming in on those terms and conditions. And it is owing to our Premier's action that there has been friction throughout the colony. The people have been crying out for the same right as their friends in the Eastern colonies have had, and the Premier has been denying their right.

THE PREMIER: When did I deny it?

MR. HOLMES: You refused indirectly to send the Bill to the people.

THE PREMIER: I do not like to call anyone to order, but when the hon. member makes such a misstatement, I really must protest. Did I refuse to send the Bill to the people when we passed it in this place?

MR. HOLMES: It was thrown out in the other Chamber.

THE PREMIER: Well, do not blame me for that.

MR. HOLMES: What has been the result? Members in the other House voted to please the right hon. gentleman, and some of their constituents have dealt with them in the right way since.

THE PREMIER: That is not fair.

MR. HOLMES: It is true.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is wrong.

MR. HOLMES: We have had the Premier demanding that the Bill as originally agreed to be amended, the people of Western Australia crying out for the right to say whether they would adopt or reject the Bill; and, with all these facts before him, the Secretary of State for the Colonies says in his cable of the 27th April: "Under these circumstances, I cannot press the matter further; and I would urge upon your responsible advisers to consider earnestly whether, in the best interests of the colony, as well as of Australia, they should not make a resolute effort to bring the colony into federation at once." That was the instruction from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Premier, that the best thing to be done was to give the people of Western Australia the right they were entitled to of saying "yes" or "no" to the Bill. Had it not been for that circumstance, I have no doubt the people of the colony would have been refused what we always contended they were entitled to. The Secretary of State went on further to say, "It appears to me, under the circumstances, of the utmost importance to the future of Western Australia to join at once." The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), who is more intimately acquainted with the Secretary of State than I am, or rather I should imagine he was from the manner in which he referred to him in moving the Address-in-reply, when I think he referred to the right hon. gentleman as "Joe Chamberlain," or "my pal Joe," or something to the same effect—

MR. MORAN: Where did you see that?

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member said the Secretary of State says that federation for Western Australia means ruin.

MR. MORAN: "Worstoration."

MR. HOLMES: No; I think these are your words: "The Secretary of State for the Colonies had said federation meant ruin."

MR. MORAN: What has all that to do with the present position?

MR. HOLMES: And yet the Secretary of State says it appears to him of the utmost importance to the future of Western Australia that she should join at once. The only inference I can draw

is that the Secretary of State has come to the conclusion that the affairs of Western Australia have been so badly managed in the past, and the federal question handled so badly, that the best thing those heads of the Government who have had the matter in hand can do is to join the federal movement at once.

MR. MORAN: How will that meet the difficulty?

MR. HOLMES: There, at all events, these political leaders will be taken care of, as they do not seem to be able to take care of themselves to-day.

MR. MORAN: That is a very keen argument—as clear as mud.

MR. HOLMES: There are great numbers of people in the colony who are anti-federalists, and who would have voted against the Bill at the right time and place.

MR. MORAN: Why not now?

MR. HOLMES: But the mover of the Address-in-reply—he and I are of the same opinion on some questions at all events—says it will not be a question of federation or no federation, but a question of federation or the Forrest Government.

MR. MORAN: It looks like it, in many places.

MR. HOLMES: I agree with the hon. member in that. And why is this so? Because the leader of the Government has been endeavouring to prevent the people from having the same say on this important subject as the people in the Eastern colonies have had.

MR. MORAN: But he is the introducer of this Bill.

MR. HOLMES: At the point of the bayonet he introduced the Bill, when the Secretary of State told him he had better do so.

MR. MORAN: Where is the bayonet?

MR. HOLMES: I suppose the Secretary of State had all the bayonets in use in Africa, otherwise he might have sent some out here. But the Enabling Bill was introduced here when the Secretary of State told our responsible Ministers the best thing they could do was to join the federal union at once.

MR. MORAN: The best thing and the worst thing.

MR. HUBBLE: The Bill was introduced last session, and passed.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier has not only alienated the sympathy of the people

on the goldfields by his past action, but the sympathy of the people of the coast and agricultural districts, by his present action. He has alienated the sympathy of his supporters in this House, and we have had an exhibition of that to-day, when the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham), one of his most consistent and persistent supporters, was found moving a vote of no confidence in the Government.

MR. MORAN: Over federation?

MR. HOLMES: Not over federation, but, like others, because he is so disgusted with the action of the Government in power.

MR. WOOD: So disgusted, that he withdrew his motion.

MR. HOLMES: That was owing to pressure. He showed his independence by moving his motion; but pressure was brought to bear on him, as it is brought to bear in respect of all important subjects in this House; and he was squeezed out, in the same manner as some of the gentlemen on this (Opposition) side, who would have acted on the present select committee, were squeezed out at the last moment.

MR. MORAN: There will be a lot of them squeezed out of public life, directly.

MR. HOLMES: You give him credit for the Enabling Bill, and I give him credit for wanting the decision to be on the present rolls.

MR. MORAN: Is there any credit for that?

MR. HOLMES: I am giving him credit: you can take it in any way you like.

MR. MORAN: You are giving him debit.

MR. HOLMES: You can call it debit. Pressure is brought to bear, and he is surrounded by so many difficulties that he is prepared to do anything that will get him out of them. Probably the sliding scale, which has been of so much use in the past, will be of much use in the future. As I said at the beginning, it will be useful to the Premier, but of no use to the country. My opinion is that every adult who has been resident in the colony for a period of twelve months should not only be entitled to vote on federation, but should also be entitled to vote at the next general election. It seems to be suggested that the adult

population of Western Australia will be allowed to vote on the all-important question of federation, and be denied a vote at the next general election, because the Premier said that, if the roll was framed to allow everyone who had been resident for twelve months in the colony a right to vote, that roll would be of no further use after the referendum was taken, and would have to be consigned to the waste-paper basket.

MR. MORAN: How can it be of any use?

MR. HOLMES: The people are to be given the right to vote on the question of federation, which is the most important question which has ever come before the electors of this or any of the other colonies; and that right having once been granted them, there should be no further question as to their having a right to vote at the next election.

MR. MORAN: We are all willing, but how can we do it?

MR. HOLMES: You can transfer the names.

MR. MORAN: Oh, can you? We have a Constitution Act.

MR. HOLMES: I happen to know there is a Constitution Act, and perhaps a Constitution Act can be so worked as to balk in a way not expected. I repeat that, if the adult population resident in the colony for twelve months are to be allowed to vote on the question of federation, that fact ought to be sufficient for them to be put on the roll.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The measure would have to be sent home for the royal assent.

MR. HOLMES: I am expressing my opinion.

MR. MORAN: How can we do what you suggest?

MR. HOLMES: Whether those who are allowed to vote on the question of federation have the right to vote at the next general election or not, I hope that those who have the right to vote at the general election will vote wisely and well.

MR. MORAN: Poll early and poll often.

MR. HOLMES: No; not poll early and poll often. I do not think it is wise for anyone in the House to advocate any such thing.

MR. MORAN: I mean early in life.

MR. HOLMES: I regret to hear the member for East Coolgardie say "early

and often." I hope the colony will be able to get over the errors and omissions which have been committed by some of the leading public men on the question of federation. No doubt there have been errors, and I hope the people of the colony will remember the actions of those who committed them, and pay out those men accordingly. We will be bound to federate under present conditions.

MR. MORAN: I hope not. Why so?

MR. HOLMES: It seems to me that there is no help for it.

MR. MORAN: Why?

MR. HOLMES: The member for East Coolgardie himself admitted, when moving the Address-in-reply, that the referendum would be as to whether there should be federation or no federation.

MR. MORAN: I hope it will not be federation.

MR. HOLMES: It will be federation under the Forrest Government.

MR. MORAN: We might not join federation yet.

MR. HOLMES: To my mind, there is no doubt we have been ordered by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, we have been instructed to join at once in the interests of Western Australia; and the people are so annoyed at the treatment meted out to them in the past that they will not consider the question of federation at all, but will think of the position they have been placed in, and the manner in which they have been treated by those who have the matter in hand. I hope that if we are forced into federation, as we shall be, we shall have a soul to call our own, and that on the terms dictated to us instead of the terms that we ourselves should have dictated, our Eastern friends will treat us fairly and liberally.

MR. MORAN: So they will under the Constitution.

MR. HOLMES: I hope that, notwithstanding the errors and omissions of the past, the proposed Commonwealth Bill will be for the good of the country.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I do not intend to take up very many minutes in discussing this question of federation, which has been so thoroughly threshed out that very little is left to say on the subject. After the very eloquent speech by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), which I listened to with a considerable amount of pleasure, I do

not think we need thresh the question out in all its phases. I would like to say that, although the eloquence of the hon. member for East Coolgardie may have convinced him absolutely that federation is bad for this country, it has still failed to convince me, and I am as ardent a federalist as I ever was in the past. It appeared to me during the hour I listened to him with pleasure that the two main arguments he adduced were that federation would not be desirable because the defence of Australia could not be adequately carried out without a transcontinental railway, and because the fiscal policy of reducing the tariff was calculated to cheapen the cost of living in this country, and therefore to increase the dividends which would go to London, and that would be detrimental. I think these were the two main points the hon. member enforced in that long and eloquent speech. In regard to defence, I would not for one moment say that a transcontinental railway is not necessary. We have never for one moment contended that it is not, but have always said that the transcontinental railway was a work which ought to have been stipulated for by our delegates, and ought to have been obtainable by Western Australia. We have further argued that the railway would be granted to us as soon as federation was an accomplished fact. To my mind the delegates neglected their duty in not stipulating for that railway; yet I say that South Australia having acquiesced as far as she is able to do at this juncture, and the good feeling of the other federating colonies having been gained, there is little doubt that a federal railway will be an accomplished fact very shortly, because without it we cannot get a proper defence, as the hon. member for East Coolgardie has pointed out. But, because we cannot get the same defence without a transcontinental railway as we can obtain with it, are we going to allow that to be an argument against entering federation? Shall we be any weaker in defence if we federate, although we do not get a transcontinental railway? If the argument is to hold, then what about the Northern Territory, what about the North-West part of this colony, which are further from the seat of Government than the other colonies are from

Perth? And what about the Northern Territory of South Australia? If the argument were followed out to its logical conclusion, those portions should be cut off and should stand alone, because under federation they cannot have an adequate defence without railway communication. My argument is that because at the present time we are defenceless, according to the member for East Coolgardie—

MR. MORAN: No; I say we are fully defended.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So we shall be under federation.

MR. MORAN: I quite agree with you.

MR. WILSON: The member for East Coolgardie, as I understood him, thinks we could not get a proper defence without a transcontinental railway, and that because that railway was not granted to Western Australia we should not enter federation.

MR. MORAN: That is your argument, not mine.

MR. WILSON: I say that with the transcontinental railway we shall have a much stronger defence than without it.

MR. MORAN: How?

MR. WILSON: On the question of fiscal policy, the hon. member for East Coolgardie argued that keeping the cost of living up and wages high would be a good thing, because less dividends would be sent to London and elsewhere. I cannot follow him for one moment. Surely it would appear to every reasonable person that increased profits mean of necessity increased investments, and, if you have a cheaper production, it surely means that properties which cannot be worked now, because the cost would be too great, will then be able to be worked, and that means that more men will be employed, which means an extended market for our producers.

MR. DOHERTY: A reduction of wages at once: now we have you.

MR. WILSON: If reduced wages and reduced cost of living are going to mean increased prosperity for this country, then I have no hesitation in advocating such reduction. If you follow to its logical conclusion the argument which has been used, then the higher the wages and the higher the cost of living in Western Australia, the better for the country. I say that such an argument is a fallacy. The

cheaper people can get their living, the better for the country!

MR. MORAN: India then must be a grand country, for you can live on 1d. a day; and China must be a grand country!

MR. WILSON: I say that even though such reduction means more dividends going into the pockets of mine owners in London, it will certainly have an accrued benefit to this country in investments and the working of mines.

MR. MORAN: More population I gave you at starting.

MR. WILSON: That is the position. I do not think any one will misunderstand me, and I am not taking advantage of this evening's debate so as to put forward any opinion which will bring me a vote at the next general election.

MR. DOHERTY: You should not give your case away so quickly.

MR. WILSON: I do not intend to try to convince my hon. friend, the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty). It would be a hopeless task, of course.

MR. DOHERTY: You have to convince the country.

MR. WILSON: Exactly, and I expect the country will convince the hon. member. We may all congratulate ourselves on the very happy position the great federal question is in to-night. I do not wish to cast any aspersions on anyone, but I say a different phase is put forward and shown by the Premier and others of his supporters, which to say the least of it is interesting, if not to some extent amusing. Every action the Federal League has taken has been perfectly justified by the position we have reached to-night on this question. I take it that the federalists in this House have felt the sense of their responsibility equally with those who are fighting against it. I do not want to take any objection to the action of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran): that hon. member has the right to fight against federation fairly, as he has been doing. We have felt the responsibility equally, and we have come to the conclusion that federation is good for Western Australia. We have fought for the right of the people, and to-night we may congratulate ourselves on the success we have attained. As to the charge that has been made that we would not assist in getting the five-years

fiscal freedom, which the Premier at last applied for, that cannot be substantiated for a moment. Did not the Federal League send a wire to the Conference of Premiers, saying that we would waive that point. Have we not pointed out all along in this great movement that the Premier was bound by the conditions of the Premiers' Conference last year. Five out of the six colonies having federated and having consummated federation, it is impossible for Western Australia to hold back and say that we must have fresh alterations and arrangements. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) admits that his argument means standing out of federation and negotiating, perhaps five or six years hence, to get better terms. We prefer to join federation now. We think there is a grand future before Western Australia; in fact, we are sure of it. We believe that being united with the Eastern colonies and entering into the federal compact under the Bill which has been accepted by the other colonies will be the best thing for this country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): At the early stage of this session I explained to the House that as this session was called for the specific purpose of considering the Commonwealth Bill, and sending that Bill to the people for consideration, it was my wish and the wish of hon. members sitting on this side of the House that the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), who has been in the forefront of the battle on this question, should carry this matter through to a successful issue, and should have the right to be considered the leader on this question. I did not speak on the question, nor do I wish at this stage to say much on it. We have listened to-night to one of the most eloquent speeches that the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) has ever favoured the House with, and it seems to me that the hon. member has been studying a book recently, which I judge he does not study too often, called the Book of Lamentations, to which he has given a complete study, and which has brought out the speech which he has given to us to-night. It amounts to this, possibly. If I believed one-half of the evils that are coming to the colony by entering into federation, which have been so well described by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran),

if I believed one of the principal things that these evils will do, according to the member for East Coolgardie, then I should be bound to use every form the House possesses, and every power I possess, to hinder the Bill going to the people, and for this reason—

MR. MORAN: You would?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I would.

MR. MORAN: I am glad of that admission.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If a member of this House fairly believed that the Commonwealth Bill is to produce the evil effects which the hon. member has described in this House to-night, it would be his bounden duty to his country, and to the people, to hinder the progress of the movement at the outset, and continue it to the furthestmost end.

MR. MORAN: Now, give us a few arguments.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: As we have had the hon. member's arguments, it is not necessary to repeat them. We have had an eloquent speech from the Book of Lamentations, and I give the hon. member credit for making one of the most eloquent speeches I have ever listened to in this House. I listened with pleasure to it, and in fact if I believed the arguments I should oppose the passage of this Bill. What is the position we occupy? We have come to-night to a stage in the history of the colony in which we are asked by the Government to give our assent to a Bill to remit to the people of this colony the question "yes" or "no"—will they join with their brothers and sisters in the other colonies in federating under a Bill which has been accepted by over three and a half millions of people, or the representatives of three and a half millions of people? We are asked to federate under a Bill which has been declared by one of the ablest statesmen in the world to be one of the best drawn and most comprehensive Bills that has ever been placed before the British House of Commons.

MR. HARPER: He has amended it, though.

MR. MORAN: That is the reason he has amended it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The very first time the Bill was placed on the table, I ventured the statement that the British House of Commons would never pass the

clause which took away the right of appeal, and I am glad to see they have exercised their powers on that question. I am glad to say we still hold that link with the old country, and I for one would be unwilling to see that link broken. I for no other purpose but that of asserting their rights over the Bill submitted to them, it was the duty of the British House of Commons to make some alteration. Just as we claim our rights when Parliament meets to pass a Bill, so the House of Commons invariably makes an alteration in a Bill of this character, to maintain its rights. The right of the Britisher to go to the Privy Council is one of those questions on which we expect the British Government to give their opinion, and I said that we in this colony need not consider this question, because it was certain the Imperial Parliament would watch over the nation in this respect.

MR. DOHERTY: Is that an argument for us?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Coming back to the point, the subject matter before the House is the discussion of the federal question. This is not the time for members to be called on to give their reasons, and to occupy a large amount of time in discussing the federal question.

MR. MORAN: When will that time come?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The time has passed. Speeches have been delivered in this House and elsewhere, and it is too late for the hon. member to come to this House at this stage, when the Bill is to be submitted to the people for their acceptance or rejection, with his advice now.

MR. MORAN: I was speaking to the people.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member has spoken to the people. He has told us that he preferred to speak to the people from the floor of the House, because he could get a better hearing by speaking on the floor of the House, and the hon. member is perfectly justified in so doing. And it is more instructive to the public generally for members to express their opinions in the House, because they speak in the House under greater advantages, and with greater care, and with a clearer conception of their responsibilities; for hon. members have

o meet with the necessary criticism, where speeches are reported, than is usual with speeches which are made from public platforms. When this Bill is submitted to the people, every hon. member no doubt will, as far as opportunities are granted to him, endeavour to put before the people a clear conception of what is in the Bill. I have been a federalist from the start. I announced in 1894, when I was first elected to the House, that I was a federalist, and I have never yet said, nor do I now say, that in the abstract it is desirable or useful, or for the highest good of the colony, to enter the federation. I said in the House, and on the public platform, that as far as this colony is concerned it would be to the advantage of the colony if federation could be put back for five years; but at the same time I have said, and I say again now, that if federation is going to take place, which it is, it would be disadvantageous to stand out.

MR. MORAN: Tell us some of the disadvantages.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say that is my opinion, and the hon. member has expressed his opinions from the Book of Lamentations—I express mine from another book, which has more life in it, and more expectations.

MR. MORAN: Yours is from the Book of Annanias.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member is not acquainted with that book," because there is no book of Annanias in it. There is a chapter about Annanias, which he might well study. The result, however, was not satisfactory to Annanias. I say that the consequences of standing out of federation would be greater than all the evils which could come to us by federating. I do not think the changes which will take place under federation will, for many years to come, be very remarkable, either for or against. I do not believe that all the evils which, it is said, will sink the colony two hundred fathoms deep will come to us by federation, though I have no expectation that we shall rush ahead by great bounds and enjoy great prosperity as a consequence of joining the Commonwealth.

MR. HIGHAM: There is not the slightest chance of that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There may be something in that interjection, but the hon. member (Mr. Higham), of course, belongs to the "lamentation" crowd. I never expected this colony would experience any very great changes on joining federation, but I believe, if we remain out of federation, we shall realise some very great disadvantages.

MR. MORAN: Mention one.

MR. DOHERTY: Mention a disadvantage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I will not mention any disadvantage, because if the imagination of hon. members is not sufficient for the purpose, I am not going to assist them. The rules of the House, Mr. Speaker, seem to be only reserved for the Ministerial side, because members of the Opposition get no assistance from members on the Government benches.

MR. DOHERTY: Surely that is a reflection on the Chair.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; it is not. I should be sorry to reflect on the Chair; but I have listened for an hour and a quarter to the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), who has been making reflections on the consequences to this colony of federation, and in that time I think I gave him very little interruption.

MR. MITCHELL: The member for East Coolgardie was saying something worth hearing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is a reflection from a member on the Government side of the House, that I am saying something not worth hearing. I for one shall be pleased to listen to the member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell), if he will give us something worth listening to. He does not often enlighten the House, and hon. members would be pleased to hear his opinions on this great question. What I was trying to say was that we have before us to-night simply the Enabling Bill, and this is not the time and place to discuss the question of federation. At this stage the only course open to hon. members is to go on the public platform and assist the people in coming to a right decision on the question.

MR. MORAN: This is the better place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is, I believe, good reason why the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) does not take the course I have suggested, because

he would have a considerable amount of difficulty in obtaining as quiet a hearing at Kalgoorlie as he has had on the floor of the House to-night. But I can speak on federation at Cue without any interference.

MR. DOHERTY: You did not do it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not speak on the planetary system and a few other subjects at Cue, but the audience stood there for two hours listening to me, and I did not think it wise to enter upon another speech of three hours at the end of that. What I am contending is that at the present moment we have the Federation Enabling Bill before us. I am entirely in harmony with the Bill, reading it in connection with the notice of motion which the Premier has on the paper. The sooner we can get the Bill into Committee and those amendments inserted and sent to the Legislative Council the better, so that the people may have what they have been looking for and crying out for so long.

MR. MORAN: Good old cry! Keep it up!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is a good old cry, and has been a most excellent cry. Is it too much to ask that the people who have to live under federation, who are entering into a contract which is to last for all time, and which fixes the destinies of themselves and their children—is it too much to ask that these people should be allowed to say “aye” or “nay?”

MR. MORAN: Who says they should not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say there has been a distinct attempt for years to prevent this question from being put to the people.

MR. MORAN: Talk to the “gallery” as hard as you can.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There has been an attempt for many years to keep this question from the people.

THE PREMIER: Not for many years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is desirable that not too many members should talk at once. I will say two years.

THE PREMIER: Say one year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The question ought to have been put to the people two years ago.

THE PREMIER: I think not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then I will say three years, or four years, when the

people ought to have had a voice on this question. Four years ago, when the question was put in these colonies, the people of Western Australia ought to have been asked to elect delegates to the Federal Convention.

MR. MORAN: You did not move in the matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I had no opportunity.

MR. HIGHAM: You had the opportunity, because you were in the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

MR. MORAN: The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) could have introduced a Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Could he? That suggestion shows the hon. member (Mr. Moran) does not know much about Parliamentary practice. We ought to have had a Bill introduced enabling the people to elect delegates to assist in the framing of the Commonwealth Bill. That, however, was not done, and the Premier has admitted, practically I think, that there was no serious belief at the time of the first Convention in Adelaide, that Western Australia intended to enter the federation. But the Premier went to the Convention. What was that Convention? Was it a picnic to which hon. members picked out from two Houses of Parliament were to go at the public expense? Were they sent to attend a Convention when there was no serious intention on the part of this colony to enter federation?

THE PREMIER: I did not say that was my opinion, but the general impression was there was no expectation this colony would join federation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Had the people elected the delegates, it would have been known whether we were going in for federation or not. The delegates would have known they were responsible to their constituents, and would have realised the desirableness of making necessary conditions. If the delegates had been elected by the people, conditions even more favourable than those named by the Premier would have been obtained in the Commonwealth Bill for the colony at the proper time.

MR. HIGHAM: What colony elected their own representatives four years ago?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When we know that three and a half millions of people have already settled this question, it would be painfully childish for us to ask them to review the whole question in the interests of 180,000 people. We had no opportunity of discussing the sliding scale, which I for one have from the first described as truly fallacious and unwise. It was hopeless to attempt to get any alteration, and now we are pinned down to take the Bill as it is, or stand out of federation.

THE PREMIER: Why did you not help us?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have given every assistance possible.

THE PREMIER: Not the federal leader.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; the federal leader also has given his best services to the Government, inasmuch as he has contended from the beginning to the present day that the time has passed for getting alterations in the Bill, and that the only course is to federate on the Bill as it is. There has never been any issue before the House and the country except this—the Bill, or no federation as an original State.

MR. MORAN: Nonsense! Rot!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member says "nonsense," and I suppose that is the classical language of the Treasury benches, to which, however, we are becoming somewhat used.

MR. MORAN: Give us a bit of federation, for goodness sake!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I say we have arrived at a stage in which this House is practically united.

A MEMBER: No, no.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: At any rate, we are united on this side of the House. We have a lot of members on the Opposition side who are opposed to federation under this Bill, but we have always said that the measure ought to be referred to the people for decision. Members on the Government side can account for themselves, seeing that they have their own leader and their constituents. What I say is that at present we have before the House a Bill on which, for all practical purposes, members are agreed. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) believes this to be a bad Bill which, if passed, will bring the country into all sorts of difficulties, reduce wages, and

under which all we shall have to do will be to endure. But strange to say the hon. member holds that the Bill must go to the people, and, from that, I suppose he is going to vote for the motion.

MR. MORAN: I have regard to the rights of the people, about which you are always howling.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The rights of the people?

MR. MORAN: Do you respect those rights?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do respect the rights of the people.

MR. MORAN: Then do not blame me for doing so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I must congratulate the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) on having done his best to assist hon. members in maintaining the rights of the people. In that respect he has on this question, as in others, always held a consistent position; and I congratulate him on that fact, and assume that he intends to maintain the rights of the people to-night, and vote for the Bill. That being the case, what is the use of our occupying hours in discussing the measure, and going over the speeches which have been delivered two or three times already, on a matter in which we are all agreed? Why not pass the second reading of the Bill, make the necessary alterations in Committee, and send the measure to the Legislative Council, and thence to the people, when if hon. members want to speak, they may speak for six days a week if they like?

MR. MORAN: You speak on Sundays, too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member, like other people who make these allusions, seems to imagine there is only one Illingworth who preaches on Sunday, and that I am that man. I may say I do preach occasionally, and am not ashamed of it. I wish I could preach more, and I wish I could preach better.

MR. DOHERTY: There is an Illingworth who sells whisky at Bunbury.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He is certainly not connected with me; but, at the same time, I hope he sells good whisky.

MR. MORAN: He does. He is a decent fellow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I hope he is. I hope he does not dishonour the name

he bears. I have occupied more time than I intended, because hon. members have forced me to do so by interruptions; but I rose particularly to say that I think we ought to pass this Bill into the Committee stage, that we should vote on it almost at once; and I shall be glad to vote on it without speaking. I think we should get into Committee as soon as we can, make these amendments, get it into the Council, and get it to the people; and then let hon. members make as many speeches as they like in their own constituencies.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): I think many hon. members have a ground for complaint in reference to this session of Parliament. We have been brought here by false pretences. I was under the impression we were brought here to discuss whether or not to send the Bill to the people, and not to discuss the merits or demerits of the Bill. I wish to say I have in no way changed my opinion as to the merits of federation from the point of view of Western Australia. I still think that to federate would be the greatest mistake that could possibly be made; but at the same time, I have never been opposed to sending the Bill to the people, though it is true I stood out for a three-fifths majority; and I will stick out for that still, if anyone will propose it when we go into Committee.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A three-fifths majority?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes; I should like to have that. But it is no use kicking against the pricks; and I say, let us finish this debate, and send the Bill to the people with the hope that they will exercise their wisdom in voting "no" to what must be the ruination of this colony; and that they will not only vote "no," owing to that consideration, but will vote "no" as a protest against what has been said in some of the other colonies. What did Mr. Lyne say the other day? He said: "I have no objection to the alteration of the Bill as regards the Privy Council, but I strongly object to any alteration being made in the Bill for the benefit of Western Australia." Is that a federal sentiment? No, sir. But that is what we shall find when once we put our necks in the noose by joining the federation. I do not want to prolong the agony. I hope hon. members will

bring this debate to an end, let the Bill get into Committee, and see what alterations we can make there.

On motion by MR. HARPER, debate adjourned till the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 19 minutes past 10 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 31st May, 1900.

Paper presented—Question: Post Office for South Perth—Question: Public Works Officers, disrating and dismissal (alleged)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Regulations (Railway Department) for controlling traffic on bridges over the Swan River at Fremantle.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—POST OFFICE FOR SOUTH PERTH.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If it is the intention of the Government to proceed with the erection of a post office at South Perth. 2, If so, when. 3, If there is any reason for the long delay that has taken place.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—I may premise my remarks by stating that the question is out of the hands of the Postal and Telegraph Department and in those of the Public Works Department, and this is the reply I have received. 1, Yes. 2, A larger building than the one originally proposed has been designed. The plans are now