

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th July, 1899.

Papers and Telegram presented—Public Service Bill, first reading—Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Bill, first reading—Motion: Commonwealth Bill, Financial Clauses, etc., to Refer to Joint Committee; Amendment, Referendum; debate concluded, Division; Committee appointed—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS AND TELEGRAM PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Agricultural Bank Report for year 1898; 2, Commonwealth Bill, Resolutions passed by Kalgoorlie Caledonian Society and Kalgoorlie Mutual Improvement Society; 3 (at a later stage), further Telegram as to Commonwealth Bill, from Premier of New South Wales.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Correspondence, etc., as to appointment of J. P. S. Main as Outdoor Loco. Superintendent.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

## APPROPRIATION MESSAGE.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Public Service Bill.

Bill introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

## PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

MOTION—COMMONWEALTH BILL.  
FINANCIAL CLAUSES, ETC.TO REFER TO JOINT COMMITTEE.  
AMENDMENT, REFERENDUM.

Debate resumed from the previous Thursday, on motion by the Premier "That the draft of the Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia, as finally adopted by the Australian Federal Convention at Melbourne, in the colony

of Victoria, on the 16th March, 1898, as amended at a Conference of the Prime Ministers of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia, which sat at Melbourne on the 28th, 30th, and 31st of January, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd February, 1899, be referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament for consideration; such committee to report not later than Tuesday, the 5th September next." Also on amendment by Mr. Walter James, in line six, after the word "referred," to insert the words "to the electors of Western Australia for acceptance or rejection at a date not later than February next, and that in the meantime the Bill as so amended be referred to."

MR. WOOD (West Perth): I am sorry the hon. member (Mr. Morgans) who moved the adjournment of the debate is not present to resume it; because it would be a pity were the amendment to go unchallenged. The amendment, so far as I can see, is really unnecessary. It was dealt with fully and ably by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) at the last sitting of the House; and that hon. member distinguished himself even beyond his own expectation, and showed an amount of ability and a grasp of the subject on which he is to be congratulated. I did not hear the hon. member's speech, but I have had the pleasure of reading it, and from all sides of the House I have heard nothing but praise for both the matter and the manner of delivery. Why does the member for East Perth (Mr. James) submit this amendment—why does he want to run counter to the best traditions of those who have the interests of Western Australia at heart? The hon. member does not look at this question from a Western Australian standpoint. In fact, I cannot understand from what standpoint he does look at it, especially in view of the resurrected "interview" he gave to a Press reporter on his return from the Convention in March, 1898, for on that occasion he is reported to have said the Bill had not been properly considered by the Convention, and he referred to South Australia in scathing terms, describing that colony as desiring to dump down its produce in Western Australia. Is that attitude consistent with

the recent speeches and action of the hon. member? The amendment does not "hold water" at all, and should not be seriously entertained for a moment; and it is, therefore, my intention to vote for the motion. I must apologise to hon. members for inflicting myself on them at this stage, but it seemed to me there was a necessity for someone to speak, because opportunity should be given for other members to follow, and there is no desire that the amendment should be put to the vote at once. For instance, hon. members want to hear the Premier on the subject, and I gather there are other members who desire to speak. When the Premier does address himself to the amendment, I hope the member for East Perth (Mr. James) will be in his seat.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): Before the Premier replies on the main question, I should like to hear his views in regard to the amendment. At present I do not see what that amendment means; but if anybody could show there is any earthly sense in it, I might vote for it.

MR. GREGORY: I know what it means.

MR. MORAN: I am glad to see that the seconder of the amendment (Mr. Gregory) has discovered the intention of the mover, who is, as usual, absent, and therefore cannot give us the information. The motion proposes to send this Bill to a select committee, with a view to that committee reporting to Parliament as to whether the measure ought to be altered in some particular, or not altered at all. I suppose the object of every select committee is to report to the House, and the House having set a special committee to special work, no doubt lends a special ear to the special recommendations of that special committee. What is proposed by the amendment, which is a very foolish amendment, anyhow? It proposes that the Bill shall first be sent to the people, and that afterwards a committee shall be appointed to inquire into its provisions.

MR. LEAKE: The committee inquire "in the meantime."

MR. MORAN: But if the hon. member reads the amendment, he will see that "in the meantime" means that the Bill must not be altered at all.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: Therefore, I ask the mover and seconder of the amendment,

what is their intention? The amendment proposes that the Bill, instead of being referred to a select committee, shall be referred to the electors not later than February next. The amendment is complete in itself, and why in the name of common sense is the tail put on "that in the meantime the Bill as so amended" be referred to a committee. What the amendment means is that the Bill itself shall be referred to the electors for their rejection or acceptance. If the amendment be carried, this House affirms the principle of sending the Bill to the people, absolutely without any alteration; and if the amendment means that, why not say so? If that is the meaning of the mover and seconder of the amendment, why do they not submit a simple proposal "that this House is of opinion that the Commonwealth Bill should be referred to the people for their acceptance or rejection?" That is the plain English of the amendment, but, instead, we have this confused proposal, which does no credit to either the mover or the seconder. It certainly does no credit to the intelligence of the seconder, because had that hon. member considered, he would have seen that he was supporting an amendment which means nothing at all. The amendment is a direct negative, or rather a direct affirmation of the principle that this Parliament shall not exercise its prerogative in any way, by interfering with the Commonwealth Bill; and there may be members who believe in that principle. But there are other ways of considering the matter and of arriving at a vote. The amendment proposes not only to submit the Bill to the people, but also to refer it to a select committee. Why not refer the Bill to the Paris Exhibition Commission, or any other body in the colony for their consideration? Such a suggestion would be just as reasonable as the amendment. If the amendment be carried, no time need be wasted on a select committee, because such a body would only waste time, seeing that no matter what their decision, either in their wisdom or want of wisdom, or no matter what the House might think of that decision, Parliament would be powerless to act upon it. The amendment is not such as ought to be submitted to an intelligent Assembly; and hon. members should surely see that proposals they submit are

sensible and straightforward. To discuss the amendment is simply a waste of breath and time, though there is no waste of time in discussing whether we shall refer the Bill to a select committee; but the question now before us, apart from a select committee or any other proposal, is whether we are going to deal with the Bill as responsible legislators. Those who wish to send the Bill direct to the people should simply vote against the motion, because this amendment is an abortion, and I do not suppose the conceiver of it knows exactly what it really means. I have nothing to say just now on the main question, but before the Premier speaks—and I know I am voicing the feelings of many members—there is anxiety to know his opinion of the amendment, which, to my mind, leaves us exactly where we were, not deciding the question one way or another. Are the mover and the seconder of the amendment prepared to say that the referendum shall not be taken before February? Why fix an arbitrary date?

MR. GREGORY: The amendment says "not later than February."

MR. MORAN: Why fix a time at all? If the committee report on the 5th September, I hope the House will arrive at a decision on the question before the end of the session. The amendment absolutely defeats the very aim of the mover, because it puts the referendum off indefinitely until February; and supposing the people "referend" as much as they like, what is to be done after they have "referended"? There might be no House to deal with the matter; and is there not the after-stage of adoption, when the will of the people must be made law by Parliament? This amendment is not worth serious consideration, because, as I say, it decides nothing. Those who vote to send the Bill to a select committee will do so with the hope that this committee may be able to recommend to the House, seriously and after due consideration, whether it is advisable to alter the Bill. Those who think the House ought not to deal with the Bill at all should vote to let it go to the people for their decision "aye" or "no." As I have said, I should like to hear the opinion of the Premier, and also the opinion of hon. members, as to the meaning and effect of the amendment.

HON. H. W. VENN (Wellington): After the manner in which the member for East Coolgardie has just dealt with the amendment, I think it can be seen at once he has put a literal construction on it. I do not rise to make a speech on the question of federation; but having listened patiently to hon. members on the question before us, and which has nothing to do with federation, the debate shows me as clearly as possible, and emphasises the fact that hon. members are all anxious to express their views on the general question of federation, and if they have not done so while discussing the motion and amendment before us, they have gone as near as possible towards doing so. If that be so, I think the Premier might reasonably allow the Federation Bill to be generally discussed, before it goes to a select committee; and then the discussion in the House will form a sort of direction to the select committee.

THE PREMIER: I do not object to that.

HON. H. W. VENN: If that is so, I think it will meet the views of this House and the views of the country generally to have a general discussion before the Bill is referred, because I feel certain that any select committee which may consider the Bill will not have the grasp and the feeling of this House, as a guide to them with regard to the Bill or the amendments which the committee may or may not suggest to be made in the Bill. But if there is a general discussion on the Bill, it will be with the object of sending it to a select committee afterwards—remember that; and thus I think we will not only be following out the ordinary rule as to referring questions to a select committee, but shall be doing a wise and proper thing.

MR. A. FORREST: What have we been speaking about, the last two days of the debate?

HON. H. W. VENN: The motion before us is whether it is a good thing to send the Bill to a select committee or whether it is not; and if members had confined themselves to that point, the question might have been settled days ago. Inasmuch, however, as hon. members have wandered off and have been anxious to treat the question of federation in its general aspect, and have been de-

sirous of not losing an opportunity of speaking on it, the discussion on this motion has consequently wandered from the particular point and has dealt with the federation question generally. I feel disposed to strongly oppose the motion as it stands on this sheet called a "draft," which has never been before the House in the form of a Bill—I am opposed to that going before a select committee, without an expression of the opinion of the House. I do not wish to be offensive, but it looks like burking discussion of the main question; and I know there is no desire on the part of the Premier to burk discussion, for he is anxious that everybody should have his say. That being so, it will be better to allow hon. members to open their safety-valves, even if they occupy a week or a fortnight in discussing the question; for they can then discuss the Bill itself, and we shall have some idea as to what the select committee ought to do.

MR. VOSPER: How can the select committee arrive at an impartial decision in that way? Their decision will be shaped accordingly.

HON. W. H. VENN: Well, why should it not be shaped accordingly? We do not want the Bill shaped according to the views of a select committee. Whatever may be the views of a majority in this House, those views should be regarded as a direction in which the report of the select committee should be framed.

MR. VOSPER: If that is so, there is no use in having a select committee.

HON. H. W. VENN: I do not want the actions of the select committee, which must be a minority of the House, to rule the majority of the House. I would sooner have the majority rule the minority. With regard to the information which the select committee may obtain, I do think the general discussion on the Bill should take place in this House, and on the top of that discussion the Bill should be referred to a select committee. If the question before us goes to a division, I shall be compelled to vote against the Bill being referred to a select committee without a general discussion preceding it.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I desire to say a few words on this important subject as to the advisability of the

Federation Bill being sent to a select committee. I am strongly in favour of the motion made by the Premier, for the reason that it will be the means of thoroughly investigating this all-important subject, and I believe the select committee will be able to obtain evidence and information which it is not possible for hon. members or even for the public to obtain. I believe the Government, at any rate, can furnish some returns which will be of considerable value in helping to form an opinion on the Bill. There are very few people in this colony who are acquainted with the subject to any extent; and I know that contrary opinions have been expressed by many persons throughout the colony, some believing with all sincerity that it would be to the advantage of the colony to join in the federation, and others believing that it would not. While I realise the sincerity of some persons who are in favour of this colony federating on the terms of the Bill, I believe at the same time there are many who would be inclined to vote—I will venture to say, out of spite—for bringing about federation on the terms of the Bill; their pique being to some extent against the Government because, and I say this advisedly, I have heard it said and argued that such a course would be one means of turning out the Government.

MR. KENNY: Question?

MR. QUINLAN: I am aware this is perhaps a little beside the subject, but I am within my right in stating what I believe to be a fact. There are and have been reasons in the past for some persons to have felt somewhat aggrieved, reasons which it is not opportune now to mention—more particularly do I refer to the goldfields; and one important reason why I favour the sending of this Bill to a select committee is that if the Bill were to go in its present form to a vote of the people, I believe it would be carried on the terms of the Bill, and carried by a majority who would not be voting in the best interests of this colony. The Bill, as at present drawn, would cause a serious loss to Western Australia, and instead of helping in its prosperity, the Bill would probably retard that prosperity, and might undo all the good that has been done since the establishment of responsible government. While I respect those

whom I believe to be sincerely opposed to my view of this question, I have not yet heard one person who has given sufficient reason to show that this colony would lose only a small amount of revenue, and none have shown that federation would bring an advantage to this colony on the terms of the Bill. Various sums have been mentioned, ranging from £40,000 to £300,000 per annum, as the estimated amount which the colony would lose by federating under the terms of the Bill. I think a select committee would be a just means of finding out something nearer the mark than those figures; and for that reason especially, if for no other, I would prefer that the committee should be appointed, and that it should thoroughly investigate the effect of the Bill, especially in regard to the financial clauses. So far as other features of the question are concerned, in reference to bonuses for industries, or the control of our railways, or particularly the question of the transcontinental railway, I will not touch on them further than to refer to the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) as having been the first, I believe, to bring this matter before the public in this colony since federation has become a prominent question. I also believe that when the results of the labours of the select committee are placed before us, those persons who are in doubt as to voting one way or the other on the Federation Bill will be justified then in expressing an opinion on the Bill; and I think it would be more just and far better for our constituents that this matter should be referred to a select committee, and afterwards to refer the Bill to the people at whatever time and in whatever form this Parliament may decide as being the best in the interests of this colony. Whatever conditions may be decided upon as to submitting the Bill to the people, we shall have to abide by the result of the vote taken on it. I am satisfied that those members who have already spoken on the subject during this discussion have diverged somewhat from the matter before us, in as far as they have dealt generally with the subject of federation; but I concur with the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn) in saying that it would be well, before sending the Bill to a select com-

mittee, that there should be a general discussion on the question of federation, because such discussion will be an immense advantage to the select committee and be of general interest to the public. As I know the Premier is about to address the House, I will conclude by merely stating that I shall vote for the appointment of a select committee.

THE PREMIER (in reply as mover): I may say that, when I proposed this motion, it was not in my mind that there would be any restriction upon the scope of the debate; and although I might have thought that this would be so according to the rule of the House, that the general question could not be discussed on a motion of this kind, yet I was not aware at that time that it would be contrary to the rule of the House to do so, but I thought it would be optional with the members as to whether they would deal with the Bill or not in discussing this motion. I did not know that it would not be open to any member to speak on the Bill in such a way as he thought necessary. It will be admitted that most of us know something about the Federation Bill, for it could not have been discussed in this colony and throughout Australasia, it could not have been criticised and discussed in the Press and elsewhere, without hon. members knowing something about the subject. Speaking for myself and perhaps for others, I say we all know something about the Bill; but in regard to other hon. members, and speaking also for myself, I am sure that if we are going to send the Bill to a select committee, we do not want to commit ourselves with regard to the course we shall take before we have the report of that committee. It seems to me that, if we are to make up our minds now as to what course we are to pursue in regard to this matter, there is very little use in our sending the Bill to a select committee, at all events as far as our future action is concerned; because, if we agree to the amendment of the member for East Perth (Mr. James), we confine ourselves to a certain course before the select committee begins its labours. I quite agree with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) that such a course would be absolutely ridiculous; that is, always admitting—and the member for East Perth himself does not

object to this—that the matter is to go to a select committee at all. I can well understand, with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), that a plain motion that this Bill should be referred to the electors in its present shape, would altogether obviate any necessity for a select committee; that is, if Parliament agreed to such a motion. I am glad the member for East Perth is in his place, because I shall have to say something before I sit down in regard to his arguments and his attitude on this question; and when speaking of an hon. member, it is always much more pleasant to have him in his place than to have him absent. In other circumstances it might have been gratifying to me to have heard the good opinion of me expressed a few evenings ago by the member for East Perth; but when one is praised only for the purpose of being kicked downstairs, I do not think praise is very much valued. I can take no exception to the terms in which he addressed me on that occasion; on the contrary, I think that, if I had known nothing but what the hon. member then said, I should perhaps have been perfectly satisfied with the remarks that fell from him; but seeing that there are such things as newspapers in this colony, and that one reads what people say about one behind one's back, I could not but call to mind the remarks of the hon. member a few days before at Boulder, when he attacked me in what I consider a most unfair and very ungenerous style, and I think in such a way as, having had some experience of the hon. member for many years, I might perhaps have expected from him. I would say to the hon. member: if he has such a high opinion of me, of my judgment and of my financial knowledge, as he expressed the other evening in this House, how came it that he made such disparaging and ungenerous observations a day or two before at Boulder? And if he has such a good opinion of me, of my financial knowledge, and of my ability to understand this Bill, why does he not show a little more respect to the advice that I give in this House with regard to the matter? Why does not the hon. member try to follow my advice and to assist me in the course I think best to take; always bearing in mind that the hon. member has such a good opinion of

me and of my financial knowledge on this subject.

MR. OLDHAM: He believes he knows better himself.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but he did not say so. I should like to ask the hon. member, and also the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) why they desire in this matter to place me in the position of an opponent to federation? Surely that cannot be in the interest of the federation which they have so much at heart? Why should they desire to make my position on this question more difficult than they know it already is? They are well aware that the position I occupy in regard to federation is a very difficult one; yet instead of assisting me, as they ought to do if they are in favour of federation, they are doing their best to place obstacles in my path.

MR. LEAKE: Are you in favour of federation? No one knows yet.

THE PREMIER: I have been careful to explain my position. I have not kept back anything from this House in regard to what I think of federation. I think I have clearly stated my views every time I have spoken.

MR. LEAKE: Not in this House.

THE PREMIER: In this House. I do not know why, if the member for Albany and the member for East Perth are really in favour of federation, they should desire to hold me up before the people of this colony as one opposed to it, seeing that I have never said anything in this House which can be construed into a statement that I was opposed to federation. Why, if they really are ardent federationists, should they desire to make me appear before the people of this colony, and before people elsewhere, as a man who has broken his pledges, who has not kept faith with the people of Australia nor with the Premiers of Australia? Surely they will admit that my assistance in this great cause will certainly not be absolutely useless to them at the present time in the work in which they are engaged.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear. Will you declare yourself in favour of it? Then we will help you.

THE PREMIER: The course I have taken in regard to this matter is, I think, absolutely clear; and I also think it is absolutely consistent. The Governor's

Speech first of all declared the views of myself and the Government on this question. Then come the speeches I have made in this House; and then comes this motion of mine, in which I ask that the Bill be referred to a select committee for consideration, which course is not only in accord with all the pledges I have ever made on this question, but is absolutely in accord with the law of this country, and with the undertaking made by this House and by Parliament as a whole, when delegates were appointed to proceed to, and to take part in, the Federal Convention. What is the object of my motion? It is that this House, which has never hitherto had this question before it since 1896, when it passed the Enabling Bill sending delegates to the Convention—that this House and the other branch of the Legislature should have one opportunity, at all events, of examining this Bill before coming to a decision upon it. It may of course be said that the Bill was examined by others; that, as the member for East Perth told us, it was examined by the ablest men in Australia: but has it ever been examined by those persons who are vitally interested in it as regards this colony? We do not want the views of persons interested in other countries. [MR. KENNY: Hear, hear.] We want the views of people who are interested in this country to be brought to bear upon this Bill. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] And that is all my motion desires. I ask for investigation. I do not want to prejudice what the result may be. I think it would have been altogether wrong on my part if I had even held out any indication of what I thought should be the decision of that select committee. Why should anyone object to that position? If the cause be a good one, you may depend upon it that, the more it is looked into, the more it is examined, the better it will appear. What is there in examination to be afraid of? It is open to hon. members to select the very best men from our two Houses of Parliament, setting aside all party considerations. We do not want any party question mixed up in this matter. Let us have the very best men we have got in the colony—those who have studied the Bill most attentively, those who have the greatest ability and the most extended knowledge of finance,

those who will give the necessary time and will take the necessary trouble in this matter: all my motion says is that those persons—the selected of the elected Parliament of this country—should have an opportunity of examining this Bill and of letting us know what they think about it. And that is the motion of which, by the amendment of the hon. member, we are asked to disapprove.

MR. JAMES: No; we are not.

THE PREMIER: Well, I think we are: that is practically what it comes to. The hon. member was not here when the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) spoke, or he might have been enlightened on that point. I need not go over the same ground; but undoubtedly the amendment of the hon. member means this: "Pledge yourselves to send this Bill—no other Bill but this—to the people by a certain time; and in the meantime go on to inquire whether it is any good."

MR. JAMES: That is what the member for East Coolgardie said.

THE PREMIER: I say we need not send any Bill to the people if we do not like it.

MR. LEAKE: And that is just what you are going to do.

THE PREMIER: I say that, if I am of opinion, after this Bill comes back to us from the sifting which it will receive in the select committee, that it is a measure which will be detrimental to the best interests of Western Australia, I shall most certainly vote against its being sent to anyone; and this is not the first time I have said so. I have before expressed myself as clearly in regard to this matter.

MR. LEAKE: Nobody objects to that.

THE PREMIER: I have said that, if I went out of this House never to enter it again, I would not sacrifice the interests of this country by assisting to pass this measure; because, if I thought this Bill would ruin the colony, I should, in doing so, be false not only to the people of this country as a whole, but to my constituents by whose suffrages I sit in this House. Now with regard to sending this Bill to the people, with regard to what is called the referendum, the only right that this House or this Parliament has, or can have, to send this Bill to a vote of the people, is by an Act of Parliament. We have no other power but that; and unless this Parliament pass an

Act referring this Bill to the people for their decision, the Bill cannot go to the people.

MR. OLDHAM: Such an Act you promised to submit.

THE PREMIER: I would ask hon. members: suppose I were to bring down an Enabling Bill to-day with this Commonwealth Bill incorporated in it—with a simple preamble, and with one clause that this Commonwealth Bill should be referred to the electors of the colony for their acceptance or rejection; would I, by that action, be forwarding the interests of federation? Every hon. member knows as well as I do that it is very questionable whether such a Bill would get through this Chamber; but it certainly would have no chance whatever of becoming the law of this colony. Does anyone think that, if we were to bring down such a Bill at once, if we could pass it through this House without any examination or investigation, such a measure would become the law of the land? We know very well it would not. There would not be the slightest chance of its becoming law; and, in my desire to see this Bill investigated, in my desire that the people of Australia, if we do not pass this Bill, shall know definitely the reasons why we do not pass it—do I, because I take this stand, and say that we will carefully investigate the matter, deserve to be upbraided behind my back at Boulder by such men as the member for East Perth—where, in his desire to raise a laugh of derision, he used an offensive remark respecting me, and said I was always doing my best to prevent federation?

MR. JAMES: So you are.

THE PREMIER: That is just the sort of conduct men of the calibre of the member for East Perth delight in.

MR. JAMES: I repeat the charge now. You are deliberately blocking the Bill. I do not take back anything I said.

THE PREMIER: You said it at Boulder.

MR. JAMES: I know, and I say it now to your face.

THE PREMIER: And you used a coarse expression in order to raise a laugh.

MR. JAMES: I do not seem to raise a laugh now.

THE PREMIER: You cannot raise a laugh here. There is no chance what-

ever of the Legislative Council—if I may speak of that Chamber here—there is no chance whatever of the members of that Chamber, in the absence of more information and very close examination of this measure, abrogating their functions or powers—because that is what it would mean—and stultifying themselves before the people who elect them. Hon. members who have looked into the subject know that the referendum is uni-cameral, and not bi-cameral like our constitution; and, if we send this question to the electors of the Legislative Assembly, the electors of the Legislative Council will have no voice whatever, but, along with the bi-cameral system, will be completely swept away. It may be said, of course, and with truth, that the Upper Houses in certain other colonies—Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania for instance—are elective, and that these Chambers have passed the Bill.

MR. MORAN: In some colonies, Upper House members are elected for life.

THE PREMIER: Life members of the Legislative Council are nominated in Queensland and New South Wales, but in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania the members are elected; and it may be said that these elective Upper Houses have passed the measure. But, on the other hand, it can be said that these Houses were in favour of the measure, and thought that it would be of advantage to the respective colonies. We know that in New South Wales the Upper House refused to pass this very Bill, as not being in the interests of that colony; and what was done?

A MEMBER: More members were nominated.

THE PREMIER: The Legislative Council was "swamped" with twelve new members, nominated for the purpose of carrying the Bill. Can that be called constitutional?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It has been the British constitutional plan at times.

THE PREMIER: I call it destroying the constitution. Here we have the fact that in New South Wales the only way in which this measure could be passed was by "swamping" the Legislative Council with a large number of new nominee members.

MR. MORAN: Pledged to vote for the Bill beforehand.



**THE PREMIER:** I do not mind that: that is their business, and has nothing to do with us. But the members of our Legislative Council are elected by the people and have a duty to perform to this country, and that duty is to examine the Bill before they agree to it. I say again, as I have said several times before in the House, that we have no legal or moral right whatever, either in this House or the other, to send this Bill to the people if we consider it to be a bad Bill. If we consider it to be a good Bill which will further the interests of Western Australia, we ought certainly to send it forward; but if, on the other hand, we think it a bad Bill which will bring disaster and injury to the country, we have no right whatever to refer it to the people. Our duty is to investigate the Bill for ourselves, and show the people and the electors of the colony the reasons for our agreeing or disagreeing with its provisions. The very best way I can see of assisting the passage of this Bill through the Parliament of this country, is to have the measure investigated by a joint select committee. We would then have objections put in the concrete form of words. We would know exactly what the select committee considered were the objections to our joining federation; or, on the other hand, we might in the report have a great lever in favour of federation, should the committee be of opinion that, taking all in all, disadvantages and advantages, the Bill would work fairly well, and should in their opinion be sent for the approval of the electors. Should the recommendations of the committee be found on consideration to be trivial, or not sufficient to justify interference with a great question such as this, then I have no doubt the House will say they are trivial. If, on the other hand, should the recommendations be of great moment, such as to deserve serious consideration, and to perhaps compel us, even against our wishes, to say we cannot afford to do this, or we cannot do that, because such a course would bring disaster on the country, I have not the slightest doubt that very serious consideration will be devoted by the House. The select committee would be able to call expert evidence, so far as such evidence is procurable in this colony. There is, I believe, a good selec-

tion of expert witnesses here, but if there is not, the best available could be called. The committee could summon before them the General Manager of the Government Railways, and also bankers, merchants, manufacturers, along with gentlemen accustomed to statistics. We would then be able to say to the people of the colony that our decision had not been arrived at merely after a debate in the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, but after the matter had been given careful investigation by a select committee, which had taken evidence, and when Parliament had ample opportunity to consider recommendations, the result of several weeks' work. This procedure will not do anything to injure a good cause; on the contrary, a good cause must be assisted by investigation. It is only persons who want to take their views ready-made, without the trouble of thinking for themselves—who would rather take their views from some eminent man who has, perhaps, addressed himself to a set of circumstances altogether different from those of this colony—these are the persons who do not want any investigation. They want to take the Bill as framed by other people, and framed, it may be, under other conditions and in other interests; and, worse than all, they want to refuse Parliament the right of investigation. All I can say is that if these people had their way—though I am sure they will not, because we are too sensible in this country to allow that—they would certainly defeat federation in a very few days. As I said before—and I think I can speak for this House as well as for another place—Parliament will never agree to pass this Bill and make a law to refer it to the electors, before there has been investigation.

**MR. MORAN:** Parliament in the other colonies investigated the Bill.

**THE PREMIER:** Members of Parliament and the people, before they are asked to decide the question, ought to have the best information procurable in the country, and not arrive at their decision hastily. An effort has been made to make a great deal out of what has been called a "breach of faith" on my part with the Premiers of the other colonies. If hon. members will look at the amendments agreed to at the Premiers' Conference, they will see, if they read between

the lines, that there is a great difference between what the Premier of New South Wales promised and what the other Premiers, including myself, promised. What did the Premier of New South Wales promise? The memorandum reads:

The Premier of New South Wales expresses his willingness to take steps for the passage of a measure through the Parliament of New South Wales providing for the reference of the Bill, as proposed to be altered, to the vote of the electors in New South Wales as soon as conveniently may be.

And why did the other Premiers not promise to "take steps for the passage of a measure" through the various Parliaments?

MR. LEAKE: Because the promise would be of no use unless New South Wales passed the Bill.

THE PREMIER: But we could have used words promising to take steps for the passing of a measure as soon as New South Wales had agreed to the measure. Hon. members will notice that the words used in reference to the other Premiers are not the same as those used in reference to the Premier of New South Wales. As to the other Premiers, the memorandum reads:

The Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion that, after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of their respective colonies for reference to the electors. I ask hon. members to read between the lines, and ask themselves why there are two clauses when one only was necessary. I will tell hon. members the reason. The reason was that I would not agree to one clause. I could not pledge myself to submit the Bill to the electors, or do anything with it, until I had consulted my colleagues. There is no record of the Conference proceedings, but I make this statement with the knowledge that it is true, and with the responsibility that attaches to me for making it. I was asked by the Premier of New South Wales, "If that is your opinion, why are you here at all?" and I said to him, "I am here at your invitation, but I am not here to make promises, or be coerced by anybody." That is what occurred at the Conference. My loyalty in this cause puts me in a position in which I may be misrepresented by those who desire to use the circumstances unfairly; but so long as I have a clear conscience, I do

not care what misrepresentation the member for East Perth or anyone else may delight in as regards myself. The Premiers desired to fasten a promise on me, and hon. members should read the two clauses, and ask why they were put in the record. Then hon. members will see later on:

The Premiers are also of opinion that it is desirable that the decision of a majority of the electors voting in each colony should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill.

Why was the word "desirable" put in? Because I would not agree to anything except the mildest term that could be used. I was not going to bind my colony hand and foot, simply because there were five men there all of one mind. I was not going to bind my colony without consulting my colleagues, or without consulting the Parliament of this country, by whose authority—an authority which I stated to those other Premiers—it had been provided in the statute that if the Bill were approved by Parliament it would be submitted to the electors. Every Premier in Australia knew that in our statute it had been provided that the Bill, as it came from the Convention, had to be approved by Parliament before going to the people. That was not the case in the other colonies, but it was the case here. Does anyone suppose for a moment I am so devoid of sense of what is right, that I would give a pledge that this Bill should go to the people, when I knew that on the statute book there was a provision that it should not go to the people until it had been approved by Parliament? Was I going to bind everyone in this country, and bind my colleagues here without permission or without saying one word? The other Premiers had all consulted their colleagues, who had already expressed themselves in favour of the Bill, which, further, had been through their Parliaments, and had even been submitted to the referendum. But that was not the case with me, because I did not know where I was standing, or what the people would say to any action I might take, seeing that I had not consulted my colleagues even.

MR. JAMES: The whole of the Cabinet were in Melbourne.

THE PREMIER: At the Premiers' Conference?

MR. JAMES: Yes.

THE PREMIER: I did not know anyone was there but myself. The hon. member can make offensive observations at my expense, especially when I am not present.

MR. JAMES: You are present now.

THE PREMIER: I do not mind his laugh here, but I do object to his going up to Boulder township and misrepresenting me.

MR. JAMES: I repeat the statement here.

THE PREMIER: In dealing with this question it would be all very well for us if we were in the throes of difficulties, if federation meant that we should get three meals a day instead of only one, if we were dependent upon others, and were about to get a great advantage by federation, then I could understand our running a good deal of risk in order to get out of our difficulties. But what is our position? It is all very well for my friend, the Premier of New South Wales, to write somewhat mandatory telegrams to me; but it is my duty to say that we own a third of this continent of Australia.

MR. MORAN: He is the "Czar" just now, you know.

THE PREMIER: That we are the most progressive country in Australia at the present time, and that we are the best customers that any of those colonies have got, for we imported three millions worth of goods last year, if not more; therefore, we are in such a position that the Eastern colonies of Australia require us for their trade. We are also the nearest of the colonies to Europe; and we hold the key really for strategical purposes in possessing St. George's Sound, at the south-west corner of the continent. In fact, at the present time we are in a splendid position to manage our own business; there is no doubt about it. Then, I say, it must occur to those who are not fired with the enthusiasm and the desire to be "one nation," and to be the great power dominating the southern seas—it must occur to them that having a magnificent territory like this, with great possibilities, with industries and a revenue advancing by leaps and bounds, and with everything in our own hands and under our own control—it may occur to some people who are not

fired with those ideas of nationhood, to ask, why should the people of Western Australia hand over to a power two thousand miles away, separated from us by the ocean and by a thousand miles of unoccupied territory, why hand over to them the control of a business that we can manage for ourselves? Therefore, the only reason why we would enter this federation is because we desire to make Australia a nation; because we desire to have a higher political life; desire to be in closer touch with our neighbours in every way, though that is very difficult to obtain when there is a thousand miles of unoccupied territory between us and our next neighbour. I say, that being so, unless there is something very good for us, or at any rate nothing very bad, unless we are sure there is no harm to come to us on account of federation, I cannot wonder that people here hesitate to take that leap. If those hon. members who are so enthusiastic about federation would devote their time to letting the people know—not letting me know, but letting the people of this country know—in what manner and to what extent we will gain by federation, or at least will not lose by it—and that is what I hope this select committee will do, that it will direct its attention to showing that Western Australia will not lose anything by federation—if those persons, or this committee, can show that, and show also that we shall have the control of our affairs to an extent almost as great as now, then this desire to be "one people, one nation" will overcome many minor obstacles. A good deal has been made by members and others as to our joining as an original State. That is a nice idea, and, if we are to join, I certainly would like that we should join as an original State. But I am not going to believe that, if we do not join as an original State, some great disaster is going to overtake us. I would like to know why the member for East Perth (Mr. James) and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) are so anxious for our joining as an original State. Do they desire office—do they desire to be members of a Cabinet of Australia—what do they want? Why is there this great desire for our joining as an original State?

MR. LEAKE: Have I said anything about an original State?

**THE PREMIER:** The member for East Perth has certainly talked about the necessity of our joining as an original State. My idea is that we had much better not be an original State if, by becoming so, we shall bring disaster on this country. We had better not be an original State, than do anything which will injure this country even for a few years or perhaps a generation. I do not think much about joining as an original State. It will be much better for us to investigate this thing for a whole year, if necessary, so that we may clearly understand it.

**MR. MORAN:** Where is there any State, in history, which has been penalised for not joining as an original State?

**THE PREMIER:** I do not think anything of the fear as to our being penalised if we do not join as an original State, because the other States of Australia will always be glad to receive us into their federation. On the contrary, whether we join as an original State or do not, if a State which does not join the federation happens to languish and fall back, then, no matter whether we are in the federation or out of it, we will not get much consideration. Those of us who look into this matter know very well, and we should tell the plain truth about it, that with all our efforts and all my efforts we have not been able to make out that there will be any gain to us in the early days of federation, at any rate, if we join it. As far as I can make out, I cannot see that at the beginning there is going to be any gain at all for Western Australia; but my hope is that, if we do join, there will not be much loss. Among all the statisticians, all the financiers, and all the newspapers which have examined this question, not one has shown where Western Australia would gain any advantage, financially, by joining the federation. It never has been shown, and no attempt has been made to show it. The evidence has been all the other way. We do not want to make anything by federation, but we do want to be assured that we shall not lose by federation. We want to keep the position we are in, and we want to be assured that our position under federation will not be worse than it is at the present time. As I have said, you may consult those bulky folios containing the speeches at the Federal Conventions, and you will

not find a sentence which shows that Western Australia can gain financially by joining the federation. The best that the advocates of federation have said is that we would not lose; many have said we would lose something; and more have said that our circumstances were so abnormal that it was not desirable to spoil the Federation Bill by making it suit our abnormal condition. Mr. Coghlan, the Government Statistician of New South Wales, who is considered one of the most able of the statisticians in Australia, and his views are thought more of perhaps than those of any other statistician in Australia, has estimated in a paper from which I am quoting, that Western Australia must lose from the first. He said Western Australia must lose from the beginning, and that our loss must annually increase until 1908—that is the year when the amount of loss will be at the rate of £541,000 per annum. I would not mind that so much, but the worst of it is that he goes on to tell us our position will be worse afterwards.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** It is utterly impossible to say anything about it.

**THE PREMIER:** We know that a statistician may be wrong in his estimate or in his calculations, for no statistician can look into the future, and there may be other circumstances arising in this colony which will altogether change those figures, and place us in such a position that we can defy any injury that may come to us from federation. I have often said there are two sides: those who say we shall lose a tremendous lot, and those who say we will not lose anything.

**MR. JAMES:** Nobody says that.

**THE PREMIER:** Well, I think the advantages will not be so great under federation as some people have supposed, and I think the disadvantages also will not be so great as some persons have stated. It appears to me that the middle way, the *via media*, will be the most likely way for us to look at federation. At the same time we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that all those men of repute who have examined the question, and spoken or written on it, have told us that Western Australia is going to lose by joining the federation; and that, I say, is a reason in itself why this House ought to investigate the matter, and the joint committee can assist the House by

looking into the facts and reporting to us what those men of repute have actually said as to the probable effect of federation in the case of Western Australia. Surely, if we do that, no one will blame us for making inquiry and ascertaining facts. I would ask this House whether my proposition is not a reasonable one; and it will be observed that by adopting it we do not express an opinion on the Bill, for we do not say the Bill is a good or a bad Bill, but we merely say we refer it to a select committee of both Houses for examination and report. I shall assist in choosing the best men we can get in this House for appointment on the committee, without reference to party feeling or party ideas; and we shall, in a few weeks, get the committee's report. Members of this House are entrusted with a great responsibility, as representatives of the people; and the worst of it is that if we make a false step in this matter, we cannot undo it. Generally, if we pass a bad Bill, we can repeal it or amend it afterwards; but in the case of federation we cannot alter or amend that, if we pass the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You want Mr. Ewing's Divorce Bill.

THE PREMIER: Divorce is out of the question in this case, for there is no getting out of the union if we once enter into a federal marriage. Are we to act like reasonable people, and investigate the bearings of this Bill, or are we to follow the jack-in-the-box enthusiasts, who tell us we must not stop to consider or investigate, but must go headlong into this bargain? As I have said, if we gave a year to the examination of the Bill, it would be better to spend that time than to rush headlong into a bargain which may do injury to this colony for a generation. And are we to be guided in this matter by those who, when they had an opportunity, the greatest possible opportunity, of doing something to throw light upon this measure by giving that Convention the benefit of their knowledge and experience—are we to be guided by those who, when they had that opportunity, did nothing? That is what I want to ask.

MR. JAMES: The anti-federalists were the very men who, at the Convention, said nothing in opposition to the Bill.

THE PREMIER: And what is the position of this hon. member who had an

opportunity and did nothing, as I will show directly? What does he advise? Why, he advises us to pledge ourselves now—"right off," and afterwards to inquire into the matter.

MR. JAMES: That is misrepresentation.

THE PREMIER: I ask, what necessity is there for us to pledge ourselves now? He is a very foolish man who pledges himself before he is called on to do so. We do not so act in every-day life. We leave the pledging to the last moment. We negotiate first, and make up our minds; and, having made up our minds—having all the information before us—then we pledge ourselves to the course we think best to follow. Shall we not be acting reasonably if we decline to follow the advice of a gentleman who sat for three or four months amongst the best men in Australia, and who, according to his own statement, only spoke twice?—who sat for several weeks at the Convention in Melbourne and never spoke at all? When we came to the crucial point, when we came to the last sitting, when we got to close quarters, when the interests of each colony had to be fought inch by inch, when the decision was near at hand, we have it from the hon. member that he never opened his mouth.

MR. JAMES: What did the others do?

THE PREMIER: Never mind about the others. I am talking about the hon. member.

MR. JAMES: Be fair, and talk all round.

THE PREMIER: And I have also taken the trouble to look up how many divisions there were at the Melbourne Convention. There were 81 divisions, and from 62 of those divisions the hon. member was absent: there were only 19 divisions in which he voted, and in 8 out of the 19 he voted against me; and he went away from Melbourne three weeks before the Convention was over, quite disgusted with the turn things had taken. He felt, as he told the people when he returned home, that there was no use whatever in Western Australia having any idea of entering this federation; that the terms would not suit us. Therefore, he came away. Although he was elected, and had very much desired to be elected to be a representative of this Parliament at that Convention, after gaining what he desired, after being a member of that Con-

vention, he came away; he came home three weeks before the Convention was over, thoroughly disgusted with the turn things had taken, and expressing himself on his return to the effect that the Constitution, as it was being framed, would not at all suit Western Australia.

MR. JAMES : That is exactly what you say 18 months after I said it.

THE PREMIER : If that is the sort of man we are going to follow, I think we will do very mischievous work. I think we had better be careful not to follow a man who went away from his work three weeks before it was over, at the very time when all his influence should have been exerted to try to do the best he could for his country. With regard to the speech of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), I do not wish to say much against it, because the hon. member, though sometimes fair and reasonable, is generally tinged with opposition: the hon. member cannot always forget that there are times when you can fling opposition away altogether, and deal with a matter on its merits. I do not mean to say the hon. member is ungenerous; but sometimes he certainly tinges his remarks with the fact that he is leader of the Opposition. After listening, however, to the member for East Perth (Mr. James) the other evening—an hon. member with that fluency of words, which fluent words I regret to have to say are his worst enemy, for they lead him into an immense amount of trouble—after listening to the member for East Perth, it was a relief, I am sure, to myself and doubtless to everyone else in this House to hear the speech of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper). The manner of the hon. member's speech was exemplary; and the matter of it I can only describe as most excellent. He knew his subject. He was not talking about a question that he had not thought out and tried to understand. He appreciated the difficulty and he understood the responsibility that were before him and before this House; and there was one thing I liked more than the matter, which as I said before was excellent, and that was the independence of thought, the high sense of responsibility, and the expressed determination to do his duty at all hazards, which I should like every one of us to emulate in this Assembly. Those quali-

cations of that excellent speech were altogether absent from the fluency of words of the member for East Perth; but the member for North-East Coolgardie, by that speech which he made the other evening, has earned his right to be a member of the proposed select committee, if we appoint one, as I am sure we will do; and my vote, if I have an opportunity of giving it, I shall certainly have very much pleasure in recording in his favour. He has made it evident to us that he has studied this question, and that he will bring an independent mind to bear upon it. I am all the more pleased to make these observations because, as you all know, the hon. member and I have not always the same ideas; but I am very glad when I have an opportunity of giving honour where honour is due. Moreover, we must remember that the hon. member is not a West Australian, that he is not bound to this country in the way in which one would expect the member for East Perth to be bound to it, by the ties of birth. But, in my opinion, he showed far more patriotism than the member for East Perth, who desires to burk inquiry, and is not satisfied or willing that we should even investigate this Bill.

A MEMBER : Rubbish.

MR. JAMES : Gross misrepresentation.

THE PREMIER : I do not think it is rubbish. Read the amendment and you will see. The amendment can only be intended to burk inquiry, and to send this Bill without any alteration to the people, for them to say whether it shall or shall not be accepted. Will the hon. member say he does not want that?

MR. JAMES : I want the inquiry. Look at the date in the amendment. Look at the speech I made on the subject. I want the people to get a chance of saying "yes" or "no" to the Bill. If you want the people to consider the Bill with amendments, refer the amendments separately. What do you want?

THE PREMIER : I want investigation, and you do not want investigation. You want this House to-night to pledge itself to send this Bill to the people, however inimical the Bill may be to the interests of this country. You say: "I want you to pledge yourselves that you will send this Bill, and nothing but this Bill, to

the people; and upon their verdict let the result depend."

MR. JAMES: Let the voters decide.

THE PREMIER: Well, I say on the contrary that, if it is proved by this select committee that this Bill is a bad Bill, one that will injure this country, I shall never lend my voice or my vote to sending it anywhere—either to the people or to anyone else. Let us understand one another; let us get to close quarters. The hon. member says: "We will send this Bill, and nothing but this Bill—it does not matter how bad it is—to the people: they shall decide. This Chamber and another place shall abrogate their functions, as if there were no Parliament in this country." I have pointed that out a dozen times before, and I can only imagine that the object of the hon. member is to defeat the Bill. That is the only idea I can conceive about him; because, as sure as I stand here, if this Bill were sent to the people as it is—and that is the hon. member's desire, for when I moved this motion he said so over and over again, he said it at Coolgardie and wherever he spoke—if this Bill were sent to the people in its present form, there is nothing more certain than that it would be defeated. And it would not get to the people: it would not have a chance of getting to the people, as it will have if we inquire into it in a select committee. I think I know something about public matters in this colony, and the feelings of members of Parliament; and I say that, if we sent this Bill as it is to-night to another place, without investigation, without the report of the proposed committee, then even if it got through this House—which I do not think it ever would—it certainly would never become the law of this country.

MR. JAMES: The same result would follow from the report of the committee.

THE PREMIER: I do not know that it would: we shall see what the result will be. If to defeat this Bill be not the object of the hon. member, I am at a loss to know what his object is; because that would be the result if he got his way? He can have no other object in trying to balk those who are trying to do their best to have this matter investigated, and to place this Bill before the country in such a manner that the people will understand it—in trying to balk those who

say that this Bill shall be investigated so that we may know, if it is not for the interests of this country, in what way it is not for our interests. The only other object the hon. member can possibly have is to place before the country those persons who are desirous of having this investigation, as persons who are trying to defeat federation altogether. He said that at Boulder the other night.

MR. JAMES: Quite right.

THE PREMIER: You had no right ever to say so.

MR. JAMES: Well, I do say so.

THE PREMIER: I know you do everything that you ought not to do; and there is no doubt about it, that most ungenerous speech made by the hon. member behind my back, at Boulder, was designed in order to raise derisive laughter at my expense, and to place me, if he could—and I have no doubt he did it to some extent—in as bad a light as possible before the people on the goldfields.

MR. JAMES: Not at all. I said what I believed, and I say it again.

THE PREMIER: He held me up before the goldfields electors as one who distrusts the people, one who will not trust the people, and who will not let them decide this great question irrespective of what Parliament may say. Because we are cautious, because we desire investigation, because we demand inquiry, because we want to protect the interests of this country, we are to be told that our object is to defeat federation, and that we distrust the people of the colony. I ask hon. members not to trust such an unreliable guide as the member for East Perth. He is a protectionist, we all know, when it suits him; he is a free-trader, when it suits him; he is an anti-federalist, when it suits him; he is a federalist, when the spirit moves him.

MR. JAMES: A good, progressive development, is it not?

THE PREMIER: He was not a federalist when he had the great chance of his life, when he had the responsibility of protecting his native country at Melbourne: then he was not a federalist. He turned his back and came home three weeks before the work was ended.

MR. JAMES: That is what you are doing 18 months afterwards.

THE PREMIER: I have only one more word to say. I commend this motion of

mine to hon. members. I ask them to support the motion, because I know that, if the cause is good, nothing will be lost by its being carefully inquired into, by its being thoroughly investigated. We will all gain knowledge, every one of us, and the people of the country will be instructed. And finally, I feel certain of this, that we are not going to flinch in doing our duty; that we will be, I am sure, unmindful of everything but what is best for Western Australia.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): My reason for seconding the amendment was to endeavour to get an expression of opinion from the House as to whether the Bill ought to be placed before the people of Western Australia. From what I can see of the action of the Premier, every effort is being made to swamp federation, or to make it as late as possible, by sending the question to a select committee, whose recommendations will be such that there will be no chance of Parliament referring the Bill to the people this session. An Enabling Bill ought to be introduced at once for discussion in the House. There may be a great many knotty points to consider, and reasons could be brought forward in debate showing whether the Federal Bill is good or otherwise for Western Australia. If it be shown there is danger in the Bill for this colony, I do not think many members will be found to vote for it, and if the Premier knows of any danger, it is his duty to tell us where the danger is. He has attended all the federal conventions, and gone comprehensively into the subject; and there is no doubt that the Premier at one time was in favour of Western Australia joining the other colonies, and he was bound by the resolution affirming that the Premiers were of opinion that after New South Wales had accepted the constitution, it should be submitted to the people of the other colonies.

THE PREMIER: To this Parliament.

MR. GREGORY: To the Parliament for reference to the electors. Hon. members need not go further than the clause which says:—

The Premiers are also of opinion that it is desirable that the decision of a majority of the electors voting in each colony should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill.

To speak of the word "desirable," as the Premier has done, is simply a quibble on his part. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.] It is a quibble, most decidedly, and the signature of the Premier is a definite promise that when Parliament met an Enabling Bill would be brought in, and the constitution submitted to the people. What we want to know, is whether the Premier is willing to trust the people of the colony or not; and the vote on the amendment will give us the information whether Parliament will trust the people, or will arrogate all the power to themselves.

THE PREMIER: That is good.

MR. GREGORY: It is a question whether this Parliament is representative of the people. In Melbourne the Premier said he did not bind this colony or this Parliament; and I think "our cat is getting a very big tail." The Premier can only tell us what he thinks, and we listen to him with great pleasure, and an amount of respect; but what we want to find out is where the danger is in federation. That we want to know at once, so that the Premier may not get out of his trouble by means of a select committee. That is the object in view, and for that reason I hope the amendment will be carried.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): It seems to me that this is not a question of federation or no federation, but a question as to whether the Federal Bill shall be submitted to a joint select committee; and surely no one can reasonably object to the latter proposal. If the motion be carried, time will be given for consideration, and I see no reason why this matter should be hurried. The member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn) told us just now that there was not a Bill before the House, but only a piece of paper; and if there is no Bill, we have nothing to deal with. If we have no Bill, and if we are not to be allowed to alter a Bill which may be introduced—and I gather from Mr. Reid's telegram that it would be useless to endeavour to make any amendment in the Bill—the best thing, if the measure is not a suitable one, would be to throw it out at once, and have done with federation. There is no reason whatever why the motion should not be carried, and the Bill go to a select committee, with whose report we can



deal when it comes before the House. It is not for a select committee to say that we shall or shall not federate, but simply to gather evidence *pro* and *con*, and I for one shall support the motion. I may say that I have been absent from the last three sittings of the House, and I am not quite familiar with what has been said or done, but I gather that the motion proposes to send the Bill to a joint select committee of both Houses, and I quite agree that this should be done.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): I have already made a few remarks on the original motion, and I therefore propose to confine myself to the amendment. When the motion was submitted by the Premier, there were objections raised by certain members to referring the Draft Commonwealth Bill to a select committee, and those objections were openly and somewhat forcibly stated. But I take it the mover of the amendment does not join in these objections, and cannot object to a select committee, because his amendment carries out the original motion. He is quite willing that this Bill should be referred to a select committee, but he seeks by the amendment to provide that the Draft Commonwealth Bill, the Bill now before the House, shall be referred to the electors not later than February next. That, if it mean anything, means that the Bill, as submitted to us, shall go to the people—that this Bill, without any alteration or comment by this House, shall, as it stands, go to the electors of the colony, and that with them only shall rest the question.

MR. VOSPER: I do not see that that is the effect of the amendment, which is a mere promise for a referendum.

MR. RASON: The amendment proposes that the Bill, that is the Draft Bill as amended at the Premiers' Conference, shall go to the people. That means the particular Draft Bill before the House, and no other, and it will be impossible to submit to the people a Bill with any suggestion or suggested alterations either from this House or from another place. The amendment means, if it means anything, that this Bill, and this Bill only, must be submitted to the people.

MR. JAMES: What other Bill do we know of at present?

MR. RASON: The member for East Perth (Mr. James) is quite willing that the question should be inquired into by a select committee; but if this Bill, and no other, without any alteration or suggestion of alteration, is to go to the people, what is the good, either of inquiry by a select committee, or discussion in this House or another place?

MR. EWING: Does the amendment say the Bill shall not be amended?

MR. MORAN: Certainly.

MR. RASON: The amendment provides that the Draft Bill as amended, which is the Bill before us now, shall be submitted to the people not later than February next. Those who vote for the amendment distinctly pledge themselves that the Bill now before us shall be submitted to the electors without any alteration, or suggestion of alteration.

MR. VOSPER: The amendment itself does not exactly say that, but it does say so in context with the original motion.

MR. RASON: That is so, and the amendment is tacked on to the original motion.

MR. LEAKE: It is interpolated.

MR. RASON: I think I am correct in saying that if the amendment be carried as interpolated, those who vote for it pledge themselves to submit the Draft Bill as it stands to the electors of the colony. Is that the wish of the House? If so, I take it there is no need for a select committee, or for any discussion at all, because neither would be of the slightest good, inasmuch as by the amendment we pledge ourselves to submit this particular Bill and this Bill only to the electors. That being so, I cannot think that anyone who desires inquiry can possibly vote for the amendment.

At 6:30 the DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. WILSON (Canning): Before the adjournment, I regret to say that we had another exhibition of the offensive manner in which the Premier generally treats those members who are opposed to him. It is only necessary for any member to dare to get up in his place and oppose the views of the right hon. gentleman, and that member is pretty sure to

be met with a torrent of personal abuse and gross misrepresentation. I cannot help but refer to this, and I regret it exceedingly, because I do not think the right hon. gentleman has any right to call members "traitors," "unpatriotic."

THE PREMIER: I never said "traitors."

MR. WILSON: He has no right to descend to personal abuse because some members happen to disagree with him in the opinion which he advances. The Premier accuses the member for East Perth (Mr. James) of wishing to defeat this Bill, because that hon. member has had the temerity to oppose the reference of the Bill to a select committee; and the Premier also said the hon. member wished to burk discussion, whereas I maintain that it is the Premier who wishes to burk discussion, because the action of the member for East Perth on this question has been to encourage discussion in every way possible.

THE PREMIER: To "burk inquiry," I said.

MR. WILSON: A distinction without a difference. And because I agree with the member for East Perth that this measure will be better discussed on the floor of the House than in a select committee, and that we will have a more full inquiry and get a better grasp and a better knowledge of the subject than by referring it to a select committee, I suppose I also am "unpatriotic" and do not wish for the federation of Australia, or it may be said I am arguing so that the people may not give a decision on the matter. The Premier is in an unenviable position, one in which no other hon. member would care to be in to-night; but I should like to remind him that he has made that position for himself. He wants the views of the people, he says, on this measure. That is exactly what we are aiming at and fighting for. I maintain that no select committee that may inquire into this Bill as it stands can possibly give us the views of the people on the measure; and the only way to get the views of the people on the great question of federation is to submit the Bill to them and let them accept or reject it. In submitting it, will the right hon. gentleman follow the example of the Premier of New South Wales? If the Premier is now honestly opposed

to the terms of federation, let him submit the Bill to the people of Western Australia, and let him go himself on the hustings and state his objections to it, and advise the people to reject the Bill. That is the right position for him to take, and not to shelve this measure, as I conclude he does, by taking the course now proposed. I say he is not in earnest in his expressed opinion that the Bill should be submitted to the people. The Premier has openly stated to-night, in very forcible language, that he does not see why this country should be ruined by this Commonwealth Bill, and that therefore the Bill ought to be submitted to a select committee. I want to let hon. members clearly understand, and I also want the people of Western Australia to clearly understand, that I do not care whether this measure is submitted to a select committee or not; I do not care whether this House passes the Bill as it is now, or amends it, if they can amend it; I do not care whether this country accepts federation or rejects it; but that federation does not mean ruination for Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: I have never said it did.

MR. JAMES: That is the inference from what you said.

THE PREMIER: I do not want inferences; I want what I said.

MR. JAMES: You never speak out "straight."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

MR. WILSON: The right hon. gentleman said he was afraid the Bill would mean ruin to Western Australia if accepted by the people; but I will tell him to-night that which he ought to know by his past experience, that whether we accept it or reject it—and I do not care which we do—it will not bring ruin to Western Australia.

MR. MITCHELL: That is a matter of opinion.

MR. WILSON: Let us examine for a moment the right hon. gentleman's position. For eight years, I think, he has been engaged in discussing this momentous question. At least eight years ago he attended the first Federal Convention; and he boasts that he has attended every Convention held since; and last year he made a speech in St. George's Hall to a crowded audience, a

speech which we were all proud to hear, a speech in which he strongly advocated the cause of federation, and in which he never pointed out any of those objectionable matters which he has just brought before us. We were proud of that speech; and the only people who were not proud of it were the pessimists and the croakers, of whom we are always hearing in Western Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Oh, they are dead now.

MR. WILSON: Early this year the Premier attended the Conference of Premiers in Melbourne. There the whole question was threshed out; an agreement was drafted which he now wishes to interpret in a way different from that in which it reads to every member of this House. He put his signature to that agreement, and he now comes here and tells us that agreement does not mean what it decidedly implies in the English language—that it does not mean what it plainly implies, and he wishes to go back on it. Strong exception has been taken to the action of the Premier of New South Wales in daring to telegraph to Perth and to dictate to us, as the member for North-East Coolgardie said.

MR. HUBBLE: Quite right.

MR. WILSON: That hon. member said the Premier of New South Wales was dictating to us by telling us that we must accept federation at his price, or it would be the worse for us hereafter. Now I say, with all due respect to the opinions of our Premier, that Mr. Reid was perfectly justified in wiring to Perth in the names of the Premiers of the other colonies, pointing out to the right hon. gentleman that he had entered into an agreement whereby he undertook to submit this measure to Parliament, so that it might be referred to the people, and asking him to stand by that agreement.

MR. JAMES: Hear, hear.

MR. WILSON: Our Premier talks very glibly about trickery and dodgery, and accuses the leader of the Opposition of trickery in all his movements; but the right hon. gentleman is, to my mind, a past-master of the art. What is all this fuss about? Why has the Premier made such a change, and why has he once more "turned turtle," as he is always doing? I cannot understand it. I cannot understand how it is, except that it is

a political move, and that he wishes to shelve this important question of federation once and for all. The attempt was first made in the Governor's Speech, where it was said that the question of federation would be submitted to Parliament after all the other colonies, including Queensland, had accepted it. Then the Premier comes down here after pressure is brought to bear upon him, and wishes to refer the matter to a select committee, and in that idea he is backed up by the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt), who wants more light; wants to know all about it; cannot understand the measure. Well, that is begging the question altogether; for if there is one member of this House who ought to understand all about the Bill, who ought easily to grasp the provisions of a measure of this kind, it is the member for the Ashburton; and it seems to me that the request of the members who are following the member for East Perth in this matter—that we shall have free, full, and open discussion—is a reasonable request, and one that should meet with the support of the Government. The debate on this question, although it has somewhat departed from the terms of the motion and of the amendment, has certainly been an education so far as it has gone. It has educated me, and I have no doubt it has educated other members, to the fact that some members of this House can "turn turtle" whenever they think proper, and that they can also consider, at the same time, that they are patriotic in so doing. I want to know what all the trouble is about; I want to know why our Premier cannot stand by the bargain made at the Premiers' Conference; I want to know why he cannot bring down an Enabling Bill to this House at once; I want to know why he cannot allow us to discuss the provisions of that Bill and to voice our opinions as freely as he voices his own; and why he wants to refer this matter to a select committee so that it may be hung up till the 5th of September, when we shall have to start all our work over again. I can only come to the conclusion that it is not the question of the transcontinental railway, which he has made so much of: it is the matter of revenue; and I think that I hit the nail on the head when I say that the Premier is afraid, and that his Government are afraid too, that federation

will mean a loss of revenue; and therefore he and they are anxious to shelve the question and to delay the measure as long as possible.

MR. MITCHELL: That would be a very good reason, would it not?

THE PREMIER: Yes; a very good reason, I think.

MR. WILSON: I do not think it a good reason at all. I maintain that the right hon. gentleman has had far too much revenue to play with and to squander in the past, and that the sooner his revenue is brought down to a normal figure the better, so that he will not be able to continue dragging a revenue out of people at the rate of £20 per head, as he has been doing till within the last year or two. The thing is absurd; it is preposterous; it cannot be expected to go on; and, if the Premier is going to expend his power in trying to continue to extort that revenue from the people of this country, he is doing the greatest injury to this country that any man could possibly do. To back up the Premier's opinions, we have had the Government Actuary trotted out. That officer is "put on to the job," and he has to go into figures so as to bowl us all out, and to show that if we enter into federation it means ruination to Western Australia. I do not care how many actuaries are set to work on this question; I do not care how many million figures are brought before us, or how many calculations are put on the table; it will not alter the main principles of the movement; and I want, if possible, to lay these down clearly and distinctly to-night, as they appear to me. The first principle is this, that there can be no loss to any State of the Commonwealth except that State's proportion of the cost of the Federal Government. I lay that down as the first principle. The second is that reduction of revenue does not mean loss. If the money be in the pockets of the people, it cannot represent a loss to the country. And the third point is this great principle, that no matter whether we federate or whether we do not, sooner or later the right hon. gentleman will have to face the question of a reduced customs revenue. As soon as the local supply equals the demand, he is bound to lose the revenue accruing from the customs. What does the Government Actuary lay

before us in the first instance? I want briefly to analyse a few of the figures, just to show that no real reliance can be placed upon figures which have evidently been gathered together with one object, that object being to discredit the federal movement.

THE PREMIER: That is most unfair and ungenerous to a professional man.

MR. WILSON: I am not attacking the professional man. He is the servant of the Government, and I believe that these figures have been compiled by the instruction and by the direction of the Premier.

THE PREMIER: Absolutely false!

MR. WILSON: On page 4 of his report the Government Actuary tries to prove that the cost of the Federal Government to Western Australia will be £33,500 per annum, or 4s. 1d. per head. These figures are deduced from a table, table C on page 5. I wish hon. members would kindly follow me in these figures, because they take some following and some grasping. If you look at the item "New Expenditure" on page 5—that is, expenditure on the new services of the Commonwealth Government—you will find that the Actuary states such expenditure at £744,000 per annum; but in that sum he includes £300,000 interest on federal bonds created to compensate State property taken over; and he includes 1 per cent. maintenance on the same property, amounting in all to £400,000. Now what I want to point out is that this is a wrong basis to go on. If the Federal Government take over all the liabilities to the extent of ten millions—that is the joint liability of the States—we are relieved of the cost of that liability, which we pay at the present time; therefore you cannot fairly say that that is an additional cost to the Federal Government. In other words, at the present time we pay this interest on the debt which it is proposed that the Federal Government shall take over and pay for the future. Therefore it is not an increased expense; for it reduces that item down to a sum of less than 2s. per head, which rate has, I believe, been mentioned by the member for East Perth as our proportion of the cost of the Federal Government—something like £17,000 in all. That, I take it, is beyond doubt. On page 10 of this report

we have table K, which shows the loss each year, as it is called, the loss to Western Australia by joining federation. It begins in the first year with an increase—a profit of £9,500; for the second year it shows a loss of £150,000, and so on year after year until we arrive at £333,000 as the loss to Western Australia for the sixth year. I have shown that on page 4 the Actuary puts down the cost of the Federal Government to Western Australia, in each year before uniform duties, as £33,500 per annum; and though I dispute these figures and say they are wrong, yet, if we admit them for the sake of argument, we will perceive that the Actuary takes no account of the difference between £33,500 per annum and the one-fourth of the customs revenue which is to be detained by the Federal Parliament, the surplus of which revenue must be returned to Western Australia. If you admit the principle that the cost to Western Australia can only be this colony's proportion of the cost of the Federal Government, then I take it you must admit that this table K in the report, showing the loss to Western Australia, is inaccurate, inasmuch as the balance of the customs revenue must be returned to Western Australia. I hope hon. members follow me there. Before leaving the figures, I may say the result of my argument, which I maintain is unassailable, is that in the first year we shall gain, according to the Government Actuary's figures, some £239,000, and in the second year £25,000, while in the third year we shall lose £35,000, and in the fourth year £95,000, in the fifth year £156,000, and in the sixth year £217,000. That is presuming my argument is correct, and I say it is correct. Taking table C, I want to show a vital inaccuracy, to which I have had my attention drawn by Mr. Matheson, M.L.C. In this table the Government Actuary brings forth figures which show that the balance of total customs and excise revenue retained by the Commonwealth will be £1,710,000, and that this will be required by the Federal Government to carry on with; and from this he deduces that we must have a customs tariff which will produce something over £7,181,000. I want to show where the actuary is inaccurate in that. If hon. members will follow the figures, they will find that £1,710,000

includes a sum of £233,000, the cost of collecting the whole of the customs revenue throughout the federated colonies. The actuary has evidently multiplied the balance of £1,710,000 by four—the three-fourths, which is returnable to the different States, and the one-fourth which the Federal Government retains—making a total of over £6,000,000, and then he has added £233,000 to that sum, to make up the total of £7,073,000, which he states the Federal Government will extract from the customs.

**THE PREMIER:** The Federal Government will want more than that.

**MR. WILSON:** I want to prove that the Federal Government will not want more, but less. The correct method is to deduct the £233,000 from the £1,710,000, and multiply the result by four, which gives the total of £5,908,000; then to add the cost of collection, namely, £233,000; and the result is the customs revenue of £6,141,000, which is all that is required under these figures.

**THE PREMIER:** It is generally admitted in all the other colonies that the Federal Government will want an eight-million tariff.

**MR. WILSON:** I am not arguing what is generally admitted, but I am going on the figures placed before us by the Government Actuary.

**THE PREMIER:** The Government Actuary does not under-state the case.

**MR. WILSON:** It is not an understatement, but a miscalculation.

**THE PREMIER:** You have not read the clause aright, perhaps.

**MR. WILSON:** I thought I could read.

**THE PREMIER:** Read the "Braddon clause," as you call it, and see.

**MR. WILSON:** I am dealing now with the Government Actuary's report, and he goes on to prove that Western Australia is going to lose money. That, I take it, is the basis of the Premier's opposition to federation.

**THE PREMIER:** There are two or three constructions to be placed on Clause 87, known as the "Braddon clause."

**MR. WILSON:** Exactly; and when the Premier places his construction before me, I shall be prepared to consider it and to debate it if necessary. At present I am putting my construction on the Actuary's figures, and I say the figures are wrong.

**THE PREMIER:** The Actuary has placed a different construction on Clause 87 from what you do.

**MR. WILSON:** I am not speaking of that. Why does the Premier not get up and prove that my contention is wrong. If the figures are worked out, it will be seen that it is impossible to prove the Government Actuary right.

**THE PREMIER:** Well, we say the matter wants investigation.

**MR. WILSON:** I think I have sufficiently shown that the Actuary's report, which is supposed to convince us that we shall lose enormously by federation—in fact, according to the Premier it shows we shall be ruined if we accept federation—

**THE PREMIER:** I did not say anything of the sort.

**MR. WILSON:** If the Premier says he did not express that opinion, I must accept his statement; but I certainly understood him to say that he was afraid federation would mean ruination to Western Australia.

**THE PREMIER:** I am sure I did not say so.

**MR. WILSON:** And that, therefore, he courted inquiry by a select committee. The cause of his fear, if he does fear federation, is this national statement drawn up by the Government Actuary, and which I have proved, in my brief remarks, to be wrong; but I take it, or at least I hope, that what I have said has removed any fear the Premier may entertain. But I will now leave figures, which at any time are difficult to listen to. It has been stated, I think by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who is in favour of the motion and of delay, that the people of Western Australia should have the same right and power of amendment as the people of New South Wales.

**MR. MITCHELL:** They ought to have, at any rate.

**MR. WILSON:** And I am quite prepared to give the people of Western Australia that right. How did the people of New South Wales exercise the right of amendment? They exercised it by having the Bill submitted to them for acceptance or rejection; that is how they amended the Commonwealth Bill in New South Wales at the first referendum. The Premier went on to the hustings and said

"Here is the Bill, I advise you to reject it, because it does not suit New South Wales." and the people did reject it. Then Mr. Reid set to work to negotiate with the other Premiers, and had the Bill amended to suit his colony. That is the line that ought to be adopted in Western Australia by the Premier. Let the Bill go before the people, and let the Premier go before the people and tell them that unless there be a transcontinental railway Western Australia will be ruined by federation. Let him go before the people with these figures, and tell them that if we join federation we shall be ruined, and advise the people to reject the Bill. If the people throw out the Bill, well and good; we shall have done our duty. I shall go before the people and tell them that, in my opinion, ruination will not follow our joining federation, but that the possibilities are we shall gain an immense advantage. Of course, the people may believe the Premier, and if they do they will be quite right in throwing out the Bill, and then we can set to work, if we have the power and the other colonies will permit us, to dictate terms on which we will enter federation. A great deal has been said in the debate with regard to altering the Commonwealth Bill by submitting amendments to the Imperial Parliament, but I maintain, though of course I may be wrong, that we shall have no power whatever to amend the Bill in that way. Federation is an accomplished fact, so far as two or three of the other colonies are concerned, and undoubtedly will very shortly be an accomplished fact in Queensland and Tasmania; and I do not think that any request to the Imperial Parliament for amendment of the Bill from this colony would receive consideration for a moment. I do not see how the Imperial Parliament could delay the federation of the colonies which have accepted the Bill, simply because Western Australia wishes to impose additional terms. To my mind the Enabling Bill, which ought to be introduced at once, should set forth the stipulations and conditions of the Government, and then we could debate the question; and if the House pass an Enabling Bill containing these amendments, it can go before the people. One of the stipulations might be the construction of the transcontinental railway, and

the people could vote on the Bill as it is, and also on the question of the railway, and possibly on additional financial or protectionist clauses if they wished. Surely these questions could be put to the referendum, and there is no need to say as the Premier has said, that none of the Bill shall go to the people. The Premier says that if the select committee do not report favourably—if they show by their report that it would be injurious for Western Australia to accept the Bill—he would not allow it to go to the people, and he hopes the House will not allow it to go. That is a wrong attitude to take up, because it is our bounden duty to submit the Bill to the people of Western Australia. Along with the measure, let there be submitted any alteration which the Parliament think ought to be submitted, and let the people vote and their decision be final.

**THE PREMIER:** Where has our constitution gone to—overboard?

**MR. WILSON:** The object of hon. members who are speaking in favour of debating the question at once, or at any rate in favour of the amendment that the question be submitted to the people not later than February, is to get some finality. We do not want the question humbugged about any longer. We do not want the question to be referred to the committee, come before us, and then be referred back and thrown out, or so altered that it will not be worth having. We want some direct statement from the Premier that he will keep his promise to refer this matter to the people, and refer it at a certain date. That is all we ask, and surely the amendment is a proper one which the Government might very well accept. I hope the Premier will see that it is in the interests of the country, and in the interests of Parliament also, that the amendment should be accepted, and that there should be some finality on the question, so that we may know what course is going to be taken and that within a reasonable time it will be submitted for the rejection or acceptance of the people. I do not want to sit down before admitting that I do see some grave objections so far as the fiscal clauses of the Commonwealth Bill are concerned; and one great objection is connected with the gradual reduction of the customs tariff of this colony. As I

understand the Bill, we have a perfect right to retain our existing duties, reducing them 20 per cent. each year over five years. If that be so, all I can say is that the proposal is almost impracticable, because it will interfere with our commerce and cause trade disorganisation, if at the end of each year we have to bring our duties down 20 per cent. That can be seen at once, because it is patent on the face of it. If merchants and others who are importing goods to Western Australia, know that on the 31st December the duties will be reduced one-fifth, trade will practically be paralysed, because merchants will suspend trade for the last two or three months before the termination of the year, in order to get rid of stocks on which they have paid full duty.

**MR. VOSPER:** And consequently increase the price of commodities.

**MR. WILSON:** And increase the price of commodities, no doubt. I can see that this going on year after year will cause such a state of disorganisation in trade and commercial circles that it would be better far to sweep away the duties at once and enter into federation, putting up with the reduced revenue which the Premier says he is afraid of, and bringing our expenses within our income. The only question that appeals to me very forcibly on this matter is as to whether the reduction of the duties would not increase our population—whether federation would attract many people to our shores, or the reverse. I am strongly of opinion, personally, that as soon as federation is an accomplished fact, and as soon as our customs duties are reduced or swept away, an enormous increase of population will be caused. As I said before, we have got the natural advantages of the country, and there is nothing we can do here, and there is no Bill we can pass in Parliament, and no Commonwealth Bill that could take those advantages away from us; and, given easy conditions of livelihood in this country, similar conditions to those in the other colonies, we can come to no other conclusion than that federation is bound to have the effect of attracting population to our shores, and, consequently, giving us the increased prosperity which we all hope for.

**MR. VOSPER:** No rejection of the Bill can take away our natural advantages.

**MR. WILSON :** I have stated that emphatically. The high cost of living, with the high revenues and enormous duties, certainly keep people away, as they have done in the past, and it is those disadvantages I wish to see swept away.

**MR. VOSPER :** We can revive the fiscal policy independently of federation.

**MR. WILSON :** In conclusion, I would like to say once more that I object to the question being submitted to a select committee, although I do not care much so far as I am concerned whether it is submitted to a committee or not, so long as a definite date is fixed on which it will be submitted to the people. If we know definitely it is going to be submitted to the people in February, I am content to sink all opposition to the select committee. Let the Government have the select committee and get all the evidence they can, by all means; but let us have also the amendment, and have a date definitely fixed when this great measure, which is of such vital importance to every man, woman, and child in the country, shall be submitted to the people for their acceptance or rejection.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather) :** The amendment moved by the member for East Perth (Mr. James), which is interpolated, if I may so describe it, in the motion, does not, so far as I understand, object in the least to the appointment of the proposed select committee. But the object of the amendment is certainly definite in one respect, namely, that the Bill must be referred to the people; and the consideration of this proposition involves some very serious constitutional difficulties which I am sure the member for East Perth (Mr. James) is fully aware of. If this House passes the amendment, then no matter what the report of the joint select committee may be—and that is only by the way, for there are higher considerations involved—no matter what the deliberations of the House may be, or whether the House should think this a Bill fraught with evil consequences to this colony and ought not to be submitted to the people, the House will have stultified itself. Hon. members will agree with me that that is the natural inference to be drawn. That being so, we, as members of Parliament, ought to accept the responsibility

which belongs to our position; and when a measure is brought before the House, a member must determine whether he will do his duty, and deal with it as his position entitles him to do, or whether he lacks the moral courage to express the representative opinion of his electors. If once it is admitted that a member of the Legislative Assembly shall be permitted to go back, so to speak, on his responsibility, and evade it by sending the consideration of this question to the electors, then he gets rid of a large and very onerous share of his duty as a representative; because, if I may say so, that is a distinct violation of the rights and privileges of this Chamber. Having accepted the position to represent your electors, and having a measure such as this put before you for consideration, then instead of determining whether it is for the good of the country that it shall pass into law or not, you evade that responsibility by saying, "Let this Bill go to the people: we will not take the responsibility." If any member believes the referendum is the proper way to settle this question, then I say the introduction of the referendum into our constitutional system is certainly an innovation in this colony, if it comes about, and the referendum has certainly been for the first time practised in any of the Australian colonies. It is an invasion on the constitution; and once you introduce that system, the great danger to be apprehended is, will it stop at such questions as this?

**MR. VOSPER :** I hope not.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL :** Then if you carry it to its logical sequence, there may be times when you will have mob rule in the country, when, instead of having a deliberative Assembly to take the responsibility of discussing such a question as this, you may get rid of the responsibility by sending the question to be determined by mob rule. Surely it is a good thing for this country that we have not got mob rule. It is said that the introduction of this amendment will improve the motion in its effect, because it will give to this House the opportunity of fully discussing the principles of the Bill. But the motion in itself provides for that, because it provides that the select committee must bring up their report not later than the 5th of September next; and then, having got the report, it will be



for this House to determine whether it will adopt or reject that report. The object therefore is that the select committee may be able to obtain evidence and gather detailed information, more particularly on the financial clauses of the Bill, and by that means will we have an opportunity of perusing the evidence to be laid on the table of the House. Then will be the time to discuss, with full knowledge, the pros and cons with reference to the constitution of the Commonwealth. Because the Government propose to refer the Bill to a select committee, it is said this is for the purpose of evading discussion. On the contrary I ask, and I do hope some hon. members on the opposite side will bear this in mind, where is the evidence that such is the intention? If there had been any limitation as to when the select committee should bring up their report, there might have been some ground for that inference; but inasmuch as that is not so, and in view of the limitation of time, how can the contention be maintained? I wish to point out again that if we adopt the amendment, no matter what consideration hon. members may give to the Bill, no matter what conclusion they may arrive at as to whether the Bill is good, bad, or indifferent, you must then, whether you like it or not, pass the Bill on to the people. I again urge hon. members to reflect and ask, is this a wise thing to do? Shall we not undertake ourselves the responsibility, having regard to the fact that a general election is not far off, to determine for ourselves whether this Bill is good or not for the country? If we say it is not good, then every member will be a traitor to his country if he does not accept the responsibility and abide by it. I was pained to hear my friend opposite, the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), make a few observations this evening which I am sure, on reflection, he would not repeat; for the hon. member at the commencement of his address imported heat into his argument, which he does not generally do, and I do not think he meant it; but he did say one thing in the heat of the moment that I am sure he will be sorry for, when he said the calculations prepared by the Government Actuary were practically prepared under instruction from the Premier, to bring out a

certain state of things which was necessary for the Premier's purpose. I think the hon. member, on reflection, would not make that statement a second time. It was made in the heat of the moment, and I am sure that, knowing as we do that he does not generally make personal aspersions, he will be sorry now for what he said. I do not know why it is that some members in discussing this question do so with a party element in their speeches, for although we all agreed that the party element is to be entirely dissociated from this discussion, yet somehow it first comes timidly forward, like the little mouse beneath the petticoat, then retreats again, and after a while comes out more boldly. I dare say that, after all, it is only when the heat of debate has reached a certain pressure that remarks are made in that spirit; and, on reflection, we all recognise that so far as parties are concerned this is a question in which party considerations are utterly immaterial. I maintain that, in discussing this amendment, we have to regard only the effect which the amendment will have on the question before us. If the Government chose to take advantage of the literal meaning of this amendment, they could delay the putting forth of the referendum till February next, when this House would not be sitting, and when the country would be on the eve of a general election.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Perhaps.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is no doubt about it. If the House should think, after members have fully discussed the subject, that the referendum on the Bill ought to be taken, and having got the evidence from the select committee, then this Chamber, and the other Chamber will make up their minds and determine whether the Bill shall go to the people or not. But, in the terms of the amendment, the House cannot take that position, because this amendment will determine once for all, if carried, that so far as this Chamber is concerned it cannot reconsider the question, but must transmit the Bill unaltered to the people for their decision. I take it that every member of this Chamber should accept the responsibility of the position he occupies, by determining for himself, as representing his constituency, whether the Bill ought to go to the people or not.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): I do not intend to occupy more than a few minutes, for the reason that the Government have intimated their intention of bringing down a considerable number of measures which are of a character that the people have been long clamouring for; therefore it is my earnest desire to see those measures placed on the statute book. I am going to support the amendment, and my reasons are that the difference between the course proposed by the Government and that proposed by the member for East Perth, is that the course proposed by the Government will mean that, if this Bill ever does get to the people, it will be in the shape not of a referendum on the Bill as presented to us now, but will become a party question at the next general election. If that course be adopted, we shall have the Bill referred to a select committee; and it is questionable whether the time fixed for the select committee to present its report will not be extended by this House. It seems to me that the probabilities are that the time will be extended, because if I remember aright the Premier said to-night that it was almost impossible for us to discuss this measure inside of twelve months.

THE PREMIER: I did not say that. I said it would be better to spend twelve months on it, than make a great mistake.

MR. OLDHAM: I placed a literal construction on the Premier's expression, just as I did on the agreement he came to with the other Premiers; but I suppose he wishes me to read between the lines of his remarks this evening as he also wishes the country to read between the lines of the agreement he made with the other Premiers. If this amendment is carried, it will mean that this Bill will go to the people entirely free from any outside issues; that it will not be mixed up with questions as to whether one hon. member is in favour of the Forrest Ministry or whether he is an Oppositionist, but that the Bill will be entirely free from any shadow of party politics, and I think that is the object every member who has a seat in this House ought to have in view in sending the Bill to the people. I was much struck by the remarks of the Premier with regard to his attitude on the referendum, and he was followed in the same strain by the

Attorney General. The Premier said, "If I believe the Bill is detrimental to the interests of the people of this colony, I will take good care, as far as I am concerned, that it does not go to the people." Well, that is a pretty rough answer. First of all we have to agree that the Bill is a good Bill before we send it to the people; or, in the words of the Attorney General, we are traitors to the people. I wonder why that argument did not strike hon. gentlemen on the front Ministerial bench when they proposed to send to the people the question of payment of members.

THE PREMIER: Not for their decision.

MR. OLDHAM: Then what do you wish for?

THE PREMIER: To have an expression of opinion: a very different thing altogether.

MR. OLDHAM: I am surprised at the line the right hon. gentleman takes. We want him to adopt the same principle again, and to send this Bill for an expression of opinion by the people. Will the right hon. gentleman do that?

MR. JAMES: He is busy.

MR. OLDHAM: Will the right hon. gentleman do in this case just as he says he will do in the other case, send this Commonwealth Bill to the people, not for their decision, but for an expression of opinion? Is he prepared to do that? We see now what the object of the right hon. gentleman is; and surely the people of the country are practically satisfied now as to what is the Premier's attitude on the question of federation, for I do not believe he has the slightest intention to support federation.

THE PREMIER: Are you in favour of it?

MR. OLDHAM: No. I am not in favour of it. I believe this Bill is one of the worst that was ever conceived; that it is one of the worst Bills ever put before sensible people for their adoption.

THE PREMIER: Then you will vote for my motion.

MR. OLDHAM: I shall certainly not do anything of the kind. I am going to vote for sending this Bill to the people, and that is the only principle that ought to have been introduced into this discussion from first to last. We should have nothing to do with federation at the present time.

**THE PREMIER:** We do not agree.

**MR. OLDHAM:** I do not suppose we ever shall agree; but what I want to know is, why the right hon. gentleman is not honest, and why he does not take the people of this country into his confidence. If this is a bad Bill, if it is going to bring ruin and disaster upon the country, why does he not arise with all the weight of his great influence, and tell the people of the colony that it is a bad Bill, and advise them not to vote for it? I believe if he did that, if he expressed that opinion boldly, he would be followed by a far greater number of people than will support him in the course he is at present pursuing.

**MR. HIGHAM:** The select committee is going to do that.

**MR. OLDHAM:** What is the use of talking about a select committee? The hon. member thoroughly understands that if this Bill goes to a select committee, then, after the committee's report has been made, there will have to be a general election, and hon. members will have this federation question—"Are you a federalist or are you an anti-federalist?"—tacked on to the general questions brought up at an election; and after the election, when the question again comes before this House, if it so happen that the larger number of members be returned against federation, then, notwithstanding the fact that the people may be in favour of federation, this Bill will never be passed. And that is precisely the position into which we are drifting. I desire to see this great national question decided by the people apart from any other issue; and that is the reason why I intend to vote for the amendment of the member for East Perth.

**MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra):** I have already expressed myself on the main question of the motion before the House, as strongly disapproving of the reference of this question to a select committee. However, in view of what I consider the great advantages to be attained by the amendment on that motion proposed by the member for East Perth (Mr. James), I am prepared to make a sacrifice of my objections to that suggestion, and to accept it, so that we may be sure that this Bill will be submitted to the people. That is the point I should like to emphasise, and also that the Bill should be

submitted to the people at a date which would enable Western Australia, if the Bill were accepted, to enter the Federal Commonwealth as an original State. Several hon. members who have spoken seem to think—they do not say so in so many words, but they infer—that, should the Bill go to the people, there can only be one result. I do not think such hon. members are altogether fair and correct in supposing that such a result would come to pass; because I for one cannot think that the people of Western Australia, if they were satisfied, if we pointed out to them, that this Bill was about to ruin their country—I cannot think that people who have lived in a country for a certain time, and who, we may reasonably suppose, will live in that country for some time to come, would willingly contribute to the ruin of that country by voting for a Bill which they know must be ruinous in its consequences.

**MR. MITCHELL:** They do not know anything about it.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** This discussion seems to have resolved itself into one as to whether the referendum shall take place on condition that the Bill is satisfactory to this Parliament or to the select committee only, or whether it should take place in any circumstances. We cannot say that this is a question of exact science. Having no data to go on, I suppose hon. members must be guided by their opinions; and in this connection I wish to register my opinion on the side of those who think that a referendum should take place in any circumstances—whether the select committee decide in favour of the present Bill, the draft of which is before the House, or whether they do not. The Attorney General has taken up what I think is, in the circumstances, a somewhat groundless stand with regard to the constitutionalism of this referendum. As far as I can make out, the referendum is quite as foreign to the constitutions of any of the Eastern colonies, where it has already been used, as it is to the constitution of this colony. I should think that if it is good enough for those colonies, it is good enough for us. One feels almost inclined to shudder at the "parlous state" in which the other colonies must be—those of them which have adopted this unconstitutional mode of finding out what the people think about a thing. Again,

the hon. and learned member says that any member who does not act upon his own responsibility with regard to this question, the like of which has never hitherto been before this Parliament, is a traitor to his constituents. I cannot agree with the Minister in that respect. I look at the subject in an altogether different light; and I think that any member who has that respect for his electors which an hon. member should have, cannot refuse to allow them the chance of saying "aye" or "no" on this great subject.

MR. VOSPER: If you cannot trust your electors, how are they going to trust you?

MR. KINGSMILL: Exactly. If you cannot trust your electors, the possibility and the probability is that they will cease to trust you, and will very likely show their want of trust at the next opportunity. Again, it appears to me that a somewhat supercilious attitude has been assumed towards the people during this discussion. Hon. members seem to think that the people are beings who cannot be educated—at all events, to see evil. It is maintained that they may be led to see good in the Bill, if this select committee approve of it, if this House approve of it; but only in those circumstances must the people have an opportunity of saying whether the Bill is good or bad. I would ask hon. members if it is not quite as possible for the electors of this colony to see that this is a bad Bill, when it is pointed out to them that it is bad, as it is for them to see that it is a good Bill; and I think we take up an altogether illogical position in denying the right of the electors to say that the Bill has defects, if such defects exist, which would be disastrous to this colony. I think the Premier was somewhat unfair in that portion of his speech which attributed a desire to burk discussion to those gentlemen who were in favour of the amendment of the member for East Perth. I would point out to the Premier that some of us here, at all events, who are against this method by which all discussion is to be handed over to a select committee—that some of us who were against that idea have to a certain extent come round, and are now prepared to accept that proposal, so long as the right hon. gentleman is willing to assure us that he is in earnest about the question by consenting to refer the matter to the people of Western

Australia. In conclusion, I wish to say that I purposely omitted to make any reference to the merits of federation, because I feel that, at this juncture, my position towards federation is simply that of any other elector of Western Australia, and that federation is not the subject under discussion—that I am not here to decide for my constituents whether federation is good or bad for Western Australia. If it should fall to my lot to give them suggestions, or to help to educate them as to whether federation is good or bad for this colony, I shall gladly do so; but looking at federation as an abstract question, I feel that now is not the time to discuss it, and that we are here during this discussion simply to find out the best method of ascertaining the feelings of the electors of Western Australia on that great subject. I will support the amendment.

MR. LYALL HALL (Perth): The amendment of the member for East Perth seems to me to be somewhat like the Commonwealth Bill—a little deceptive. It requires a good deal of looking into. At the first blush I think the amendment commended itself to many of us, because it seemed to ensure the Bill going to the people. But, as the Premier has pointed out, the amendment really defeats itself; because, even if the Bill were to pass through this House, it is very doubtful if it could be got through another place. There is no doubt that the hon. member's amendment means that, whatever may be the suggestions of the select committee, whatever the select committee may find, or what they may say regarding the Bill as it now stands being hurtful to this colony, the Bill, and nothing but the Bill as it now stands shall be put before the people. I at first thought that the amendment of the hon. member meant that the Bill could be put before the people in two ways: that the Bill, as it now stands, could be put before the people, or that the question could be put to them in this way: "Are you in favour of the Bill with certain amendments?"

MR. LEAKE: So it could.

MR. LYALL HALL: "Are you in favour of the Bill as it now stands, or are you in favour of it with certain suggested amendments?" The amendment of the hon. member does not do anything of the

kind. There is no doubt whatever that, if we vote for this amendment, we must, whatever may be the suggestions of the select committee, put the Bill as it now stands before the people without any amendment whatever. It certainly seems to me that certain motions and amendments are made on the other (Opposition) side of the House, with the idea of trapping members on this side into voting a certain way.

MR. OLDHAM: Vote according to your convictions. That is all you ought to do.

MR. LYALL HALL: Many members of the Opposition are undoubtedly actuated by the principle I have just enunciated. I have never been in favour of federation; and I became still more antagonistic to it when I learned in the Eastern colonies, in the two larger provinces, of the intense jealousy, the wilful misrepresentation, and the great ignorance which prevail there—in Victoria and in New South Wales—regarding the colony of Western Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is too thin.

MR. LYALL HALL: I wish the hon. member would find an interjection of his own, instead of following the lead of Mr. Gillies. I say that the public Press in the Eastern colonies did not lose, and do not lose, any opportunity of maligning this colony; and when I was in the East I could not help thinking of what I have said before, "God help Western Australia if these men are to have a hand in guiding the destinies of that fair colony." I became still more antagonistic to federation when I heard the federation speeches in Victoria some twelve months ago. One of these was the speech of the Premier of Victoria, Sir George Turner, who, in speaking to a very large audience in the Town Hall, St. Kilda, in answer to the objection which was raised by the two largest colonies, that too much representation had been given to the smaller States in the Senate, said—I think I can almost quote his exact words—that the interests of Victoria and of New South Wales were practically identical, more so probably than those of any other two colonies; and that, on all large questions affecting New South Wales and Victoria, those two colonies would no doubt vote together; and he pointed out that, in the event of New South Wales and Victoria voting to-

gether, they could out-vote all the smaller States combined. That statement was received in the St. Kilda Town Hall, by a Victorian audience, with applause. Therefore, I must say that I was from the first antagonistic to federation, and that, after hearing it discussed in this House, and especially after the very able speech of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), I feel myself bound to say that I am still further opposed to federation. In conclusion, I only wish to state that I intend to support the Premier's motion, because I believe in this Bill being sent to a select committee composed of some of the best men in this House, of which committee I hope the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) will be one, and the member for North-East Coolgardie another; and I think that further light will thus be thrown on this Bill, and that, if it be found that the Bill is detrimental to the best interests of this colony, it should then be put before the people in two ways: "Are you in favour of the Bill as it now stands? or Are you in favour of the Bill with amendments as suggested by the select committee or by the House?" I shall therefore vote against the amendment of the member for East Perth.

MR. JAMES: Why can you not decide on that reference now?

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): Personally, I wish to say that I am in favour of the member for East Perth's amendment, for the reason that it will define the date on which this Bill shall be sent to the people. I have been twitted as one of the members who have cried about the country: "The Bill to the people." I have said "The Bill to the people;" and I say "The Bill to the people" to-day. What I want, however, is this: I want the people to understand the Bill when it is sent to them, and free discussion on the subject must tend to educate them. The trouble to-day is a want of interest. The public have no interest in the Bill; and why? Because the public are of opinion that the Bill will never be sent to them for consideration. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] That is the people's conclusion; and the amendment seeks to remove that objection by giving the people to understand that upon such a date, or prior to such a date, they will be called upon to decide for or against this

Bill; and, if the amendment were carried, it would set the people thinking, because they would understand that they were to have an opportunity of considering the Bill at a later date.

MR. VOSPER: They would then set to work to examine the Bill.

MR. HOLMES: The reason is obvious. The people are not considering the subject, because they have come to the conclusion that it is altogether outside their jurisdiction; because they think that Parliament—that a majority of hon. members—will decide that the Bill shall never go to the electors; and until we do away with that feeling, which undoubtedly exists, we cannot expect any public interest in the Bill to be displayed. There is no denying it, everything tends to the conclusion that we cannot make progress until we give to the people what they reasonably ask. If the amendment is carried, those who view the matter carelessly now will become interested; we will have the public interested; we shall have the select committee producing evidence, and if the evidence taken before the select committee, combined with an interested public, cannot forward the question, I do not know what will. Personally, I have always been opposed to federation, and the more I study the Bill the worse it gets. Still, I only appear in the matter as an elector, and will, when called upon as an elector, vote against the Bill. When the Bill is before the people, I am going to do all I can to enlighten the people, to show them the faults that are in the Bill, and to help them to reject the measure. I am not going to have the people, who have been told up to a certain point that they shall have an opportunity of deciding the question, informed at the last moment that Parliament are going to usurp their claim. The Premier went out of his way the other night, when introducing the motion, for the purpose of twitting me with inconsistency.

THE PREMIER: What an impudent thing to do!

MR. HOLMES: I will say this: there is not a more consistent member in this House than myself, and no one knows it better than the Premier.

THE PREMIER: I do not know it.

MR. HOLMES: It was through the Premier's inconsistency and my con-

sistency that we could not agree; hence the separation.

THE PREMIER: You never let me know anything about it.

MR. HOLMES: It is not my duty to come to you. I know that some members on the other (Government) side go about for instruction, but that is not my way of doing things.

THE PREMIER: Get all you can and then go.

MR. HOLMES: That is what the Government supporters do. I have been twitted by the Premier with inconsistency; let me point out to the House what a sinner the Premier is. There is no greater sinner in this House, especially on this subject of federation, than the Premier himself. The Premier attended the Convention in the Eastern colonies when the Bill was submitted and amended, and when the conclusions were arrived at to which he assented; then he comes back and makes a speech in St. George's Hall, on federation, saying that he would refer the Bill to the people, and that there was no more ardent federationist than himself. Later on the Premier attended the Premiers' Conference, and he admitted the other night, although at the Conference he agreed to what had taken place and attached his signature to the agreement, as well as giving his word, that those present at the Conference were too much for him. He admitted that Mr. Reid, well, "ran rings" round him.

MR. DOHERTY: He cannot run very fast, you know.

MR. HOLMES: Mr. Reid went to the Conference of Premiers and said, "Gentlemen, these are my terms, and on these terms, and no other conditions, will I federate." The Premier says to-day that he resides in the best colony; that there is everything in favour of Western Australia; that this is decidedly the best colony of the group; that we hold the key of the position; that we have a great and glorious future before us, and that we can defy competition: he tells us this to-day. I think he should have told the Premiers at the Conference the same thing, and have explained the position of this colony to them; he should have told them the conditions on which we would federate, and have said "These are my conditions, the

conditions only on which Western Australia can federate." That was the time to suggest the transcontinental railway, and to make the other suggestions which we hear from him now. The truth to my mind is this, that after leading the people of Western Australia up to a certain point—the Bill has never been asked for, the people have never asked for federation, the Premier thrust it on the colony, and when the people were within reach of the goal the Premier does not say this, he has not the courage to say it, but he makes the people believe that they shall not have the Bill referred to them. That is the position. He does not say "We cannot federate if you want to," but his actions tend to make one believe that that is the conclusion at which he has arrived.

MR. JAMES: He does not know which thimble the pea is under.

MR. HOLMES: Since the Premier has returned from the Conference of Premiers, where he agreed to everything, Mr. Reid's suggestions and the amendments, he has kept silent. If the Premier is honest, he would say that on reconsideration, after coming home from the Conference of Premiers, where he had a good time and perhaps forgot himself, he had found he was wrong, and I believe he would then get a lot more support; but we cannot drag anything out of him as to what he intends to do in the future. We know what he has done in the past—he has told us federation is a good thing; now we are told he has his doubts about it, but he does not give any reason why he has altered his mind. The Premier told us the other night that there was one clause in the Bill that was a blot, and must be removed: he referred to the clause which states that the Commonwealth cannot construct a railway through any State without the consent of that State. The Premier considers that is a blot on the Bill; I consider it is one of the best clauses in the Bill, and I will do my best to oppose any suggestion to alter the clause. Why should not a State have the right to say where a railway should be constructed? There is not a better clause in the Bill, to my mind, than the clause reserving to a State the right to say whether a railway should be constructed through that State or not. It is a different matter with the transcon-

tinental railway: that should have been dealt with previously; that should have been one of the conditions that the Premier ought to have made at the Conference of Premiers, and not one of the suggestions which he proposes to bring in now. The Premier has altered his mind on the subject of federation—we can see it, although we cannot drag anything out of him; he has altered his mind on many subjects—on the redistribution of seats, on women's suffrage, and then he has the audacity to charge me with inconsistency. The Premier went further than that when he said he would avail himself of the first opportunity to "wipe me out." My mind is made up. "Cæsar has spoken;" and when Cæsar speaks we know what he means. Before the Premier has that opportunity of carrying out his threat, he will hear from me on matters concerning the welfare of the country. I would not be at all surprised to find the Premier bringing in a Bill making it a crime for a person to have an opinion of his own. I have no doubt that he would do so if he thought he would receive the support necessary to carry such a Bill through. I do not think I need say anything further, except that to be consistent after my previous utterances, I am going to support the amendment.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): It is not my intention to say anything with regard to the Commonwealth Bill, but I think it is necessary to say a few words in regard to the motion before the House. The motion and amendment appear to me to be one and the same thing, except the additional words that the Bill should go before the people at a certain date. Several members seem to think that in consequence of this amendment, the Bill will not go to a select committee.

MR. MORAN: What is the object of its going before a select committee?

MR. SOLOMON: To obtain as much information as possible.

MR. MORAN: What will happen then?

MR. SOLOMON: Then it will be a question for the House to decide.

MR. MORAN: That will not do. You are lost.

MR. SOLOMON: The National League has held several meetings in various parts of the colony, and at the close of almost

every meeting it has been decided by those present that the Bill should go before the people. I certainly think it is the duty of the gentlemen, members of this House and who are members of that League, to support the amendment to send the Bill before the people. This, I take it, is necessary, because the public have been led to believe that members of Parliament would support them on that point. The question appears to me to be this: is it not right to let the people see that it is the intention of the Government and Parliament to allow the Bill to go to the people, and to allow the people after the mature deliberation of the select committee, and also of Parliament, to decide upon the Bill, and to decide upon any amendment that may be placed before them? This appears to me to be the best way to settle the question. The report of the select committee is to be brought up about the 5th September, which will give six clear months until the end of February. Surely that is time enough in which to discuss the Bill, and all matters in connection with it, so that there can be a proper decision by the people one way or the other. I do not think it is right to say that the people in Western Australia are not capable of judging for themselves as to the good or bad effect of the Bill. I do not think we shall be doing wrong in fixing a date on which the Bill shall be placed before the people, both the Bill in its present condition and in an amended form.

MR. MORAN: Two referenda?

MR. SOLOMON: The Government say it shall come before Parliament, but if Parliament does not agree to the Bill, it shall not go to the people, whereas if Parliament does agree to the Bill, it shall go to them. If Parliament agree to the Bill, what good will it be to send the Bill to the people? because we feel sure that, if Parliament agree on a question of this kind, we shall have the people with us, as already the tendency is in that direction; therefore, if Parliament do not agree, those who put us here to vote on ordinary questions should have the power to say "yea" or "nay" on an important matter of this description.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): There is one result of the discussion, and it is this, that we have experienced several alarming

disappointments. I thought we should have obtained a definite expression of views from the right hon. the Premier, or, at any rate, that we should have heard something about the suggested amendments which it is thought the House ought to discuss. I say at once it is my intention to support the amendment, and I cannot conceive why members should object to the amendment, because it in no way interferes with the proposals made by the Premier. It is really a compromise, a reasonable and honest compromise, because it says in effect "We will give way to you on the question of the reference to the select committee, as long as we can secure from you a pledge that the Bill shall go to the people within a certain time."

MR. HIGHAM: "The" Bill.

MR. LEAKE: "The" Bill. I am not going to take that point now; but you need not fear that I shall avoid it, because I will answer you in a moment. I will ask members to notice that the original proposal was to refer the Bill to a select committee, to report not later than the 5th of September next. The amendment in no way interferes with that, but it adds an additional proviso, so to speak. We will give in to you on that point, but we ask, as a further concession, that we shall have an assurance that the matter shall go to the people not later than February. That is a long time after the House will have prorogued, and, of course, the meaning of the amendment is clearly that there shall be brought up an Enabling Bill, and, as I have pointed out before, this particular Bill as a schedule, and then we may discuss the pros and cons of federation, instead of practically wasting time in what seems to me to have been an unfruitful discussion, because we have not been able to deal fairly and honestly with federation in this debate.

MR. HIGHAM: Question?

MR. LEAKE: There is no question about it. If the hon. member had been in his place, he would have remembered what the Speaker said, and I think very properly said, about the right to discuss the Bill. I do not object to hon. members, such as the member for North Fremantle and the member for Perth, opposing this amendment, because they do so openly and honestly: in this respect they declare



themselves as unqualified opponents of federation.

MR. DOHERTY : I have not spoken.

MR. LEAKE : Did I say North Fremantle?

MR. DOHERTY : Yes.

MR. LEAKE : I meant Fremantle. I owe the hon. member an apology. He has not spoken except by way of interjection. (General laughter.) It was the hon. member for Fremantle and the hon. member for Perth. I say I am pleased to meet men like them, because we know exactly where we are in dealing with them, and I wish all other members would follow their lead. Let them, in fact, follow their lead instead of the lead of the Premier, for that would be far more satisfactory. I cannot help thinking the hon. gentleman has laid himself open to the remark made by the member for East Perth, and I am not quite certain that I did not say something in the same strain myself, as to his attempting to burk discussion on the question. If I did not do so, it was because I did not think of it for the moment, and I will say so now. I have no doubt at all that the intention is to delay this matter, and that is to be regretted, because if we cannot get this reference to the people before February next, we shall be in the throes of a general election, and it will be impossible then to keep this question free from party politics and local discussions, and I appeal to members to compromise this so-called dispute in the way suggested by the member for East Perth. If that be done, I will give my undertaking to help any member, if he is in favour of federation, to discuss this Bill freely and openly in public. And I will do more than that : I will discuss it with those who are opposed to me, but I do want to debate the question free from personal or party feeling. The Government have laid upon the table this evening a telegram received from the Premier of New South Wales, and I do not agree with those members who suggest there is any attempt on the part of that right hon. gentleman to dictate to this country, or to our Government. I myself think this telegram expresses in clear and emphatic language really what are the views entertained by himself and the other Premiers of the Australian colonies, and I will read it :—

I am authorised by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania, to reply to your telegram. There are vital differences between the cases of New South Wales and Queensland and that of West Australia. The request for amendments and a Conference came from New South Wales after the Convention draft Bill had been submitted to the electors and had failed to pass by the statutory majority. In reference to the one amendment asked for and obtained by Queensland, that Colony had not been represented in the Convention, and had not gone over the draft Bill in both Houses and offered suggestions to the Convention as West Australia did. Further, after you had, at the Melbourne Conference, urged certain suggestions unsuccessfully, you joined in the agreement we all entered into to submit a Federal Enabling Bill to our respective Parliaments, providing for a vote of the electors being taken on the Federal Constitution as amended. We do not possess any right, nor do we desire, to interfere with the action of your Government, Parliament, or people in submitting the Constitution to any scrutiny locally thought advisable. Our simple point is this. We called upon you to submit the Constitution to a vote of the people within a reasonable time, or rather to do your best and the best of the Government to induce Parliament to take that course. We again express our confidence that you will do that, and thus fulfil your agreement with your brother Premiers. Any hope of putting pressure upon us to consent to further amendments in the Bill you should dismiss from your mind as absolutely hopeless.

MR. WOOD : Dear me!

MR. LEAKE : I do not think the member for West Perth should treat a formal communication like this so lightly. I regard it as one of very great importance, because I cannot help thinking that by our tacit acceptance of the position the Premier took up we have approved of his action, and as a Parliament we ought, in my opinion, to support it. I never heard a rumour outside, or in the Press, that the Premier was to be blamed for what he did; but on all hands, and up to the very last moment, the people have been led to suppose—and it has been pointed out time after time—that the Bill will be submitted to them for discussion. It was never understood that Parliament should declare necessarily “aye” or “nay” for the Bill, although it is open to them, perhaps, to do so; but, whatever may be the opinion of Parliament, it was always intended that the opinion of the people should be taken, and that telegram bears out the contention which has come from those who have spoken in favour of the

amendment, that we want to keep faith with everybody. We want to keep faith with our neighbours, and we also want to keep faith with our own electors, and to let them discuss the Bill. What the result of that discussion or vote may be should not, I think, influence our opinions at the present moment, but we ought to have such discussion, and, since we cannot amend the Bill as a constitutional measure, it must, of necessity, go to the people to vote "aye" or "nay" upon it. It is urged that this is not correct, and that the people should have an opportunity of declaring in favour of or against certain proposed amendments. Unhappily we do not know what those amendments are, because we cannot draw the Premier upon this subject, nor will he disclose his personal attitude with regard to it, or deny the accusations that are brought against him that he desires to upset the federation movement. Therefore, the only possible course open to us—I do not care whether it is constitutional or not—is to discuss these proposed, suggested, or contemplated amendments on the Enabling Bill; and whilst we can send to the people this Draft Constitution Bill as amended at the Premiers' Conference, for a direct vote "aye" or "nay," we may also have a second paragraph, as it were, and ask the people to vote "aye" or "nay" upon the suggested amendments which the House adopt. We have hardly time enough to go to the people and ask them to say what amendments they suggest; and amendments like this are generally made in committee of the whole House. It would be impossible to expect to have a committee of the whole colony, and it naturally follows that the people's representatives here are the proper persons to frame the suggested amendments. Then I say we can vote upon the Bill approved by New South Wales, and we can also vote upon the proposed amendments which this House may or may not carry. Suppose a majority of this House say they do not want any of the suggested amendments, or that when we get into committee it is found impracticable to frame amendments, then there will only be the Bill to go to the people. If, on the other hand, a majority of members declare some amendments should be suggested, we can take the vote on these

as easily as we can on the amended Bill. Why, therefore, all this unnecessary argument, and feeling almost, introduced into the discussion I really am at a loss to understand. I honestly say that the only inference I can draw from the whole position and proceeding is that the Premier does not want federation at all, and, moreover, he does not want any discussion on the matter. I cannot help thinking that is the position, and I am sorry for it, because I should like to see the question determined—faced, at any rate, at once, and if possible determined. If we know at the next general election that federation is not possible, we will not be troubled with its discussion, and we can frame or discuss the future policy of the Government on that understanding. It is a most important question, one which I am afraid has not occupied the attention of hon. members quite so deeply as it ought to have done. I myself feel uncommonly strongly on the subject, and intend to support the amendment, because I regard it as a compromise. I have told the member for East Perth (Mr. James) that I do not believe in the select committee, because I do not think there can be any good result; but I am willing to accept the select committee, if an undertaking be given that the Bill will be referred to the people. I do not think there is any hostility or party feeling in that attitude, and if there is party discussion introduced at all, it has come from the other side of the House. That is evident when the Premier indulges either in the censure of the member for East Perth (Mr. James), or in eulogy of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper). It is not sound argument for the Premier to say that he does not believe in this matter being brought into the House because it is going to be defeated; that is an argument I cannot appreciate.

MR. JAMES: He is going to defeat it himself.

MR. LEAKE: That is it, I suppose; but we do not fear the situation. We ask that the Bill be brought in, and if Parliament defeat it, Parliament must accept the responsibility. Members who vote will have to answer for their action, I presume, some day or another; but it looks very much as if there were some hon. members afraid to face a discussion

and direct vote on the question, and, therefore, we have this unnecessary evasion and prolongation of discussion.

THE PREMIER: We will have the direct vote by and by.

MR. LEAKE: Then I ask the Premier, if that is so, why not agree to the amendment of the member for East Perth?

THE PREMIER: He ought to assist me instead of opposing me.

MR. LEAKE: I will assist you.

THE PREMIER: I am speaking of the member for East Perth.

MR. LEAKE: I will assist the Premier in the discussion of this federal question, if he will permit me. I will be glad to do so, as I have said before, and say so again.

THE PREMIER: Then wait until after the select committee.

MR. LEAKE: Give me an assurance that you will take steps to introduce the Enabling Bill into Parliament before the session closes. That is all I ask, and surely it is a reasonable request. The Premier shakes his head.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. LEAKE: If I put the question again, the Premier will shake his head off, and I do not want any political disaster.

THE PREMIER: You must not anticipate.

MR. LEAKE: This is not a question of anticipation: it is a question of fair compromise and honest dealing.

THE PREMIER: Then wait a little while.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why not answer the question? It is a simple one.

THE PREMIER: Let the member for Central Murchison answer something for himself.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I cannot answer that question.

MR. LEAKE: I do not know that I can advance much more in favour of my position; but again I affirm that this amendment is a desirable compromise, though I know argument cannot convince some people. If hon. members are imbued with political honesty and a desire to do what is right and vote without any unnecessary dictation, they will see that there is reason in the request of the member for East Perth. It is a curious fact that most of the opponents of this amendment, who sit on the Government side,

although they have expressed themselves in favour of the principle involved, intend to vote against it. If there is any attempt to bring this question into the arena of party politics, I disclaim any responsibility. I submit that if the select committee can report by the 5th of September, it is not asking too much that, whether the report be favourable or unfavourable, we should have an opportunity of discussing the terms on which this Bill shall be sent to the people. That there must be delay is undoubted, because while the select committee are asked to report on the 5th of September, yet we know they will not be bound by that date, because the House which fixes the time can also extend it. There is no doubt that if the *personnel* of the committee is hostile to federation on any terms, the committee can delay the proceedings, and can hold back their report until long after the 5th of September.

THE PREMIER: Oh, no. You will probably be on the committee and I also, and we would not allow that sort of thing.

MR. LEAKE: We could not help it. The report could be delayed until it was too late to discuss the Enabling Bill in Parliament. It is idle to say we would not allow delay, because if there were fourteen members on the committee, the chances are that the Premier, whilst he can control a majority here, would not be able to control the select committee.

THE PREMIER: They would all be reasonable men, anxious to work.

MR. LEAKE: If there is a majority in favour of the Bill they will all be reasonable, but if there is not a majority in favour, they will be unreasonable: that is the old argument over again. But I ask hon. members to consider this question, and to avoid the possibilities of delay. We who are in favour of the Bill will accept the select committee, and allow all the discussion and all the time the Government want, even extending the time beyond the 5th of September, if we only get an assurance that an Enabling Bill will be brought in so that we may discuss it before the end of the session.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): I am somewhat diffident in addressing the House on this great question, so many able speeches having been made on the

subject in the Conventions from 1891 up to the present, and any additional information I could give must be very trivial. But there are reasons why I should like to address myself to the question, although I should probably have given a silent vote, did I not represent a constituency which, above all others, will be affected by the Bill if it be accepted by the people. The topographical position of North Fremantle is such that it must draw to it all, or nearly all, the great industries that may arise in the colony, seeing that there we have a waterway and also the railway, which, as most people know, give additional impetus to production and commerce. Then, there are other circumstances which make me feel rather nervous in giving a decided expression of opinion to-night. When I look at the analytical speech made by the member for East Perth (Mr. James) in Sydney, and then find the same gentleman addressing this House in nervous English in an opposite direction, I feel afraid I may myself turn round some day and give expression to views and opinions opposite to those I am attempting to put before the House at the present moment.

MR. JAMES: Jump with me this time.

MR. DOHERTY: I have no fear of the bogey raised by some hon. members as to the construction of the trans-continental railway from Port Darwin to South Australia. In the first place, that railway, to be at all useful, would have to be connected with a railway through Persia, part of Turkey, and in that way connected with Europe and England to give quick communication with Australia. Suppose we take it that such a railway is built, and a fast steamer running between Singapore and Port Darwin, the entire journey would probably be seventeen days and nights, fourteen of which would have to be spent on the railway; and very few people would undertake such an arduous journey, when they could voyage in a luxurious steamer from Marseilles, Naples, or some other continental port, and arrive at Fremantle within a reasonable time. In any case I do not think any railway which the South Australian Government might be able to build would come into general use for the next 50 years. Most of the country which it would traverse consists of barren

waste, or grows vegetation so rank as to be utterly useless for pastoral purposes, while other portions are so dry as to make it impossible to utilize them in any profitable way. My great objection to the federal movement is that it will abandon this colony entirely to the other colonies. The customs duties to-day received on inter-colonial goods amount to about £350,000, while the duty on foreign goods is about £550,000. Under federation we would lose that £350,000, because the Bill provides that after a term of five years the intercolonial duties are wiped out. But there is a greater loss still. The amount of the duty the Federal Government would put on foreign goods would be equal to 33 or 40 per cent. on the present rates, and the £550,000 paid on foreign goods to-day would, if we federated, drop down to about £275,000, or half, because the 40 per cent. would stop the importation from foreign markets, and we would find ourselves with a revenue of about £300,000 from customs. Can the Government be carried on with such a revenue? And there is another effect, graver still. The working men are those who cry out most for federation: would they benefit by the change? Emphatically they would not. The duty paid at the present on intercolonial goods is about 12½ per cent., but with a federal duty of 40 per cent. on foreign goods, the intercolonial people of New South Wales and South Australia, who are not philanthropists, would simply add another 7½ per cent. to the price, and the people of Western Australia who say they are already over-taxed, would have to pay that additional charge. Some philosophers who, like Mr. Matheson, M.L.C., dream of figures, tell us that under federation Western Australia would be a paradise, whilst other people say there are other forms of taxation besides customs. But the people at the present moment are up in arms about the dividend tax. That is a tax I do not object to if it can be made an income tax; but people who govern large companies here are against direct taxation, and why?

MR. JAMES: Is not everybody against being taxed?

MR. KENNY: Particularly the banks.

MR. DOHERTY: There must be taxation if there is to be a Government.

MR. JAMES: The principle is to tax the other fellow.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member's argument helps me, and I say there is no better form of taxation than through the custom-house, where a man pays exactly in proportion to what he consumes or wears. If a man is wealthy and can afford luxuries, he pays in proportion, and so does the working man with only three pounds a week.

MR. VOSPER: That depends entirely on how the customs taxation is adjusted.

MR. DOHERTY: It is very fairly adjusted here, as you will of course admit. Then comes the great question of the cost of collection. Anyone who has studied these figures knows very well that the cheapest method of collecting revenue is through the custom-house. Roughly speaking, I should say that our customs collections do not cost us more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But suppose we put on an income tax, or a direct value land tax, I should say that the cost of collecting the income tax for the first year would be 30 per cent., and that afterwards, no matter how economical the working of the department, 15 per cent. would be the cost. Which is the better course? One is direct taxation; the other is *pro rata*. Direct taxation is sometimes iniquitous and sometimes probably fair; but the cost of collecting it, and the uncertainty of getting it in, are most unreasonably out of proportion to the taxation imposed. We know what happens in the case of an income tax. The member for East Perth has often advised limited companies, and he knows how they would take stock for income tax purposes, and he might perhaps advise that they should mark down their stock 20 per cent. and thus defeat the State. The one sound and certain method of getting in your revenue for the purpose of carrying on a country is through the customs. Another thing: I cannot understand why persons who pretend to be democrats, and who wish this colony to be equal to the other colonies, will not have a protective tariff. Ought we not to protect our own industries? Should we not give an impetus to working men to ply their trades here? It must be obvious that, if we wipe away our protective duties as against the other colonies, what chance will there be for our own workers? Absolutely

none. I can assure this House it was only last Friday that a representative from a large tannery in South Australia came into my office; and talking with reference to his business, he said that he did intend to start a tannery in Western Australia, but that if he thought federation would come about, he would immediately take his departure. I said "why?" He replied: "Why, we could simply swamp you with our cheap labour in South Australia." Then we are to wear South Australian boots and use the leather of that colony for harness, for the purpose of injuring our own people in Western Australia. That may be very good sentiment, but it is not practicable.

MR. JAMES: It means cheap clothes.

MR. DOHERTY: Boots are not clothes.

MR. JAMES: They are part of clothing.

MR. DOHERTY: You pretend to be a protectionist. Now this is a direct question: do you or do you not pretend to be a protectionist?

MR. JAMES: This is a question of federation.

MR. DOHERTY: Well, federation touches more directly on our industries than any other question.

MR. CONNOR: Address the Speaker.

MR. DOHERTY: I will address him. I have really said all I wish to say on this subject.

MR. KINGSMILL: What about referring the Bill to the people?

MR. DOHERTY: That would be a very good thing indeed. I thank the hon. member for that suggestion. I will tell you why it would be a good thing to send it to the people. The first thing the people want is education. The best way to educate the people is to collect all the evidence obtainable from all points, of all classes, and of all kinds. Collect that evidence through the select committee. There is no finer way in the world of getting it. Day by day the knowledge of the members of the committee will widen. The questions they ask from one day to another will give them a deeper and deeper knowledge of the subject than they had when they started, so that they will thus acquire a grasp of the entire opinion of the people in this colony who are mostly directly affected by this question; for the evidence, I should take it, will not be drawn

altogether from one class: all classes of witnesses will be summoned by that select committee; they will give their evidence; and that evidence, I hope, will be distributed through the newspapers day by day.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. DOHERTY: By that means do you not educate the people? By that means do not we ourselves gain knowledge? And after all, what do we want? We want to protect Western Australia; we want to get for this colony the best advantages we can; we do not want to give away all we have got simply for the honour and glory of marching under one flag and rattling one drum: we want a drum of our own. This cheap sentiment does not go down with me. I do not possess that sympathetic spirit which some members seem to evince when federation comes on the board. Federation is in the air; and I say that we should let it remain in the air; we do not want it to come to the earth. Let it stay in the air, where we can admire it for some years; and then, if we are strong enough to stand with equal power with the other colonies, then will be our time to join. If you have a boy, you do not send him out to the world without education and experience: you give him some knowledge. First you give him an education; you afterwards give him a trade or a profession; and then he is in a position to fight his way. So it is with this colony. If you give this nation power and strength to combine with the other colonies on equal terms, then I say that we shall be very proud to join them when we are in an equal position to compete with them.

MR. JAMES: What about referring the Bill to the people?

MR. DOHERTY: That is the best thing that could be done. The people are supreme, as has been recognised all through Australia; and when once we have the information collected by the select committee let the Bill go to the people.

MR. JAMES: Whether it is good or bad?

MR. DOHERTY: Whether it is good or bad.

MR. JAMES: Then I claim your vote on this amendment.

MR. DOHERTY: You will not get it. I quite understand the hon. member.

He is a lawyer, and he is arguing one point in one way. He told the people recently that he was trained as a lawyer—trained to debate either side of a question; and he has fully carried out that principle. He has debated this question in Sydney in one way, and he debates it here in another. We fully recognise that. And what surprised me, and made me enlarge upon this question, was the class of public men taking up this subject. Who are they? Lawyers! And for what reason are they advocating federation? I do not wish to be personal, but I will tell you why. Any class of people, and particularly lawyers, who take up a subject like this, naturally look at it from a personal standpoint. In the event of an election for the Federal Parliament—say the election of a senator—it is very natural that my learned friend from East Perth (Mr. James), and the other from Albany (Mr. Leake), and the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), would be elected as senators; and what would be the result? As lawyers it would be a very nice thing to receive a little sum of, say, £200 a year, and be able to build up a business in the federal city, with another office in Perth.

MR. JAMES: Where is the federal city to be for the next five years?

MR. DOHERTY: Never mind; your opportunity is to come.

MR. VOSPER: There is a hundred years' work in interpreting the Constitution.

A MEMBER: I think two hundred.

MR. DOHERTY: I am sure the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) will be dead before the hundred years are over. In the conduct of this great campaign, many personal motives are manifest. I do not wish to be rude to the member for East Perth; I am one of his greatest admirers. I listen to him with rapt attention when he addresses the House in that nervous style of his; but I shall certainly vote against his amendment.

MR. JAMES: You have been talking in favour of it.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): It is my intention to vote for the amendment. I may tell hon. members why: because I consider that amendment embodies everything that is reasonable both on the Government and the Opposition side. It in no way burks discussion; it gives every facility for a select committee on this

question; and this committee, as the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) has just stated, will be the best means of educating the people of this colony. Furthermore, I consider it is time that the people of Western Australia should have an opportunity of expressing their views on federation. That opportunity has been given to the people of every other colony excepting Western Australia. The people of the other colonies have had every advantage, every educational opportunity, inasmuch as they have elected their representatives, and have heard them discuss the advantages or disadvantages of federation; and up to the present moment all these opportunities have been denied to the people of this colony; therefore I consider it is full time that an opportunity was given to the whole of the people of Western Australia to express their views on this matter. As regards the questions raised by the Attorney General, I cannot understand how he can consider that a procedure which has been followed by the most important colony in Australia, can fairly be regarded as unconstitutional. The colony of New South Wales has twice had a referendum on the federal question, and why in our case a referendum should be considered in any way unconstitutional is a matter which I think many members will find it hard to understand.

THE PREMIER: They swamped the Upper House in New South Wales in order to have the referendum a second time.

MR. CONOLLY: I should like to state that, although the Premier has expressed considerable doubt as to whether any motion passed by this Chamber for sending the Bill to the people would pass through another place, I think that is a question which might well be left to the members of the other Chamber. So far as we here are concerned, I consider that our duty is carried out when we at least show our willingness, and I may also say our confidence, in the people of this colony, by expressing our intention of allowing them to declare their views on federation. What another place does on this question lies with that House; and on that House the responsibility will consequently rest.

A MEMBER: They are in for six years, you know.

MR. CONOLLY: I have listened to many imputations against the sincerity of the Premier; but, personally, I consider it quite possible that, when the select committee have returned their verdict on the great federal question, the right hon. gentleman may come round to the views at present expressed by members of the Opposition, and that he may then join with us.

MR. MORAN: This is not a party question.

MR. CONOLLY: I regret to say the Government have made it a party question.

THE PREMIER: Let us hope we shall all be united.

MR. CONOLLY: If the party gauntlet has been thrown down on either side of the House, it has certainly come from the Government side. But I would yet say that any judgment with reference to the insincerity or otherwise of the Premier may be somewhat premature; and it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that the right hon. gentleman, who has already exerted his best efforts in behalf of federation, is going to throw it over entirely at the last moment. Consequently I can only hope that, in conformity with the wishes of what I think are a large majority of members of this House, he will accede to this great question of federation going to the people at a future date for their decision.

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

|      |     |     |     |    |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 22 |

Majority against ... 8

| AYES.               | NOES.                 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. Conolly         | Hon. S. Burt          |
| Mr. Ewing           | Mr. Connor            |
| Mr. Gregory         | Mr. Doherty           |
| Mr. Holmes          | Sir John Forrest      |
| Mr. Illingworth     | Mr. Hall              |
| Mr. Kingsmill       | Mr. Hassell           |
| Mr. Leake           | Mr. Higham            |
| Mr. Oats            | Mr. Hooley            |
| Mr. Oldham          | Mr. Hubble            |
| Mr. Solomon         | Mr. Lefroy            |
| Mr. Vosper          | Mr. Locke             |
| Mr. Wallace         | Mr. Mitchell          |
| Mr. Wilson          | Mr. Monger            |
| Mr. James (Teller). | Mr. Moran             |
|                     | Mr. Pennefather       |
|                     | Mr. Phillips          |
|                     | Mr. Plesse            |
|                     | Mr. Rason             |
|                     | Mr. Robson            |
|                     | Mr. Throssell         |
|                     | Mr. Wood              |
|                     | Mr. Quinlan (Teller). |

Amendment thus negatived.

Motion (the Premier's) further debated.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie) : Just a parting word before the original question is put. I want to say for myself, and I am perfectly certain that I am voicing the opinions of a large majority of the members on the Government side of the House, since we find that it is a party question—

A MEMBER : It is not.

MR. MORAN : It is nothing less than a party question. It is a question on which we find the Government supporters voting solidly on the one side, and the Opposition voting solidly on the other—possibly a mere coincidence ; but it will take a lot to make me believe that it is a coincidence. This is the second time on which this question has been made a party one in this House, this session ; and it will take a lot to make me believe that the vote was a coincidence. This debate will be reported in some quarters as being the final test, the final issue, as to whether there shall be a referendum to the people on the federation question or not, and on the question as to whether the Bill shall go to the people or not.

MR. LEAKE : Did not the hon. member speak to the original question, Mr. Deputy Speaker ?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER : Only on the amendment.

MR. LEAKE : I only wanted to save time.

MR. MORAN : I am too old a bird to be caught now. On two occasions rash and inconsiderate action on the part of the member for East Perth (Mr. James) on this great question has hurried forward a decision which must have a deterring effect on federation itself and on the Commonwealth Bill. There is an old saying but a true one, that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." It is not original, but it is as true as it was one hundred years ago ; it is absolutely true. What I want to say is this : this vote just taken has no significance whatever in regard to the ultimate question that will come before the Assembly as to whether the Bill, or no Bill at all, shall be submitted to the people of Western Australia. I am not going to be placed in a false position on this matter because it suits the hon. member for East Perth, who, as I said, is very well able and is

accustomed to change his coat. On many occasions before he has turned his coat with great alacrity and great speed, and with an absence of elegance. Because it suits the hon. member to rush in with a new-born enthusiasm on this question of federation, it has no significance whatever. The position is this : there have been two votes taken on this question before this Assembly—one on the Address-in-Reply, which, of course, no honest man will deny was a party question, as far as the Opposition were concerned. Members on the Opposition side may say it was not a party question : perhaps it is just as well, but at the same time there was the coincidence that they voted solidly on the matter ; and to-night we find the members of the Opposition voting solidly on the one side, and the Government supporters on the other. It appears the cloven foot of party must get into the question of federation, some way or other. The member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) is against federation, therefore his vote may not always go in the track of federation. There is another gentleman, the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who is very prominent in this country as having introduced—well, not introduced, but having made prominent a measure or an action, or a proposed amendment, by which he seeks to alter the Constitution Bill, to insert a clause that the trans-continental railway shall be a *sine qua non* of federation, or that the clause in the constitution that says the Federal Parliament shall not build a railway in a State without the consent of that State, shall be altered. The member for North-East Coolgardie says that clause should be struck out, but the hon. member has pledged himself to vote for the Bill, and the whole Bill, being sent to the referendum.

MR. VOSPER : Nothing of the kind.

MR. MORAN : Well then we will just put ourselves right. The amendment which has just been defeated stated that, in the opinion of this House, the Commonwealth Bill, and by the Commonwealth Bill we mean the unaltered Commonwealth Bill which was submitted to the Premier's Conference—and the motion describes it—shall be sent to the people for their acceptance or rejection. Where is the man who, having voted for that amendment, will turn round and propose



to alter the Bill in this Chamber? I say it cannot be done; but there is a course open which the member for North-East Coolgardie who, as a good politician and a well informed man, no doubt will take. He will still have the channel open to him of referring to the people the Commonwealth Bill, with a schedule of amendments attached to it; and if the people vote for the amendments and the Bill, then the hon. member as a democrat will take it that the people are on his side. Supposing the people do not do that; supposing the people refuse to do that, and a majority vote for the Bill as it is?

MR. VOSPER: Then it will be accepted by the people, of course.

MR. MORAN: Now I understand the hon. member's position exactly. It is this, that the Bill shall be submitted to the people and the Parliament, not altered but as it stands. That is the exact position.

MR. VOSPER: I want to leave the final decision to the people.

MR. MORAN: The final decision, and also the initial decision. There is to be no decisive "yes" or "no" on that Bill; that is what it means. In conclusion I want to say that I reserve to myself the right to say that I may vote for the Bill, and the whole Bill, to go to the people. Then members on the Government side are pledged to nothing; they are pledged to this motto, *festina lente*: that is the position in regard to the Bill. Before we had been in session two weeks, the federation question was rushed on, and we were asked to bind ourselves. We could not alter the Bill if we tried, and yet we have stood up here one after another and delivered eloquent speeches on the question. I believe the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) delivered a most eloquent speech, I am told, and yet to-night he votes for the amendment! We reserve to ourselves on this (the Government) side of the House the right to send the Bill to the people, or we reserve to ourselves the right to alter it. That is our position and we will not be misrepresented. The object I have in speaking to-night is that I have a very hostile Press in my part of the world, which will not scruple to misrepresent me in every possible way; but my words will be marked down in

*Hansard*, and I will not be placed in a false position in any way. Therefore, in voting to-night I have voted that as much light as possible shall be thrown on the Bill during the next two months; and then, with the additional knowledge obtained, I may be converted myself, whatever my views are now, and every man in the Chamber may be converted; or the people may be.

THE PREMIER: And you are perfectly free?

MR. MORAN: I am perfectly free. Does every man who has voted to-night say he knows the Bill? I assert that there is not one in the House who knows the Bill thoroughly, and scarcely a man in Australia does so. Learn all you can, and wait awhile, and when that has been done, vote. That is the position I take up to-night, and I feel certain that it is also the attitude of my colleagues on this (the Government) side of the House. There is no doubt the cleavage is pretty distinct, as shown in these divisions, and I sympathise with those who voted the same way as I did to-night.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I only rise to make a personal explanation. It has been asserted by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) that this matter is one of party, and originated on this (the Opposition) side of the House. I disclaim any such organisation, if such a thing has taken place, and I have not been to any caucus. I voted as I did on the amendment because I am in favour of the referendum. I reserve all my rights in regard to the future.

Question put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that the number of members of the Select Committee of this House be seven instead of five.

Put and passed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg to inform hon. members that it is necessary to vote for six only, the mover being a member *ex officio*.

A ballot for a Select Committee having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover (Sir J. Forrest), were elected:—Messrs. George, Higham, Illingworth, Leake, Morgans, and Vosper.

On the motion of the PREMIER, ordered that the committee have power to call for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House.

Ordered, that the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council, with a message requesting their concurrence.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-36 p.m. until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 26th July, 1899.*

Question: Captain Douglas and Recognition of Bravery—Perth Mint Amendment Bill, third reading—Contagious Diseases (Bees) Bill, third reading—Criminal Appeal Bill, in committee, reported—Police Act Amendment Bill, second reading; division—Wines, Beer and Spirit Sale Amendment Bill, second reading—Evidence Bill, second reading—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### QUESTION—CAPTAIN DOUGLAS AND RECOGNITION OF BRAVERY.

HON. A. B. KIDSON asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intend taking steps to have the bravery displayed by Captain Douglas, of the s.s. "Dunskey," in rescuing, at the risk of his life, the survivors of the "City of York," recognised in the proper quarter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied: The usual course pursued in this country has been for the facts of the case to be brought under the notice of the Government, so that a statement may be forwarded to the proper quarter. The Government cannot take notice of statements in the newspapers, unless distinctly brought under their notice. Perhaps the hon. member could arrange for a statement of the case to be made out. The reply to the question is: The Government would be glad to make representations in the proper quarter, if the facts were placed before them.

#### PERTH MINT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and *passed*.

#### CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (BEES) BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

#### CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

On motion by the HON. A. B. KIDSON, the House resolved into committee to consider the Bill.

Passed through committee without debate, reported without amendment, and report adopted.

#### POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE HON. F. M. STONE (North), in moving the second reading, said: The Bill I now ask members to read a second time contains a section which we repealed last session, and I regret to say I was one of the members who either voted for that repeal or said I would not vote against it. Since that time I have exceedingly regretted my action on that occasion, having seen the consequence of the repeal. Sports of any kind cannot now be carried on unless we have the "bookie" element in it, and the sports are ruined. Having heard that this element had got into sport, I went down to some school sports to see how they were carried on, and I never saw such a disgraceful proceeding. Certain men were really riding "crooked" in the interests of the bookmakers, and although the Cricket Association endeavoured, I believe, to stop it in every way, they were unable to do so. They were defied by the bookmakers, the consequence being that those sports, which should have been of benefit to the community, and a pleasure, were simply ruined. If anyone went to that recreation ground, he could see the crooked riding, for it was really done almost openly.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: That would soon effect its own cure, because it would stop betting.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The bookmakers had barred a man in every case, except one, and in that case there was a "fall."