

sion that the only improvements considered were clearing and cultivation, but he found now that fencing and well-sinking were also taken into account; and for the mistake he had made he was to blame. Unlike some members of the Opposition, he did not attempt to throw any mud, because he saw no cause. During the short time he had had the honour of a seat in the House, he had cultivated an admiration of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), for the lucid manner in which he laid his opinions before the House, and also for the fairness with which that hon. member said those hard things which were, perhaps, necessary in Parliamentary life. People who threw abuse across the House might have no more sense than to do so, but it ill became a lawyer or a gentleman to make use of expressions which had been heard. He cast back such accusations for what they were worth, in the teeth of those who made them.

MR. JAMES: And they were worth very little.

MR. MORAN: Let the hon. member (Mr. James) keep his own house in order.

MR. JAMES: Having always supported the Agricultural Bank, the interjection was meaningless. The expenditure of the proposed increase of capital would extend far beyond the life of the present Parliament. Although he sympathised with those who hesitated to support that increase, he yet maintained that as this extra £100,000 would be entrusted to a man like Mr. Paterson, hon. members could have complete confidence in its wise investment, though the clause undoubtedly required careful consideration.

Amendment (Mr. Wilson's) put, and a division called for by the mover.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was only one voice.

Amendment negatived on the voices, and the clause passed.

Schedule and title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER: Hon. members having agreed not to sit on Wednesday evening, and Wednesday being a bank holiday, a half-holiday having been also granted in the Government offices so that civil ser-

vants might attend the opening of the Industrial Exhibition in Perth, it would be well that the House should not meet at all on Wednesday. He moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Thursday afternoon.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 10:46 p.m. until the next Thursday.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th October, 1899.

Appropriation Message, Supply—Papers presented—Questions: Midland Junction Workshops—Question: Canning Jarrah Railway, Purchase—Sunday Labour in Mines Bill, first reading—Shunting and Dredging for Gold Bill, first reading—Motion: Australian Contingent, Transvaal—Motion: Draft Commonwealth Bill, Joint Committee's Recommendations; debate on Bill and Amendments, first day—Message: Assent to Bills (4)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE, SUPPLY.

A Message from the Governor was received and read, recommending an appropriation of £250,000 out of the consolidated revenue fund for the service of the current financial year.

Ordered, that the Message be considered in Committee of Supply at the next sitting of the House.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, By-laws of the municipal council of Leederville; 2, Meteorological Observations, Perth Observatory, etc., 1898.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTIONS--MIDLAND JUNCTION WORKSHOPS.

MR. EWING asked the Premier, Whether he intends to place a sum of money on the Loan Estimates to start the Midland workshops: if so, what sum?

THE PREMIER replied that the Loan Estimates were at present under consideration, and that there was a sum of £17,977 available for the work on 30th June, 1899.

MR. EWING further asked the Director of Public Works, When the work of erection of the Midland workshops is likely to be proceeded with.

THE PREMIER (for the Director of Public Works) replied:—It is impossible to say with accuracy, as it depends upon information which has to be obtained from the advisers of the Government in England in regard to the exact dimensions of buildings and foundations required for the new machinery which is to be ordered; especially the hydraulic riveters and the overhead travellers and electric motors. The Government thoroughly realise the urgency of the work, and are desirous of pushing on with it as fast as possible.

QUESTION--CANNING JARRAH RAILWAY, PURCHASE.

MR. EWING asked the Commissioner of Railways, Whether it is the intention of the Government to purchase the Canning Jarrah Timber Company's Railway.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied:—Inquiries are being made, and the matter is receiving consideration. The Government have the right, under the contract, to purchase the railway at any time after the 31st December, 1899, at a price to be fixed by arbitration but not exceeding £1,000 per mile, upon giving one month's notice of their intention to do so.

SUNDAY LABOUR IN MINES BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

SLUICING AND DREDGING FOR GOLD BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER OF MINES, and read a first time.

MOTION—AUSTRALIAN CONTINGENT, THE TRANSVAAL.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved:

That this House desires to express its loyalty and devotion to Her Majesty the Queen, and its sympathy with Her Majesty's Government in the difficulties that have arisen in South Africa; and is of opinion that, in the event of war being declared, Western Australia should co-operate with the other colonies of Australia in offering to despatch a military force to the Transvaal.

He said: While I regret there should be any necessity for asking the assent of hon. members to this motion, I have great pleasure in submitting the proposal to the House, because I feel that in doing so I represent the views of hon. members. It is in times of difficulty that we should show our sympathy with and our loyalty to the Empire; and, after all, it is only in times of difficulty and great danger that we can show our sympathy and loyalty. Whenever danger arises, whether that danger be great or small, sympathy and support from this distant part of the Empire must be very much appreciated, and must fill the hearts of our countrymen at home with gladness. I do not mean to say that, so far as we are able to judge, the great Empire to which we are so proud to belong is in any great danger. I think that is not the case; but that does not in any way lessen our obligation to show we are in sympathy with those at the helm of State at home, directing the affairs of the Empire. In times of great danger, and when our country might be at war with some great and powerful nation, some persons might think—I hope they do not—that there are disadvantages in our being part of a great Empire, and having to bear our share of the difficulties which follow in the train of war, or which arise under adverse circumstances. But if we value our being part of a great and mighty nation in time of peace, we must be prepared in time of war to share the vicissitudes of that nation. I would like to ask anyone who has travelled about the world and visited many foreign countries, whether he has not felt proud of being a subject of the great Empire of Britain. We are far away here from the political and commercial centre of the Empire, but still we can at any rate show some sympathy, and give a small practical

support to our countrymen whenever they get into difficulties, especially in a portion of the world not very remote from us. I think there is a feeling throughout Australia that if war be declared, a military contingent from the Australian colonies should take part; and I am certain there is no West Australian who would desire an Australian contingent to sail for South Africa without the people of this colony taking a part in it. I have not yet been informed definitely as to the action that will be taken by the other colonies, except what I have seen in the Press. I have had some telegrams from the other colonies, from which I gather there is only one feeling throughout Australia, a feeling that the Australian people ought to join, and will heartily join, in sending a military force to the Transvaal, should such a course appear necessary. I commend this motion to the House, and in the event of its being carried, I propose to submit another motion that a telegram be sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by His Excellency the Governor, setting forth the views of this House on the matter. I may say I have already telegraphed to the Premiers of all the Australian colonies the terms of this motion, which I now beg to submit to the House.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): As an expression of loyalty, I am sure the motion will not be objected to by any hon. member; and I agree with the Premier that we must all regret the circumstances which have led to this proposal. It is not suggested for a moment that our assistance is a matter of vital necessity to the mother country in the present emergency; but I believe the motion is merely to be regarded as an expression of loyalty, and of our desire to join with our neighbours in offering what little support it is in our power to give. Perhaps the offer of assistance will not be accepted; but, at any rate, the offer will show the Imperial authorities that here in Australia the sons of the Empire are ready to join hands in protecting not only themselves, but to offer what assistance we can for the general benefit. If anything practical is to be done in the manner indicated, perhaps it may be done in the way of the Imperial authorities taking steps to recruit in the Australian colonies. As at present contemplated, it would

appear that the Australian colonies themselves should form a military contingent; but it is not likely that will really be done: it is far more likely, I suggest, that the Imperial authorities will seek to recruit in the Australian colonies: and if such an attempt be made, no doubt a ready response will be given by the Australian people.

THE PREMIER: I mean by this motion that we shall contribute to the support of the contingent.

MR. LEAKE: I presume that in any event, if soldiers were sent from Australia, the colonies would contribute towards the maintenance and support of those soldiers.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: And of course I should not hesitate to say that my vote, in such an event, would be found in favour of granting the necessary sum of money.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: I shall support the motion for the reason that it is an instance, or an evidence, of the loyalty which we in Australia bear towards the British Crown; and I am perfectly certain, from whatever point of view it is regarded, this motion is one of the first importance. Critics, of course, may sneer at us and say: "What is it to us what the Imperial authorities do; and what have the affairs of the Transvaal to do with the people in Australia?" There is, perhaps, some force in such a question; but we here do not seek to advertise ourselves at the expense of anybody, but merely to express our loyalty and our sympathy with the Imperial authorities in the difficulties which have arisen.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): As a member of this Chamber, on an important occasion like this it would ill become any of us, who hold particular views on this question, to allow the motion to pass without a few words. This is a very important motion; and this is the second time that Australia has proposed to send troops out of her territory to practically foreign parts. The first occasion was when the Soudan contingent was sent, a contingent which covered itself with glory and lots of other things, before it came back.

MR. VOSPER: Dust!

MR. MORAN: It is rather unfortunate for us in Australia, whose loyalty I maintain cannot be doubted, that our mother country is not measuring her sword against a foeman more worthy of her steel. It is somewhat ignominious, and we feel, whether we express the opinion or not, that England is entering on a war distasteful to every man; and on an occasion like this we may at least be allowed to express the hope that blood will not be shed, especially the blood of people who are unfortunate in their ignorance, but that some amicable settlement may be arrived at. The Boers are a race of men who have created a home for themselves in the wilderness of Africa, and are, after all, only imitating the British race, the greatest colonisers in the world; and it is hardly to be hoped that Australian soldiers will be called on to shed the blood of people who, after all, are fellow colonists carving a home for themselves. It is with extreme regret that I, as a member of this Chamber, have to support this motion. That is not, perhaps, a popular thing to say, but such must be said. It is a most regrettable incident that this handful of people should be pitted against the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, and that we should be called upon to shed the blood of those who have simply done in another part of the world what we have done here. It is true that the Boers are ignorant, and may be tyrannous in their own way; but their ignorance is a comparative quantity, for are they as guilty as we are led to believe? What is the plain English of the matter? There are sufficient Uitlanders in the Transvaal to obtain and exercise the whole of the power and hand the country over to Great Britain, as soon as they get the franchise. If the Uitlanders got the franchise, they could control the President and the Parliament, and the natural result would be to endeavour to tack the country on to Britain. If war does take place, we must understand we are sending troops to help in a war which can only have one end, and that a sudden one, namely the extermination of the people we fight against. These people are fellow-Christians and Europeans like ourselves; and it is, as I have said, with extreme regret that I support the motion. I yield to nobody in my loyalty to the British Empire, and if we

would express that loyalty still more strongly, let us take down the commercial barriers which exist between these colonies and England; and let us not, under the guise of a Commonwealth, establish a tariff against the mother country, a tariff which will give England just about the same chance of trade with us as we give to Chinese or any coloured race. That is where we can support the mother country, if we wish to support her as loyally as we ought to do. Let us say, once for all, that we will have an Imperial federation, a federation of British-speaking people; and let their goods come to our shores a little more favourably than the goods of any foreign power. It is needless to express our loyalty by sending a handful of men who know nothing about fighting, to help the greatest Empire in the world in a small affair like this. But the other colonies are doing so, and it does not behove us to stand out. Neither the Premier, the leader of the Opposition, nor anyone else feels much pleasure in spending money to fight against a people who have been a worthy race of colonisers, and whose only fault to-day is, perhaps, ignorance.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I shall follow the example of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), so far as not opposing this motion is concerned; but I think it well the House should reflect upon this one fact, that we here in Western Australia know nothing about the justice or injustice of the war likely to be waged against the Boers.

THE PREMIER: We do not want to know.

MR. VOSPER: I think it would have been better by far if the matter had not been discussed in this House.

THE PREMIER: Not at all.

MR. VOSPER: We know nothing about the merits of the case.

THE PREMIER: You are arguing that we do not belong to the Empire.

MR. VOSPER: Not at all. I would only point out, for the consideration of the House, that at the present moment the Government of Cape Colony, the colony mostly concerned, sympathise with the Transvaal, and the majority in the Cape Assembly seem to be in the same position. That is a very significant fact,

and one which ought to warn us of the necessity of being somewhat acquainted with the facts of the case. I would only say, by way of conclusion, that while I am fully in sympathy with the expression of loyalty, I am not in sympathy with the idea of Western Australia or any portion of Australia joining in a war-like policy against a small people, concerning whose grievances or troubles we know nothing. I am in sympathy with what was said by the Premier of New South Wales a few days ago, when approached on the subject of a contingent from that colony. He said that if the Empire were in a position of difficulty or danger, he would not only consent to the sending of a contingent, but would volunteer himself; but the Empire was not in danger, and there was no necessity. Surely it may be said, as Mr. Lyne has said, that the Empire itself is sufficiently great, sufficiently magnificent in its resources, its unlimited numbers of men and unlimited funds, not to need call upon colonists for assistance in this war. I cannot help thinking that with the loyal expression underlying this motion there is a desire to gratify the people of the mother country, and to increase her prestige; but this is not calculated to raise, but rather to lower her to some extent in the eyes of foreign nations. We see in the German newspapers—and public opinion generally expresses itself in this way—that it is said on every occasion when Great Britain is called on to fight a small foe, as she was called on in the Soudan and is now called on in the Transvaal, it means beating the war-drum all over the Empire, and fighting a small power as if it were a power of some importance. I think we may, in these colonies, reserve our strength and expressions of loyalty until we find the Empire really menaced. I sympathise with the expression of loyalty to Her Majesty, and I think also the people of Great Britain are to be sympathised with in the quandary in which they are now placed, because no doubt the position is a very serious one. No one likes the task of exterminating a brave people, whose greatest fault is their ignorance, their prejudice, and their general position of being behind the times. I think we may leave to the wisdom of British statesmen and the bravery of British troops a task which does not belong to us.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): I think that, so far as the politics of South African affairs at present are concerned, they in no way affect this House in regard to the motion, that being a matter which we may safely and fairly leave to the Imperial authorities at home. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] Anyone who has read up the events that have taken place in South Africa must clearly have recognised that the fairest and most liberal opportunities have been given to the people of the Transvaal to accede to the wishes of our brother colonists—as the member for East Coolgardie so aptly termed them—in South Africa, that is to say the British portion of the South African community; and it is on behalf of those brother colonists in South Africa that the British colonies are at present forming a cohesive feeling in favour of supporting the Empire. There is also another aspect of this question, for the time has come when the Australian colonies should take part not only in the defence of the Empire, but, where occasion arises, in the building up of the Empire. The Australian colonies, recognising that they are one of the most important portions of the British Empire, should identify themselves with its growth and with its difficulties as well; and besides this, it would be wise, as a leading feature in the building up of this feeling in Australia, to allow Australian troops to fight side by side with the British troops, even though ours be small in number. It is not that anybody in the world supposes this assistance is necessary to Great Britain in the difficulty in which she finds herself, but the great point is the moral influence exerted, which is carried not only throughout the Empire but among all nations of the world. It shows that whereas other nations have invariably had troubles and even bitter contentions with their colonies, Great Britain stands as one united great people, shoulder to shoulder with her colonies, upon which she can always rely; that wherever they are, her colonies are always ready to support her. I do not agree with the observations of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper); for I do not think the clamour he has alluded to gives rise to ridicule among foreign nations, but it has a good healthy, moral influence, and shows people of foreign nations the immense

cohesion which exists in the vast Empire of Great Britain. [The PREMIER: Hear, hear.] It is my intention to support the motion, and also my hope that the assistance we have offered in our small way will be accepted by the Imperial authorities, because it is a good and healthy thing that the traditions of Australian troops should be built up and interwoven with those of the Imperial forces.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): I had hoped this motion would have met with the favourable consideration of the House, and that there would not be one dissentient voice, or at any rate there would be no hesitation in passing such a motion. I cannot agree with the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), that the action invariably taken by branches of the Empire when Great Britain is in trouble, the beat of the drum, as he calls it, all through the Empire, has a bad effect. On the contrary, I think it has a good effect, and I rejoice that this effect is produced whenever the Empire is met with a difficulty. It is a fact of which we may all be proud, that whenever trouble assails the mother country, although it may be a trouble which may be easily surmounted, colonists all through the Empire are ready to proffer their help if it is needed. I cannot agree with the hon. member that we should wait till the Empire is in real difficulty before we volunteer service. That is not true friendship. The friendship I hope we have towards the mother country is such that it causes us not to wait until extreme difficulty is realised, but to render proper help at the very first moment of difficulty. I think that none of the colonists, none of the branches of the Empire, should attempt to make themselves arbiters as to the justice or injustice of the difficulties. Suffice it for us to know that trouble has arisen; suffice it for us to know that other Australian colonies have offered help. Where should we be if we alone of all the branches of the Empire stood aloof and proffered no assistance? I take it to be our duty to offer this assistance. For my part I hope the offer will be accepted, and that we shall join in sending an Australian contingent to the Transvaal. I still trust that war may not eventuate, but if it does, and an Australian contingent goes to the Transvaal, I am sure they

will uphold the credit of Australia, and I hope the Western Australian portion of that contingent will uphold the credit of this colony.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I think that, through all ages, war has been regrettable, and no doubt a certain portion of the community may think the war not justified, or otherwise; but I agree with the previous speaker, that on this occasion and on other occasions it is not for us to inquire into the justice or injustice of a war which the British Empire may engage in. It has been from time immemorial the proud boast of Britain's sons that wherever they may be they have the protection of the British flag, and I take it that the sons of Great Britain who are resident in the Transvaal are entitled to the protection of the Empire and to our sympathy and support. I was surprised to hear the remarks which have fallen from some hon. members, that we should not take part in this matter. It is not a question of the number of men we can send, but a question of the moral effect this action on our part will have throughout the civilised world. I support the motion with all my heart, and hope it will be carried unanimously, and will continue to have that good effect: so that when the time comes when we may require similar assistance, spontaneous offers from every portion of the British Empire will help us in our difficulty as we would now help our brethren in the Transvaal. Of course we hope this war will not take place; but surely we can trust to the integrity and the wisdom of the rulers of Great Britain, and believe they will not enter upon the war unless it is absolutely necessary. Yet once we go to war, once we enter into the fight, let us stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers at home in defence of the Empire, no matter what the trouble may be. I hope the motion will be carried unanimously.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I much regret that any discussion should have taken place on this question. It seems to me that when the Premier had moved a motion of this kind, and when that motion had been supported by the leader of the Opposition, it would have been more graceful on our part to have left the whole question to go to the vote without discussion. But, since the discussion has arisen, I

desire to express my own feeling on the subject, and firstly to say that I cherish strongly the hope and expectation that the counsels of Great Britain, the peaceful counsels of the nation, will yet prevail, and that there will be no war. I sincerely trust that this may be the issue. All we know about this question is very little indeed, but we do know that Great Britain has been striving during the whole of the trouble to settle the question without the arbitration of the sword, and I sincerely hope that she will be successful in so doing; but in my judgment it would be mean on our part to wait until we ourselves were in danger before offering help to the mother country. It would be all very well if it were a question of some great war, in consequence of which we, as a nation, were in a critical condition; then, doubtless, as some hon. members have suggested, it would be well for us to offer assistance to the mother country. But I would suggest that our offer would not then be generous, and could not have the same effect upon the nation as our present offer must have. I take it, however, from what I know of the Australian feeling, that what we in Australia desire is to show that we recognise not only our dependence upon the great nation of which we form a part, but our obligation and our readiness to fulfil our part of the bond when the occasion arises. In the present instance, of course, the help afforded by Australia will not be very great, but we must remember that small debts as well as large ones should be paid; and when we are in no danger ourselves, and when we have no personal interest in the trouble which has arisen, then is the time to show our generous loyalty to Her Majesty and to the Government of the nation, seeing that we are in a position to do so in an unselfish manner, and in a way that is above suspicion. I do not like war; I am against it; but we have to face the fact that, in the best judgment of the nation, we are standing upon the very verge of a war; and if that war eventuate, I have not the slightest doubt that the moral effect of the action of Australia will materially help to minimise its dangers and its consequences. I do not agree with the hon. member who suggests that this will be a war of extermination, for I believe

that if there be a war, and if our arms are successful in the early part of that war, very little change will take place among the people who may be, for the time, overcome. We know what the British nation is; we know how the British Government act to all nations over which it is their lot to rule; and I do not think that the Boers on their plantations will find themselves in any worse position under British rule than they are under the rule of Oom Paul.

MR. MORAN: Independence is very dear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I know independence is very dear, but the British nation has seen the time when it has not been independent in its own country, when, in the time of King Alfred, there were eleven contending kingdoms in Great Britain and eleven kings ruling. Now we are scattered up and down throughout the length and breadth of the whole world, and surely the least we can do is to express our sympathy and our willingness to help the mother country if help be needed. I trust that help will not be needed; I trust that peaceful counsels will yet prevail; but, in existing circumstances, I see no alternative before this Parliament but to vote heartily and unitedly for the motion now before us. (General applause.)

Question put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, requesting him to forward this resolution to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, by cablegram.

Question put and passed.

MOTION — DRAFT COMMONWEALTH BILL, JOINT COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

DEBATE ON BILL AND AMENDMENTS.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) moved:

That the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider the "Draft of a Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia" be now taken into consideration.

He said: We have now arrived at a stage in this great question when this House will be able to discuss the whole matter. We have been told on previous occasions that those who have joined with me in the course adopted have de-

sired to defeat federation, and to gain time with that or some ulterior object. But all that has been said to this effect has now been controverted by the fact that we have the Bill before us, and are able, if we so desire, to discuss the Bill from beginning to end. We have also the advantage of knowing the views of the Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, the members of which have examined the Bill, and have submitted to this House, in a report, their views in regard to it. Up to the present time, this House has never had a full debate on the Commonwealth Bill—we have certainly had many discussions, but the whole field of the Bill has never before been under review; and notwithstanding what has been said in regard to delay, I personally cannot think that any wrong has been done, or that anything but good has resulted, in regard to the various stages through which this Bill has passed since this House met in June last. I venture to think that the opinion of most people, and certainly, as far as I can judge, of those who shall come after us in the future, will be that we, up to the present at all events, have acted like reasonable persons having a great responsibility, who were desirous of trying our best to do our duty. It would have been far otherwise had we rushed into the matter without any inquiry, taking everything for granted, and not knowing and perhaps not caring much whether the Bill sufficiently safeguarded the interests of the people whom we are here to protect. The federation of Australia is a question which has occupied the attention of politicians for many years, and is a very great question; for it is difficult for anyone to ascertain exactly what are to be the results to any particular country from the act of union.

Federation not a Party Question.

There is plenty of room for difference of opinion; and I think this question has now arrived at a stage when we may deal with it in a non-partisan spirit, for we can all give our best attention to the matter, we can all exercise our individual judgments and with only one object in view, namely to do the best we can for this colony, not altogether forgetting the interests of the great continent of which we form a part. I may say that I do

not stand here this afternoon as the representative of the Government, on this question, because my friends around me will bear me out in stating that I have never consulted them on the matter; and, except those who were present the other day at a certain interview, I very much question whether they know what I am about to say or to propose on this occasion. Therefore, no one will be able to insinuate that I have desired to drag party politics into this question, for I have not done so: I have never consulted my colleagues in the Cabinet with regard to it. I have dealt with it from the beginning up to the present as a non-party question, and I hope we shall continue to do so. Of course, if any trouble arises, probably the divisions which take place may appear to be somewhat on party lines. I do not know how it is, but it does seem to me that on some questions in respect of which one would think there would be no party spirit aroused, the divisions taken seem to be almost the same as if party spirit had been introduced. That result may perhaps be due to the magnetic influence which my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Leake) exercises on those who surround him; and it may also follow from the fact that parties in the Legislative Assembly are drawn together by mutual sympathy and by common ideas in regard to public questions, thus making divisions often appear to be of a partisan character when they are really not so.

Personal Explanation.

The first thing I desire to do is somewhat personal, and I can afford to be personal on this question, because I am not dealing with the subject as a matter of Government policy. I desire to review, in a few words, my own position in regard to this question.

MR. LEAKE: It requires reviewing.

MR. MORAN: Do not be nasty. Keep party out of it, if you can.

THE PREMIER: I desire to review the position I have taken up in regard to federation and also in regard to the Bill, that is the Bill as framed by the Convention and afterwards amended at the Conference of Premiers. It is well-known I have taken part in all the Conventions that have sat to discuss the question of federation—in 1891 in Sydney, afterwards

in Adelaide and Sydney in 1897, and again in the beginning of 1898 in Melbourne.

Bill Altered by the Premiers.

It is well known, I suppose by everyone, that at none of those Conventions did any individual member pledge himself as to the course he would pursue, nor did he pledge himself to support the Bill as framed. I was not at the meeting of the Convention on the last day in Melbourne, but I believe no one, whether a member of a Government or whether a private member of the Convention, pledged himself as to the course he intended to take; and we all know it was not for a considerable time after the Convention ceased its labours that the Premier of New South Wales gave out his intention to vote for the Bill, and I believe afterwards he changed his opinion in regard to it, and although he may have voted for the Bill himself, he certainly did all he could to prevent the people of New South Wales accepting it.

MR. MORGANS: Are you referring to the last Convention?

THE PREMIER: Not the Premiers' Conference, but to the Convention at the beginning of 1898. At a large meeting held in the Town Hall in Sydney, Mr. Reid said that, although he intended to vote for the Bill, he did not approve of it, and, eventually, he did all he could to induce his fellow-colonists not to vote for it. The result was that the statutory majority of 80,000 persons in favour of the Bill was not obtained; therefore, the whole matter came to an end. Afterwards there was a meeting in Melbourne—the Premiers' Conference, it was called—when some alterations were made in the Bill at the instigation of Mr Reid, the Premier of New South Wales; and these amendments were, by an Act of Parliament in the various colonies, inserted in the Bill and referred again to the referendum of the people of New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia. We all know that was a departure altogether from the understanding first arrived at. The first idea was that the people should settle this matter, and the people alone; that they should elect the Convention to frame a constitution, and afterwards that the Bill should be referred to the people under the terms of the Act of Parliament

which brought into existence the Convention. But, after all that has taken place, we know it was not a Convention elected by the people that made these alterations, and that a Conference of Premiers, without any authority whatever, sat in Melbourne and made the alterations; the people's Convention, as it was called, having no voice in the matter whatever. It is well-known, too, that the result was a second referendum which was taken in several colonies, and the second referendum resulted in a majority being obtained in favour of the Bill as amended by the Conference of Premiers. Although I never pledged myself to support the Bill as framed in Melbourne, I have expressed myself generally during the past ten years in favour of the federation of Australia. I have spoken on federation on many occasions, outside the colony and in it, and notably, I think I may say, I spoke in St. George's Hall in Perth, on the 27th of May, 1898. A great deal has been made, or tried to be made, out of what I said in St. George's Hall in 1898. An attempt has been made to show, without any real ground, I think, that my views are different from the views I expressed in 1898. I am not at all ashamed of that address of mine made in 1898, for that address expresses my general opinions, and I may tell hon. members I am rather proud of that speech, generally speaking—I do not mean to say that with every word of it I am in accord to-day, because I do not suppose it ever happens that if a person reads a speech two years afterwards, he will agree with every sentiment expressed at the time; but, generally speaking, that address of the 27th May, 1898, in St. George's Hall, represents my views in regard to federation. If I had to make that speech again to-night, the only particulars in which I would amend it would be in regard to alterations of a temporary character, which I submit in no way affect the great general question. I am however of opinion that the Bill which I supported in 1898 does not meet, in my opinion, knowing more about the Bill now than I did then, the requirements of this colony; but I do not think anyone should say that because temporary alterations are necessary that therefore the general principle running throughout that address need in any way be altered. As I said be-

fore, I attended the Premiers' Conference in February, 1898, in Melbourne; and there is no part of my connection with the cause of federation that I look back upon with so little favour as I do in regard to what took place at that Conference, for I never was satisfied, and am not satisfied to-day, with what was done at that Conference. In my opinion the alterations that were made, and made altogether illegally as far as the foundation of federation was concerned, that was a federation to be framed by men elected directly by the people—the alterations which were made and illegally made were all for the worse, every one of them. In my opinion the Bill was mutilated, and every one of the alterations, in my opinion, made the Bill a worse one than when it left the Convention; and if hon. members were to ask the leaders of public opinion in the other colonies who took any prominent part in framing the first Bill, many of them would say, as they told me, the amendments made by the Premiers mutilated the Bill and made it much worse than it was. I do not wish to say anything but what is most courteous of my friend, the late Premier of New South Wales (Mr Reid is a friend of mine, and always has been); but there is no doubt he dominated that meeting of Premiers. He came down with a demand that the capital should be in New South Wales—that was one point; and unless that was conceded, he would have gone away, and there would have been no federation. At his request the Bill was also amended in other particulars, as we know, especially that alteration weakening the position of the Senate, which is worse than all, and in some other particulars which hon. members have before them. No doubt the other Premiers who were there were all anxious for federation, their colonies having signified by immense majorities at the referendum that the people were all anxious for federation; indeed, in Victoria the whole place was ablaze for federation, as I saw from my own observations; also in South Australia and Tasmania, too; and the Premiers, knowing that fact, knowing their fellow-colonists were eager to have federation, were most anxious to fall in with the alterations desired by the Premier of New South Wales. The result was that an arrange-

ment was come to—I do not say the Premier of New South Wales got all he asked, but the main points which were considered of importance were agreed to; and, for my own part, I may say I most unwillingly agreed to them. I did not wish to stand alone out of the six Premiers present; I did not like the idea of standing alone when they were unanimous; and I very unwillingly consented to the alterations.

MR. VOSPER: It would have been all the better to have stood alone.

THE PREMIER: I will explain that later on.

The Pledge to Submit the Bill.

I did not want to do any thing that would interfere in any way with the great federal movement. The larger and more populous colonies were agreed and very anxious; and, as I said, I most unwillingly agreed also; but I agreed only to a certain definite extent. Those who desire to misrepresent me may say what they like, but I agreed to nothing more at that Convention than is shown in the minutes published after the Convention closed. I only agreed to submit the Bill, as altered, to the Parliament of my colony; and I will refer to the exact words of the agreement directly. Being only one out of six, it was no easy matter for me, amongst veteran statesmen of Australia, to carry amendments; but I did try to get some alterations in favour of this colony. I tried to get an alteration in regard to electorates for the Senate, and I tried to get a strong expression of opinion in favour of a railway from here to South Australia. But neither of these requests were agreed to. I do not blame the Premiers for not agreeing to these requests; for at that time it was very difficult to do anything in favour of any one colony, because that would only have encouraged other colonies to ask for something as well. It was not so much the desire on the part of the Premiers not to meet the wishes of Western Australia, as it was that they felt they would get into some dispute with their own people for not having asked for something more in the interests of their respective colonies. I, however, refused point blank—I do not know that I am

telling any secret, or I hope not—I refused point blank, as representing the Government of this colony, to take any action in regard to the measure more than is disclosed in the minutes. What were my promises? These promises are before hon. members, but I must repeat them, and they were only two. One promise was to submit the Bill, as amended, to Parliament for reference to the electors; and the second was that it was desirable the decision of the majority voting should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill. It was desirable, first, that the Bill should be submitted to Parliament, as amended, for reference to the electors; and it was also desirable that the decision of the majority voting should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did you agree to that?

THE PREMIER: I agreed to those two things. I have submitted the Bill to the Parliament, and it has been on the table of the House for a long while, about two months. The result of the deliberations of the Joint Select Committee is also before hon. members. So far as my first promise to refer the Bill to Parliament is concerned, I have done all that I undertook to do, and it is for Parliament now to do the rest.

The Enabling Act: a Condition.

I was aware, and so was everyone else who takes an interest in public matters, as I am sure we all do, that the Enabling Act which sent members to the Convention from this colony, provided that the Bill, when it came from the Convention, should be approved by Parliament before being referred to the electors in this colony. It never got that far, because in our Bill, New South Wales was to be one of the colonies to join in the federation; and before we had an opportunity, I think almost before Parliament met, New South Wales had rejected the measure, and therefore we could not go further at that time. The Enabling Act puts the obligation on Parliament of approving of the Bill; and what would hon. members have said if I had gone to the meeting of Premiers and pledged this House to approve of the Bill? As I said before, I distinctly in-

formed the Premiers I would not pledge this Parliament, nor would I pledge myself further than the two promises which I have already referred to. Up to the present, at any rate—whatever I may do from this time forth, which is not known to anyone yet—I think I can defy anyone, in this country or any other, to put a finger on any promise of mine, in regard to this matter, which I have broken. Since that time many changes have taken place in regard to the federation question, and a great many difficulties have been overcome in other colonies. Those colonies have all voted for the Bill, except perhaps Queensland, and there is no doubt the Bill will also be accepted by that colony. Since that time I have given the Bill close scrutiny.

To Refer Federation to the People.

It may be thought that I, who had the opportunity of hearing all the debates and of taking part in the discussions at the Convention, ought to know all about the Bill; but I am sorry to say that there were provisions in that Bill which I misunderstood, and on which I put a meaning different from that which they appear to bear at the present time. I have given the Bill close scrutiny, and although I believe that for several years this colony would be greatly inconvenienced, and would have to change its whole fiscal policy, I am not prepared to say the measure is so adverse to the interests of this colony, looking not only to the effects to-day but into the future, that I should use my influence to prevent its being referred to the electors. I therefore propose, when the question comes before the House, to vote for the Bill being so referred.

Sliding Scale: its Effect.

I feel sure, however, that the provision of the sliding scale in the special Clause 95, in favour of Western Australia, does not carry out the intention of the members of the Convention. I feel that clause will be unworkable, or if not unworkable it will certainly not take the place in our financial affairs it was openly stated to be intended to take. Before I sit down I shall quote the views held by the prominent statesmen of Australia in regard to this special clause in favour of Western

Australia, and I will be able to show that the only idea they had was that this clause would be of great assistance to this colony, recognising fully as they did the difficulties of our situation. There was no other idea than to give such a concession to Western Australia as would enable us for the first five years of the operation of the Commonwealth Bill, to hold our own and keep us out of financial difficulty. I have given, as I said, this matter much attention, much more I expect than those people who abuse me have given to it; and that being so, I am faced with the financial difficulty created by the fact that this clause will be entirely different in its operation from what was anticipated and expected. I can only say, for myself, that I was absolutely under a wrong impression in regard to this clause, and as to its meaning. I did not understand until very recently that our existing tariff would not continue during those five years.

Reimposing Duties: a Difficulty.

I had no idea that our tariff would have to be reimposed after the coming into operation of the uniform tariff. Of course, it may be said that if we have power to impose a tariff, we have also power to abrogate it; but that is not so. There are many laws of the colony this House might be content to repeal, but the other branch of the Legislature might not allow us to do it; so that there is a great difference between the power to reimpose and the right to allow a certain law to exist. At any rate, I did not know myself that the tariff was required to be reimposed, and I find that on February 21st, 1898, at the Convention, I said:—

I take it the intention is this—I do not know that it is expressed, but I take no objection to it—that the operation of the tariff in existence in Western Australia, when the uniform duties come into force, shall still be applicable to intercolonial products.

There is no doubt that at the time I thought there was no reimposition necessary, but that the law would continue in force. I thought that while producers and manufacturers would no doubt be injured by the operation of free-trade, still if they had five years certain of this protection by means of customs duties, it probably would be as much to them and perhaps

more than the uncertainty of a revision of the tariff at each annual meeting of the Parliament. But I find that the idea I had in my mind was altogether erroneous, and I feel quite sure that if the true state of affairs had occurred to me, I would have been able to induce the representatives of the other colonies to have put this matter on a better and safer foundation. It did not occur to me, however; and the result is that this concession, which I shall prove was intended by every representative of Australia as a concession, is really no concession, but is in fact an extra burden; for while we would have the right of imposing taxation upon intercolonial products for a certain time, the Commonwealth Parliament could impose additional burdens upon imports from beyond Australia coming into this colony, and we should really be taxing ourselves then more than we are taxed at the present time. Can any one tell me that this was intended? Can those hon. members opposite who were at the Convention, say for one moment it was ever intended? I am sure it did not occur to them any more than to me that such would be the result, or they certainly would, with the views they held at that time have expressed themselves to me or someone else, or have made some reference to it at the Convention.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Did you understand the 20 per cent. reduction?

THE PREMIER: I did, and I pointed out that it would cause a dislocation of trade. I was told that the term would be seven years, and not five; but you may take it from me that the tariff will be enforced not long after the Federal Parliament meets.

Federal Tariff: How Soon?

Why should the Federal Parliament delay? I see no reason why they should delay framing a tariff in the very first session. A tariff is not such a very difficult subject, unless you are going to tax hundreds and hundreds of items. I do not suppose the Commonwealth of Australia will have a very large list. Our lists here are too large even now, for we have hundreds of items we might strike out which produce but little revenue. What you want are a few items which will be large revenue pro-

ducers, and no doubt that is the system which will be adopted, and it will not take long to frame such a tariff. Depend upon it, there will be a desire to get free-trade at work as soon as possible. Is it reasonable to expect that New South Wales, with its free-trade tariff would be content to wait a year or two before having free access into Victoria and other places? It is not likely or reasonable.

MR. JAMES: We have had two years since January, 1898. See the time that statement was made.

THE PREMIER: The idea was that two years would elapse after the Commonwealth was established before free-trade would be instituted, and the result will be that in this colony we will probably lose from the consequences of free-trade with other colonies £300,000 a year of our revenue, unless some great convulsion comes about or some stroke of good luck occurs that we do not know of. No one who has looked into the matter has any doubt about that; and it means that we will have to curtail our expenditure, and our spending power will have to be reduced by that amount. I can assure hon. members that the loss of £300,000 a year to this colony is a very serious matter. The effect of the sliding scale was never understood by me or anyone else in this colony, till recently, and any hesitation members may think I have had in regard to entering federation at once under the Bill has been due to my fear as to the financial changes and difficulties which may be occasioned by the loss of one-third of our customs revenue.

Loss of Customs Revenue. *

Hon. members who have not to look after finances, and do not take so much interest in the finances of the colony as I have done for so many years, perhaps do not realise what it will be for the Treasurer of this colony, if he is deprived of one-third of the customs revenue. It will be a very serious matter indeed. Of course it will be said that the money will be in the people's pockets. I will have something to say about that, directly. I wish to state that the financial difficulties I see ahead are the only reasons why I desire to get rid of this sliding scale and substitute a fixed five years. The only object I have in view, is to protect the financial credit

of this colony. In any action of mine in regard to this question, surely I may expect that high and honourable motives, at any rate, may be credited to me. If it were not for this burden upon me, this responsibility in regard to the finances of the country, I personally, should have everything to gain through federation. Common sense must tell people that to be misrepresented in this colony and throughout Australia in regard to this great question, to be represented as one who has broken faith with his colleagues and with the members of the Convention, who are the most prominent men in Australia, or even to be thought to be breaking faith, must give me a great deal of concern and anxiety. Common sense must also tell people that if there had not been some great burden of responsibility upon me, it would have been much easier for me to "go with the stream," and let the colony trust to Providence and work out its own destiny under the original Bill, than to have adopted the course I have taken. I suppose all of us have, more or less, some ideas of political activity, and that we all desire a larger political arena than we have in this colony. There will be more room for ambition for all of us when we have a continent to deal with, and a wider field not only for our energies but for our ambitions. Common sense revolts at any such proposition as that one desires not to keep faith with his colleagues representing the people of the other Australian colonies. The only reason there can be for any attitude I have taken up, judging it from a common-sense point of view, must be that I fear a danger to this colony during the next few years.

Recommendations of Committee.

I desire to examine the proposals of the Select Committee, my object being to show you how reasonable they are and to show you also that if the people of Australia and the Premiers of Australia are in real earnest in regard to federation, if they desire to build up this Commonwealth to contain the whole of Australia, they should not hesitate for one moment in accepting the most reasonable and moderate proposals that I am going to advocate here to-night. I believe they will do so. I can well

understand that, until the question is got out of hand in Queensland, no Premier in Australia can for one moment allow that any alteration is possible in the Bill for this colony; but I venture to think that if we take a firm stand on what we consider is of material interest to us—and nothing is more material to us than keeping our finances on a sound and satisfactory basis—if they feel assured of that, and they know the proposals will not hurt them, and that they are only for the protection of ourselves, then I feel quite certain that, if they are really anxious for federation, they will not hesitate one moment in advising the Imperial Government to make the necessary alterations in the Enabling Bill, which are so small for them but so important for us, and which will operate for only five years. When they have read the proposals made by the Select Committee, they must come to the conclusion that the proposals are reasonable and moderate. The members of that Committee were not anti-federalists. They were not desirous of keeping this colony out of federation, or they never would have prepared such moderate and reasonable alterations as they have submitted. If they had been anti-federalists, they would not have said:

Your Committee have, however, approached this important subject with a desire to report as favourably as possible on the Bill referred to them for consideration, and as they recognise that under federation Australia will occupy a higher plane in the world's opinion, and that it will tend towards the consolidation of the Empire in this part of the world, they feel impelled to recommend that all minor considerations should be waived, and that only such amendments as are of real importance should be suggested and insisted on.

And then:

Your Committee, however, hope and believe that the adverse effects of federation on the customs revenue, and upon the producing and other industries of the colony, will not be so much felt so soon as the production has increased, and our industries have become more firmly established, and when other avenues for taxation may probably be available; and they are of opinion that if a definite term of five years' fiscal freedom were conceded, this colony might fairly be asked to take the risk of joining the Commonwealth as an original State.

Are those the words of anti-federalists, men desirous of keeping this colony out of federation? Are they not the views of moderate men, charged with a great

responsibility, and desirous of not incurring the great risk of running this colony into financial danger? I will now examine these proposals—there are only four, and, as I have said, they do not affect the other colonies adversely, though they are so very important to us.

First Amendment: Division into Electorates.

The first is that, *until Parliament otherwise provides*, this colony shall have the same right as was freely conceded to Queensland, to divide its immense area of 1,000,000 square miles into electorates, for the election of the Senate. This is no new idea to us. Several of the colonies desired the same thing. Victoria desired it, I know; but of course her area is so small compared with the areas of the other colonies, that the need for it was not so apparent; but in Western Australia, with its vast territory and varied interests, with a large population on the goldfields and a large population in and near Perth, is it unreasonable that we should have the power to divide the colony into electorates? With our diverse climates and our different industries, is it reasonable, is it right or fair, that either the people in Perth and Fremantle, or the people on the goldfields, should elect all the senators. By the Bill, the five senators might represent merely the metropolis and Fremantle. It would be quite possible that Perth and Fremantle, including what might be called the metropolitan districts, would elect the whole Senate; or there might be an attempt on the goldfields, where there is a large voting population, to elect perhaps the whole five senators. I think the metropolitan districts would probably succeed in electing the senators by that system, but it would be very inequitable to allow them to do so. No section of the community has the right to the whole representation in the Senate; and there is nothing unreasonable in our asking to be placed in the same position as Queensland in regard to this important matter. We have a larger territory than Queensland, and our population is quite as much scattered. We have not so large a population as that colony; still, we have in our favour the same arguments, and probably even stronger arguments than can be used for Queensland. If this were the only alteration required in the Bill, I am

not prepared to say I should make a demand, or not more than a request, in regard to it; because the state of affairs provided for in the Bill, in the matter of elections for the Senate, will not exist for ever. The clause reads: "until the Parliament otherwise provides." The Commonwealth Parliament has the power, and may exercise it—I do not know whether the Commonwealth will or not, but it may—of arranging the electorates for the Senate in the various colonies, and therefore it is not a permanent matter; so that if this were the only alteration required, although I think it is so important, still I would not stand out as regards that one point. What do the Select Committee say with regard to it? They put the whole matter in a nutshell, in words more concise than those I have used:

That owing to the extensive territory and the varied interests of this colony, the Parliament of Western Australia should have the power to divide the colony into electorates for the purpose of electing senators.

Our Parliament need not do it unless they like, but they should have the power of doing it in this House the same as they have for the other House. If the Assembly do not wish to exercise the power, they need not do so, but should have the power of doing it; and even if they do not exercise it on the first election, there may be good grounds for doing so in time for the second election. The report proceeds:

And this Committee is of opinion that section 7 of the Commonwealth Bill should be amended accordingly.

The alteration proposed is very small; merely the inclusion of the words "and Western Australia" in the clause which already finds a place in the Commonwealth Bill.

Second Amendment: Railway Connection.

The Committee's second proposal is with regard to the right of the Federal Parliament to authorise the construction of a railway from the capital of Western Australia to connect with the railway systems of the other States. As far as that amendment affects us, it means that the Federal Parliament would have power to authorise the construction of a railway from, say, Port Augusta in the railway system of South Australia, to

the Western Australian border, with a view of the railway being carried on to the capital of this colony. Well, that surely is not an unreasonable proposal. This is what the Committee say in regard to it:

The right of the Federal Parliament to authorise the construction of a railway to connect the capital of this colony with the railway systems of the other States of the Commonwealth being absolutely essential for the purpose of defence, for means of rapid intercommunication, and for federal purposes generally, this Committee is of opinion that the following power should be added to the powers given to the Federal Parliament by Section 51, viz., "The right to authorise the construction of a railway through a State for the purpose of connecting the railway system of that State with the capital of Western Australia."

Can anyone object to that? I have not the slightest doubt that if I had noticed the point, if it had been brought under my notice at the Federal Conventions, we could easily have carried it. There would, I believe, have been no objection to it whatever; because it is so reasonable, it is so necessary for the purposes of a federation, that the inhabitants of one part of the federation, if there be land between the States, should be able to get by railway from one State to another for the purposes of defence and of intercommunication; and it is of vital importance to this colony, if we desire ever to be on the high road of trade and commerce, that we should look forward to the time, and that very soon, when the mails shall be landed at Fremantle and distributed by railway throughout the Australian continent; when people will come here by thousands and go up to Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Menzies and other places, to view our mines, and then go on their direct road to the other colonies, and *vice versa*. This is what we look forward to; and that being so, are we to enter into a federation on terms which will enable South Australia for ever to block the construction of this railway? I do not say that South Australia would do so. There are just as generous people in South Australia, I hope, as there are anywhere else; but that is not the point. We want to have it in the Bill: we do not want to be dependent on anyone in regard to this all-important matter. It is a reasonable and a fair demand, and ought to be conceded at once. It is not as if we were asking

the Federal Government to build the railway. Some people think that we should insist on a railway being constructed, that we should follow the example of British Columbia by saying that federation would be a name only to us unless we are connected by railway with the rest of Australia, and that the Federal Government should undertake to build a railway from Port Augusta to our own railway system, before we agree to enter the federation. But the members of the Committee, who are moderate men, have not asked for that: they do not ask for a single penny from anyone. All they ask is that there shall be power given in the Bill, that the Federal Parliament shall be empowered to authorise the construction of a railway from Port Augusta to the boundary of Western Australia. Some may say, "Oh, leave it to the Government of South Australia: they have expressed their opinion in favour of the construction of the railway." But if the South Australian Government have expressed their opinion in favour of the railway being constructed, why should they object to this power being given to the Federal Parliament? There is no difficulty in giving such power to the Federal Government, because there is not a single individual to be found in Australia, if one travelled from Dan to Beersheba, supposing there were such places—there is not a man who could honestly maintain that the proposal is not fair. Therefore, who will object? What man can object to such a reasonable proposition as this finding a place in our Federal Constitution? I cannot agree with those who say "We can take it on trust." I say we do not want to take such an important thing as this on trust. All sorts of difficulties may arise which at present we cannot see. The same Government may not be in power in South Australia; but even if they be in power, and if they be the best Government in the world, still a bargain is a bargain; and when we make a contract we do not leave an important matter to be dealt with on the grounds of sentiment and friendship. We say, we must have it in the contract; and I say to everyone in Western Australia, and I would preach it from the house-tops if I could: "Do not enter into federation unless the principle be in-

cluded in the Constitution, that the Commonwealth Parliament shall have the power to authorise the construction of a railway to connect the capital of this colony with the railway systems of the other colonies." I do not believe for a moment that if this matter should go to a conference of Premiers, or to a conference of delegates, the responsible politicians of Australia would ever raise any objections to the insertion of a clause like this in the Commonwealth Bill. Now we come to the third amendment, to what is called the "sliding scale."

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

Third Amendment: Sliding Scale, how Misunderstood.

THE PREMIER (continuing): I had arrived at that portion of my address which refers to what is known as the sliding scale in the Commonwealth Bill, Clause 95. I have already pointed out that this clause was specially inserted in the Commonwealth Bill as a concession to Western Australia, in order that she might be able to enter the Commonwealth without the serious loss of revenue which otherwise it was fully realised she would have to deal with. I do not suppose there is anyone who will deny that this was the intention of the Convention when they inserted Clause 95. I have already pointed out that as far as I am concerned, and I believe in the opinion of others too, in fact I might say all others, there was a misconception as to the operation of this clause. I thought it would result in this colony having the tariff which existed at the time the Commonwealth Bill was proclaimed, and that the tariff would be continued not only for five years, but also for the time between the proclamation of the Commonwealth and the adoption of uniform duties of customs throughout the Commonwealth—it was generally thought that would be six or seven years from the date of the proclamation. To show you that this was my opinion, I specially referred to it in the speech I delivered in St. George's Hall, in May, 1898, when I clearly stated what my views were in regard to it. I said all those persons who were in favour of the

abolition of certain duties that existed in the tariff ought not to agitate for any amendment of the tariff, seeing that federation was so close at hand; and it was generally admitted, in fact it was received by acclamation by those present who had been accustomed to an attitude of opposition to those duties, that there should be no alteration in the tariff during the six or seven years after the introduction of the Commonwealth; it was therefore understood by myself at any rate, and stated, that the tariff existing at the time the Commonwealth Bill came into force was not to be altered, and would not be altered until the five years had expired, except by the gradual diminution of the 20 per cent. annually.

Extra Taxation.

Now, however, we find, after we look more closely into the matter, not only has the tariff to be reimposed, but the operation of the clause will result in extra taxation on the people of this colony, a point that was not sufficiently considered. Everyone knows now that as soon as uniform duties are established in the colony, many articles of food are imported from beyond Australia will at once be taxed to a greater degree than now, and will be increased in price. We know very well that tea must increase in price to the extent of the Commonwealth duty, which will be not less than 3d. in the lb. All over Australia at present there is a duty of 3d. a lb. or more on tea, and it is not likely at all, in fact it is certain that the duty will not be less under the Commonwealth tariff; therefore tea at once will be raised in price, so soon as the Commonwealth Bill is proclaimed. And then there are mining machinery and all kinds of machinery.

MR. VOSPER: Sugar.

THE PREMIER: Yes; sugar will be increased £3 or £4 a ton.

MR. GEORGE: £5.

THE PREMIER: £5 perhaps. Queensland the other day asked this Government to impose a duty of £5 a ton on sugar.

MR. VOSPER: Sir George Turner says £6 a ton.

THE PREMIER: That is the duty they have now in Victoria, I think? Sugar must be increased in price; the benefit will go to Queensland; we must

pay a higher price in order that Queensland sugar may have the free run of all Australia, and all other kinds of sugar from every other part of the world will have to pay a duty of from £4 to £6 a ton. And there is kerosene, which has been free in the colony for years, but which I do not suppose will be admitted free under federation. Then there are rice and all those other products which we import free now or which bear a small duty, but which under federation will no doubt have to bear a heavier impost. There is, for instance, the duty of 5 per cent. on machinery. We would, of course, get machinery free from the other colonies, but would probably have to pay 20 per cent. on machinery imported from England, and therefore would have to pay more for the article. All these things were not realised sufficiently, if at all, by myself when the proposal was made to give this colony a concession by which we might be able to recoup ourselves during the first five years for loss of revenue sustained by reason of intercolonial free-trade.

Concessions to Western Australia: Opinions Showing the Intention.

To show that I am not making assertions which cannot be proved in regard to the feeling that was evidenced amongst members of the Convention in this matter, I will read a few passages from the speeches of some of the members of the Convention, and by these extracts hon. members will be convinced, beyond any doubt whatever, that all the statesmen of Australia who took a prominent part in the discussion of this question were under the impression that we (delegates) were under, and that I was under. Indeed, it is not an impression but an absolute fact, that it was necessary for Western Australia, if we entered federation, to have some special provision made in this direction. I have shown already that the special provision given to us is one-sided, and will not result in the way then expected; that it really means we will be taxed to a greater extent than at the present time, and I shall be able to show hon. members that the representatives at the Convention were of opinion that our position and our conditions were altogether exceptional and abnormal. I have

not had time, I regret to say, to do much in the way of searching out passages from the different speeches on this question at the Convention, but I only wish hon. members and the people of the country could find time to read the debates in the two volumes of the *Hansard* reports of the Melbourne Convention, and to see for themselves the attitude taken generally in regard to this colony. I can describe it as a friendly attitude, taken up by many of the statesmen of Australia who recognised most fully the very exceptional position in which this colony would be placed if it entered federation without some special consideration. Hon. members and the people of the country, if they had time to read the debates, would be able to judge to a far greater extent than they are able to judge now or would be likely to judge in the future, as to who it was, in the course of all those debates, who stood by Western Australia, fought the battle for her, and did most of the work there recorded. If people were able to give attention to the debates, they would clearly see whether it was the two members opposite (Messrs. Leake and James), or whether it was myself, who fought that battle on the part of Western Australia. I have been astonished myself, in looking at these volumes, to see how I continually fought the battle for this colony. Yet I am told I have done nothing; in fact, I am told I have been retarding the progress of the federation movement in this colony. One of the most able and one of the most generous politicians in the Convention of Melbourne, and in fact at all the Conventions, was the present Premier of Victoria, Sir George Turner. Sir George Turner said (Vol. I., p. 895):

In any scheme, be what it may, we have to deal exceptionally with the colony of Western Australia, because that colony has abnormal circumstances, and, with her increasing consuming population, a very large customs revenue.

Mr. Reid, who was then Premier of New South Wales, and whom you all know, when it was suggested that after expenses had been paid, the distribution of the surplus of the customs should be made on the *per capita* basis, said (Vol. I., p. 900):

The fact that Western Australia would be debarred on the *per capita* basis is enough. I

do not wish to go into the views of the Committee, but members will see that Western Australia cannot accept the *per capita* basis. It would simply rob her of nearly all the money she gets. Under that basis she would pay about seven times her share.

Mr. Reid, when the Melbourne Convention was making some special provision for Western Australia, said (Vol. I., p. 781):

My great objection to this proposal is that it singles out one State from other States; but, on the facts of the case, I see it is absolutely impossible to ask Western Australia to come in with us, unless that colony is secured in some such way as we now suggest against a financial crisis.

Mr Reid also said in Melbourne, when urging the case for Western Australia (Vol. I., p. 781-2):

Western Australia does not say, "We want money to replace these identical duties that we have lost." They do not take up such an unreasonable position. They simply say—"It is clear that, with the tariff of the Commonwealth, our financial system will be subjected to a sudden shock and crisis; we wish some safeguard against that; and so long as the customs tariff of the Commonwealth, whether by duties on articles we do not tax or not, leaves us in the total result anywhere near where we were, we have no cause of complaint or of claim."

Such was the position the Western Australians took up, and the position I took up, namely that so long as an arrangement would leave us somewhat near where we were (we did not expect or want any gain), so long as an arrangement left us without any great loss, then we would be satisfied.

Sir Philip Fysh, who was Premier and Treasurer of Tasmania for years, and is now Agent General for that colony in London, said (Vol. I., p. 799):

But whatever the result may be, Western Australia will have this satisfaction, that she is not to be placed under federation, for the first five years, in a worse position as regards customs revenue than she is at the present time.

It was proposed by the Finance Committee that any loss of revenue to the Treasury in this colony during the first five years should be made up by the other colonies, and that proposal, which was abandoned afterwards, was almost carried at the Convention. Sir George Turner again said at Melbourne (Vol. I., p. 803):

Western Australia I have always admitted to be in an abnormal position, and it must be dealt with separately from the other colonies.

I never take Western Australia into consideration in dealing with any question with regard to finance, because I admit that it is in such a position that it must have separate treatment.

Mr. Henry, who had been Treasurer of Tasmania and was a member of the Convention, said (Vol. I., p. 808):

We all, from the first, admitted the special circumstances of Western Australia, and the necessity for dealing in a special way with her finances so that she could enter the federation.

Mr. Henry also said (Vol. I., p. 813):

I desire most earnestly to see Western Australia come into the federation, and I should like to join in any reasonable scheme to keep Western Australia right.

Sir George Turner again said (Vol. I., p. 1129):

My honourable friend has told us that the people in Western Australia will save very largely in consequence of having the duties taken off.

I want hon. members to listen to this, because it generally bears out what we know occurs in practice. Sir George Turner goes on:

At present they receive £380,000 or £390,000 from these intercolonial duties.

The amount is not so much now as it was then. Sir George Turner continues:

Although the people there may save some small portion of that on account of the duties being taken off, I think the probabilities are that the people will have to pay for most of the goods they import about the same as they do now. I do not see how the people will save any large amount. No doubt some lines may be and will be reduced, but I fancy the people of Western Australia will find, after the duties are taken off, that they will have to pay nearly the same for their goods as they do now. Even if they do save something, it will be very hard for the Government of the colony to persuade the people that they have made such great savings, that they have the money in another pocket, and that they should put their hands into that pocket and take out some of that money in order to hand it over to the Treasurer. They will then want to know "What benefits have we gained by federation?"

MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear. That is what is going to happen.

THE PREMIER: That is very clearly and concisely put by Sir George Turner, and in words which I am sure I could not improve on. That reminds me that people, on the goldfields especially, who are always saying that living is dear and that the duties are the cause of that dearness, are the very same people who do not object, and have not objected for

years, to pay 1s. for a little whisky, though in all other parts of the colony the same quantity of whisky is sold for 6d.

MR. VOSPER: Not a little whisky, either.

THE PREMIER: Hotel-keepers on the goldfields who make these exorbitant charges are found presiding at public meetings, and making speeches about the high cost of living, while they are charging double price for the spirits they sell.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Drinks are 1s. at Cue.

THE PREMIER: There is no reason why drinks should be that price, and it is a most exorbitant charge. Hon. members talk about the "meat ring," but the "whisky ring" is much worse.

MR. GEORGE: It is bad whisky at that.

THE PREMIER: Sir George Turner went on to say (Vol. I., p. 1130):

I am quite of opinion, so far as Western Australia is concerned, that if we are to induce her to come into the federation, we must do something to assist the representative men in that colony to bring her in with us. We have been told by Sir John Forrest very earnestly, and I have no doubt honestly, that he and his honourable friends will have a very hard task before them to persuade the people of his colony to join us at all.

I must ask hon. members' attention to what follows, because it is important. Sir George Turner continues:

And when we look at the great distance which divides Western Australia from the rest of the colonies, and remember that there are hundreds and thousands of people there who are hoping to develop their own natural industries and their own manufacturing industries, and that through intercolonial free-trade they will be seriously injured in that respect, I can quite understand the difficulty that will arise, and that Sir John Forrest and his colleagues will have a very hard task indeed to induce their colony to join us. I believe that Sir John Forrest and his brother representatives are very anxious to induce her to enter the federation.

MR. JAMES: Some of us are.

THE PREMIER: I do not think the hon. member was anxious at the time, though he may be now.

MR. JAMES: It was not the time to induce the people, then.

THE PREMIER: Sir George Turner went on:

And therefore, while the proposal with regard to Western Australia may not be theoretically correct, I feel that we are bound to do something to assist that great colony.

Mr. Walker, another representative, said this (Vol. I., p. 1140):

I presume that we all agree that, even if we have to pay for it, we must have Western Australia in the federation.

Sir Philip Fysh also said (Vol. I., p. 1151):

The extreme solicitude of the Finance Committee, joined to the extreme solicitude of the Convention, to draw our friends from Western Australia into the federation, leads us to desire to meet them in every possible way.

Mr. Walter James interjected (as a delegate): "Why not give us the customs duties for 10 years?"

MR. JAMES: That is what I said in Sydney, and you would not follow me. You are coming round now.

THE PREMIER: You appear to have changed your opinion since.

MR. JAMES: I will tell you, when I speak.

THE PREMIER: Mr. James in his place at the Convention seldom spoke at all.

MR. JAMES: He got on the point, though, did he not?

THE PREMIER: He said: "Why not give us the customs duties for 10 years?" That was a very sensible remark. But he went further than I thought necessary, and further than I now think we ought to go. Sir Philip Fysh continued, after this interruption:

It is admitted that Western Australia occupies a very exceptional position. The bare fact of her collecting over 35 per cent. of her present customs duties on intercolonial products, and the fact that she cannot afford to lose this revenue of £380,000 immediately, point to the necessity for something being done.

MR. MORGANS: Who said that?

THE PREMIER: Sir Philip Fysh, the Treasurer of Tasmania, a man very conversant with Australian finance; perhaps more so than most people in Australia. Sir Philip Fysh went on to say (Vol. I., p. 1153):

It will, however, I recognise, give her producers a better chance of producing for their own market. . . . In Western Australia, however, where production is in a younger stage, the farmers have not yet attained a position which will enable them to compete with the producers in the other colonies, and during the next five years it may be presumed that they will endeavour to secure that position for themselves.

He went on to say:

I do not desire to speak for the Western Australian representatives. They are capable

of speaking for themselves. We must admit as reasonable men, however, that they are in an extraordinary position, and therefore some extraordinary means must be devised to meet their case.

Mr. Solomon, the present leader of the Opposition in the South Australian Legislature at the present time, a very wise man—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: As his name denotes.

THE PREMIER: My hon. friend opposite (Mr. Solomon), a relative of his, knows him. Mr. Solomon said (Vol. I., p. 1154-5):

But in regard to Western Australia we have a case which is not a question of the loss of a twentieth or a fortieth of the customs revenue, or a loss of £100,000 out of a revenue of £2,000,000, but a loss of nearly a third of the total of the customs revenue of the colony.

But everyone recognises, and has recognised from the inception of this Convention, that in dealing with these commercial questions and with the finances of the colonies, it is absolutely necessary to make exception in regard to Western Australia.

The thing was looked at from its practical aspect, and each Treasurer on the Committee, and every member on the Committee, tried to imagine himself in the position that Sir John Forrest and his colleagues are placed in, and to ask himself how, if so situated, he could possibly go to his colony with a proposal that meant a loss of a third of its revenue, and advise it to come into the Federation on those conditions. The members of the Finance Committee recognised that, under these circumstances, it was necessary to give the people of Western Australia special treatment in order to induce them to join the union. Every hon. member recognises that if there is one colony of the group which the older colonies specially desire to see in the federation—perhaps because of their selfish wish to extend the markets of their own producers—it is Western Australia. Western Australia, with its growing population and its immense demand for colonial produce, is the market we all desire to open up for our general trade; and it is for the Convention to determine whether we shall treat Western Australia, not with liberality, because that is a word which need not be used in this connection, but with a degree of fairness, and a recognition of the fact that she must be assisted in bearing the loss which federation will entail upon her, or whether we shall make up our minds to leave her out of the Union. The conclusion of the Finance Committee was that it was necessary to give special terms to Western Australia; that in asking this desirable partner to join us we should say that, as she was sacrificing more than the rest of us, we should give her special terms in the adjustment of the finances.

Mr. Solomon also said (Vol. I., p. 1160-1):

The Finance Committee have said that the circumstances of Western Australia demand special treatment. It is all very well to say that it would only prevent it in one colony, but that one colony is a colony to which many of us look for a great deal of our trade. One may as well be candid on these questions. As a representative of South Australia, I say that South Australia looks to Western Australia for a very lucrative and mutually advantageous trade.

Mr. Henry, the late Treasurer of Tasmania, said (Vol. I., p. 1169):

There is a just, and I may say a strong, feeling as to the necessity of making some provision in the Bill that will induce our Western Australian friends to join the federation, and enable them to justify their action in their own colony.

Those are only a few of the quotations. There are hundreds, I believe, in those two volumes, all in the same key, all setting forth that Western Australia is deserving of special terms in order to enable her to come in with safety and without unduly disarranging her finances. What do the Select Committee propose in regard to this sliding scale? The proposal is, I think, very moderate, and I am sure, as I said before, that the statesmen of Australia must have been astonished at the moderation of the Select Committee. The report says:

That as Section 95 of the Commonwealth Bill, which provides for an annual reduction by a sliding scale of 20 per cent. of duties of customs on intercolonial manufactures and products, was intended as a concession to Western Australia with a view of enabling her to enter the federation as an original State without undue loss, and as it is believed that an annual change of tariff would result in great inconvenience and injury to trade, this Committee is of opinion that this section should be amended to read as follows:—"Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution the Parliament of the State of Western Australia may, during the first five years after the imposition of uniform duties of customs, impose duties of customs on goods passing into that State, and such duties shall be collected by the Commonwealth. Provided that during the aforesaid period of five years, all goods imported into the other States of the Commonwealth from Western Australia shall be subject to such duties of customs as the Parliament of the Commonwealth may provide. All duties imposed under this section shall cease at the expiration of the fifth year after the imposition of uniform duties of customs." The effect of this amendment would be that Western Australia would have the right for a period of five years after the imposition of uniform

duties to impose duties of customs on goods from the other States in the Commonwealth, also from places beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

Hon. members will notice that we have desired to act altogether fairly with regard to this matter. We do not say: "We will be able to tax you, but you shall not be able to tax us." That is what is in the Bill. The Bill as passed by the Convention provided that during the five years we could put a tax upon any goods coming from the other colonies or elsewhere, from beyond the sea. The effect of the provision was that anything grown or made here and sent to the other colonies would be admitted free. But the Select Committee did not provide that. The Committee in fact say: "As we claim to place a duty on your goods for five years, you should have a right to impose a duty upon any goods coming from us." That is perfectly fair. It is not one-sided. We say, "You can treat us in exactly the same manner as we desire to treat you during those five years. In fact, you can do during those five years exactly what you are doing now."

Fourth Amendment: Inter-State Commission.

The only other question dealt with by the Select Committee is that of the Inter-State Commission, and I do not intend to devote many words to that, but I will read what the report says:

That, with the object of establishing manufactures and stimulating production in Western Australia, this Committee is of opinion that the Inter-State Commission should not exercise its powers in regard to Western Australia until after five years from the imposition of uniform duties, and that the following amendment of the Bill should be made:—

"Sections 101 to 104, both inclusive, shall not apply to the State of Western Australia until after five years from the imposition of uniform duties of customs."

The effect of this amendment would be, that the Parliament of Western Australia would have complete control over all railway freights and charges in the colony for the five years during which the right to impose duties of customs would continue, and that the Inter-State Commission would not be able to interfere till after that period.

I think that clause is a fitting corollary to the one preceding it, which provides that this Parliament should have the right to impose customs duties during the five years after the imposition of uniform

duties, so that the Parliament would have the right to arrange freights on the Government railways during those five years, the whole thing coming to an end at the close of five years, and after that time we would be in the Commonwealth altogether. During this five years the Commonwealth would have control over our post-offices, our defences, the collection of our customs revenue, and other things, but we would not have free-trade with the other colonies during those five years—that is, unless the Parliament of this country desired it. It is altogether left to the Parliament of this country to do what they like. The Committee propose that for five years the Inter-State Commission shall not operate in this colony. People do not understand the working of the Inter-State Commission yet, I think, and will not understand it for a long time; but it may be found a very oppressive engine indeed, which may stifle and altogether kill some of the industries; but still we say that, if we have these clauses for five years, knowing that at the end of that time they will come to an end, we are so desirous of throwing in our lot with the whole of Australia that we will take the risk afterwards.

Those who Oppose Special Concessions.

I have quoted all these extracts from the eminent men of Australia, the leaders of political thought, with the one object of showing to this House and the people of the colony that there never was an idea in the mind of any capable politician at the Convention that we could afford, in our abnormal circumstances, to enter the federation without some special provision. Yet there are to be found plenty of people in this colony who will go about and make speeches, saying we do not want any special provision, that we are rich enough to enter federation, notwithstanding our abnormal circumstances, and that we are quite able to enter upon even terms. All I can say in reply to that is that such is not the opinion of the politicians of Australia; therefore, I am inclined to think that the people who make those speeches are persons who have not considered the question, or are not really speaking with any sense of responsibility.

A MEMBER: Do you propose we should join as an original State?

THE PREMIER: Yes; I propose so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will all these disabilities end in five years?

THE PREMIER: They would end in five years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The disabilities?

THE PREMIER: What do you mean?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would those things end in five years?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member asks such funny questions. If he reads paragraph 12 of the Select Committee's report, he will see the whole thing. The hon. member asks a simple question, as if he had never heard anything about the matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not asking that question at all.

THE PREMIER: The report reads:—

Your Committee, however, hope and believe that the adverse effects of federation on the customs revenue, and upon the producing and other industries of the colony, will not be so much felt so soon as the production has increased and our industries have become more firmly established, and when other avenues for taxation may probably be available.

We shall have those five years in which to look about and to consider our position, knowing what is coming on, and will perhaps be able to decrease expenditure. We may be able to get revenue from other sources, and to recast our fiscal system; at all events we shall know what we have to expect, and shall have time to prepare for the future. I believe there are a great many people in this colony who do not know what federation is, or what will be the effect of the Bill upon this country. I do not make that statement from any wish to be discourteous, but many of my friends, and men who I thought ought to know better, do not know the facts of the case; and I have been simply astonished that, after all this controversy and all the information that has been thrown broadcast over the colony by the Press and through other channels, people do not know more than they do about the effect of federation upon this country, and as to what will happen when we federate. To-night I should like, just for the sake of giving information, to explain in a very few words what will happen when federation is accomplished as regards this colony.

What must be Surrendered under Federation.

This is undoubtedly the very greatest question we have ever had to deal with in this House; it is the most important and the most far-reaching problem we have ever considered; and further, we must remember that we cannot retrace our steps.

MR. VOSPER: It may be the last great question we shall have to consider.

THE PREMIER: I believe it will be the last great question. Certainly no other question so great can ever come before this House again, for we will be shorn, if I may use the expression, of a great many powers which we as an autonomous State, I almost say as a sovereign State, at present possess. We shall have to give up one of the very greatest powers that any self-governing country possesses; that is the power of taxation through the customs, and the power of collecting excise duties.

MR. VOSPER: And perhaps all forms of taxation. The Commonwealth Government can adopt all forms of taxation, if they choose.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member is perfectly right. The Commonwealth is given the right to impose all forms of taxation, and is also given priority of taxation; but we can tax too in respect of all other things save those I have mentioned. Therefore, there is no reason why the house a man occupies in Hay Street should not be taxed by the Commonwealth Government; though, after the Commonwealth Government have got all they can out of that householder, there is no reason why this Parliament should not tax the house also; but this Parliament will have to come in second.

MR. VOSPER: And municipalities as an easy third.

MR. A. FORREST (Mayor of Perth): No! They will be first.

THE PREMIER: They will not be first; they will be third. There is no doubt that we are going to give up what the Irishmen have been fighting for so long, and have not yet obtained, that is home rule; because, as I will show before I sit down—and my only object is to give information, and I think it is necessary that I should give information, perhaps not for members of this House, but for the sake of the people of the country generally—that the power of taxation

and the power of collecting excise duties will be gone from us for ever, and will never come back to us; and we shall also have to give up the control of the posts and telegraphs, and the telephones, together with the power or the right to have any military force in this colony.

MR. VOSPER: You will have to give up control of the railways too, under the clauses dealing with the Inter-State Commission.

THE PREMIER: The power of controlling a local military force is removed. We can have no more volunteers here, or at least they will not be under the jurisdiction of this House. We shall never have any more of those heated arguments about the defence force which we have occasionally heard in this House.

MR. VOSPER: No more Transvaal business.

THE PREMIER: We shall never more be able to give bounties, or to grant any assistance to industries in the shape of bounties without the consent of the Federal Parliament; and we shall not be able to have preferential rates on our railways as we have now, for encouraging and giving a preference to the products of our own country, as distinguished from those of other countries.

MR. LEAKE: The Federal Government can give bounties.

THE PREMIER: Yes; and a State can give mining bounties, and thus encourage mining.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; bounties can be given in respect of minerals.

THE PREMIER: And we shall never be able to build any more lighthouses on our coast: that will be a matter altogether for the Federal Government; and as for quarantine, the keeping of our people safe from the introduction of disease from without, we shall have to trust the far-off Federal Government in New South Wales to look after that, because we shall have no power to make quarantine regulations.

MR. GEORGE: Let us hope they will be able to keep out the influenza.

THE PREMIER: These things we must give up for ever. We shall never again have the power to erect a telegraph pole in this country, or to put up a telephone wire; and if a post-office be wanted up at Mount Margaret, or at Laverton, or away in the wilds of Pilbarra, we shall

have to write over to New South Wales to ask for it, because we shall be unable to get it from any authority in this colony.

MR. GEORGE: And then you will not get it.

THE PREMIER: And if a light-house be wanted, we shall have to apply for it to the Federal Government, because we shall not be able to build it, or to have anything to do with it. If there be a telephone or a telegraph wire, or a post-office, or a lighthouse, or anything else of that sort required, we shall have to write to the federal capital in New South Wales, somewhere near Kosciusko, for I believe that is where the federal city is to be built; we must then ask the Federal Government whether they are in favour of a postal service from Southern Cross to Hope's Hill, which my hon. friend from Southern Cross has been asking about to-day. In future that hon. member will have to make his demands to the local postmaster, who will probably have some power in his hands to grant such requests.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Sholl will then be king.

THE PREMIER: Or, if the local postmaster has no such power, he will have to refer the matter to the Postmaster General at the federal capital. Another point is that the Federal Government, besides all these exclusive powers, will have the power to legislate on all the social questions with which we deal from day to day; on all social questions such as now come before this House, they will be able to legislate. We also shall be able to legislate in respect of most of those questions, but the federal legislation will override ours if the two conflict; and we may depend upon it that we shall soon give up legislating in those directions. If hon. members will turn to Clause 51 of the Bill, they will see there a long list of powers given to the Federal Government. The laws we can make with regard to all the subjects mentioned in Clause 51 of the Bill will remain in force only until the Commonwealth Parliament legislate in respect of them, and then our laws will be annulled. Their laws will override ours, so that in a short time we shall have nothing to do in this House with social legislation, nor with legislation

dealing with any of those subjects I have mentioned, such as customs, excise, post-offices, telegraphs, quarantine, lighthouses, and matters of that sort, nor with any other matters enumerated in Clause 51. I mention these matters just to point out to the people of the colony what a serious question federation is, and how serious it is to give up all these powers we now possess. If we had never had them, I have no doubt we might easier do without them in the future.

Civil Servants who must Transfer Allegiance.

We must remember, too, that all the customs officials in the colony, and all the postal officials, the clerks and postmasters and telegraph officers, telegraph clerks and telephone girls throughout the colony, also all the military, all the volunteers, all the lighthouse-keepers and quarantine officials, will still be in this colony, but will not care twopence for this Parliament or this Government. They will be under the control of the Federal Government.

MR. VOSPER: Civil servants will then be awkward men to meet.

THE PREMIER: Civil servants, at all events, will not care much for the local Parliament: they will all owe their allegiance to the Federal Government, or to the Ministers who in New South Wales will rule the various departments of the central Government, and will be their official chiefs. This great change will be not for to-day, nor for to-morrow, but for ever; and this Legislature and this Government will henceforth have nothing whatever to do with controlling the Departments I have mentioned.

Federal Centralisation.

It is often been said of me that I am a centraliser, that I desire to centralise everything in Perth. Well, what is the centralisation now to what the centralisation will be at the hands of the Federal Government in New South Wales? Everything will be centralised there, as far as this colony is concerned; and those who blame local centralisation will have more to complain of in regard to the greater centralisation in the future under federation. I expect, however, that some good will result from this, because the authority is so far away and will never be seen, and there

will be no way of getting at the authority, and therefore I expect people will be less apt to complain.

MR. VOSPER: There will be no more deputations.

THE PREMIER: That is true. There will be no possible chance of intending deputationists writing down to the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), requesting him to interview the respective Ministers at the head of every department, on about fifty subjects. That hon. member, if he wishes to do so, will have to take a pilgrimage to New South Wales; and when that fact is realised, I think people will become more contented, and will be less willing to complain.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But we shall have some representation.

THE PREMIER: Yes; we shall have some representation; but we do not know what our representatives will be able to effect with the Federal Government.

What will be Left to us.

However, I wish to tell hon. members that we shall have something left to us in the way of legislation. We shall have our land laws; and seeing that the land laws have scarcely been altered for the last 12 years—we passed them again last year without much amendment—I do not believe our land legislation will in the immediate future engage attention to any considerable extent.

MR. VOSPER: Then we shall not be deprived of Noxious Weeds Acts?

THE PREMIER: No; I think we shall still have those. We shall also have the control of our mines, and the control of our railways subject to the Inter-State Commission coming in and telling us that we must not charge more freight than is charged elsewhere, that we must not give a concession to this industry or to that, because such concession would interfere with the rates that prevail throughout Eastern Australia. Another great power reserved to us—a secondary power, be it remembered—is that we shall have the power of taxation over everything in this country; subject, however, to the prior right of the Commonwealth Government to tax first. The other day we passed through this House a Bill, which I can assure you I was glad to see passed,

because it will produce a lot of revenue, and we want revenue for the development of this country's resources: I refer to the dividend tax. I estimated that this tax would produce £94,000; but what would I have thought if, whilst I was just passing the Bill through this Parliament, another similar Bill had been passed by the Commonwealth, taxing dividends in Western Australia, and throughout the federation? I should have been check-mated "in one act": my £94,000, instead of going into the Treasury of Western Australia, would go into the Treasury of the Federal Government in New South Wales. In fact, we have to make up our minds that we are to be only "number 2" in respect of taxation; and I expect the result will be that we shall not be able to indulge in taxation legislation, that we shall have to reduce expenditure, that the departments will be reduced numerically and financially, and we shall have to change our whole fiscal policy and arrangements.

MR. MORGANS: You will become non-entities.

Self-Government, Limited.

THE PREMIER: I have talked about "prestige"; I said, ten years ago, that under federation we would suffer in prestige. We are a self-governing colony at the present time. We shall not be a self-governing colony then, except to a limited extent. We are known in the world at the present time; and if I or any one else make a speech here on any important question, the fact is telegraphed to London, and it appears in the London Press. But we never hear of speeches made by the Premiers of Ontario, of British Columbia, or leaders in the State Parliaments of the United States of America: the speeches of such statesmen are seldom heard of far away from their own localities; and that will be the case with us. Federation will be an engine of centralisation for all important matters. Defence can well afford to be centralised. It will be a strange experience for us in this House and those accustomed to administer affairs in the colony to have thousands of people in public positions all over the colony, and to have no control over them at all, no control whatever. There are the post-office officials and the officers of

customs: all the officials in these departments we shall have no control over. It will be a great shock to us, but it may be good for us in the end. We shall chafe at it, no doubt, in the first few years, but we shall not live for ever: a new generation will arise who will not know anything about the self-governing powers which we have now, and which it is desired to give up, and they will probably be content to live under the new condition of things. I know all these things; I have known them always; I have had some experience of government, and I have been in Canada and in the United States, and know something of the condition of things there. The change will be new to the people of this colony. A great many have not realised the great change which will come over the Government here when we give up what we call "home rule," when we will relinquish the control of our own business. We have now the command of our own business; we are as free as the great country our fathers came from, having nearly as great powers as the Parliament of Great Britain; but we shall have to give up these; and many things we have been accustomed to deal with ourselves we shall have to entrust to others; especially taxation through the customs, we shall have to trust that to people who know nothing about us, for the most part, who have never been here and know nothing of our surroundings and requirements.

The Change when Realised.

We shall chafe, as I have said, under it during the first few years. Those who have advocated federation-at-any-price and those who have advocated it at all, especially those who have advocated it at any price, will be cursed during the first five years of federation; everyone of us will be abused. People do not like to lose powers which they once possessed. My friends opposite, who would like to hand over the colony at any price, will come in for the odium that will be poured upon them by many people. The first few years of federation will no doubt be full of trials and disappointments. It is to be hoped, however, that after the first few years, and when we have got used to the new order of things, federa-

tion will be to our material benefit; but we shall find it very trying in the beginning. Our powers of legislation will be curtailed to a large extent, and we shall be a subordinate Government. People will not like it at first, but time will remove all these objections.

Advantages of Federation.

I need not point out the advantages—there are a good many which will come to us—but I will point out a few. We shall not find advantages in the way of our making money or being financially better off; but there are advantages, I think, which will be more appreciated as time goes on, which will not be appreciated at the beginning, but in a few years to come will be more appreciated; we will be more united with the rest of Australia, and be able to work out our destiny in becoming a nation, "one people, with one destiny." We shall have free-trade and a free interchange of our produce throughout the length and breadth of the land; and we shall have wide markets, if we have anything to sell.

MR. HARPER: Ah! "if"?

THE PREMIER: And we shall be able to send our products untrammelled by tariff restrictions; and we shall have a higher and wider political life. As the report of the Select Committee says, Australia as a whole will occupy a higher plane in the world's opinion. As I have said over and over again, we shall be politically lifted up; our politics will be less parochial than they are under existing conditions. I think there will be another advantage, and I am not going to hesitate to state it to-night: there will be a curtailment of the influence and power in legislation of the local demagogue, the noisy, irresponsible, local agitator, who will have less power in the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia than in this colony; and that will be a very good thing for the State and every one living in it.

MR. VOSPER: The Commonwealth Parliament will be more conservative, then?

THE PREMIER: It will be a long way more conservative. The Commonwealth Parliament will strengthen—I have not thought out this matter to-night, but have known it for years—strengthen the law as to the rights of property and the protection of civil rights generally. I

believe property will be better protected, and civil rights will be more protected, under the Commonwealth than under our existing constitution. I think altogether the effect will be that our political conditions will be placed on a firmer and more lasting basis. I have not mentioned, as members will notice, how we are to gain financially, because we shall lose for some years to come, unless the amendments recommended by the Select Committee are made. After the five years—I am full of hope that during the five years we shall increase in population, and in wealth—after five years, I hope we shall be able to hold our own in the councils of Australia; but during the five years, unless the terms which we ask are conceded, these proposals that no reasonable man can object to, our finances will be upset, and we shall lose a great deal of money. I think these amendments should be conceded.

Why not Concede the Amendments?

I do not suppose there are many men in Australia, and there ought not to be in this colony, who are of opinion that these amendments should not be conceded. The only question that arises in the mind of anyone is the difficulty in getting them conceded, which might prevent our entering the Commonwealth as an original State; but I do not place much importance on entering as an original State. I do not see that we are going to make a fortune in entering the Commonwealth. However eager I may be that we should enter the federation, I do not think that we should financially benefit for some time. To some colonies which have more produce than they can use, and which require larger and more markets for their manufactures, it is important that the new constitution should come about quickly, in order that they may have a better market, a market untrammelled by customs duties, for sending their wine, their oil, their wheat, and their flour and their manufactures to other States. Take the instance of South Australia, with wine which they do not know what to do with: they cannot get their wine in anywhere free of duty. If South Australia sends wine to this colony, there is a duty of 6s. 6d. per gallon to pay on it, and if that duty were removed, South Australia could sell her

produce 6s. 6d. a gallon cheaper in this market; so that her producers would soon flood out the wine productions of this colony, and the consumers would be able to drink more wine at a cheaper price. I myself see no reason, on the plea of justice alone—I do not want any other plea, but on the plea of justice alone I see no difficulty whatever in the moderate proposals of the Select Committee, which I entirely indorse, being accepted and adopted. The Commonwealth Bill can be altered without any trouble. I know an instance in this colony in which we passed a Bill in this House, a Constitution Bill, and it had to go to the British Parliament for an Enabling Act to make it law; and that Enabling Act altered the Constitution which was passed here. If that has already been done it can be done again.

Those who Oppose Amendments.

There is no person who is acquainted with political matters who does not know that the Imperial Parliament can amend the Commonwealth Bill in any way they like, and it is very likely and is pretty certain that the Bill will be amended in one or two particulars by the Imperial Parliament, even if our amendments are not accepted. The reason our amendments are not being considered now is that I believe there has been an idea prevailing in some of the colonies that the people in this colony are only too eager to shake hands with their friends in other parts of Australia, without considering whether Western Australia sinks or swims; that only the Government and a few members of Parliament are blocking the road; and those persons are of opinion that if they “stand to their guns,” we shall be ignominiously defeated when we appeal to the people. Well, if we are defeated, we shall accept it in the spirit in which we ought to accept it; but that remains to be seen. If those persons who are so eager for federation had only stood by Western Australia in the way that others have been trying to stand by her, there would have been no trouble in obtaining the small alterations which we feel are absolutely necessary. I say without hesitation, and I do not care whether it applies to the people here or elsewhere, to the political men here or in other parts of Australia, that if they

will not make these small, moderate, reasonable, just alterations in order to meet the requirements of Western Australia, they are no real federalists; that if they are content to erect in this southern part of the world a Commonwealth, leaving out of that constitution the people who occupy one-third of the continent, if they are willing to erect such constitution leaving one-third of the continent out of it because they will not make these small amendments, which we consider are necessary for our own safety and are just and reasonable, then I say they do not deserve to have the control of this great continent.

Bill as Drafted, Bill as Amended, both to the People.

Being, therefore, of opinion that the sliding scale in the Bill is unworkable, that the recommendations of the Joint Committee are the least, the very least, that should be granted to us, but that the electors of the colony should have an opportunity of deciding the question, I propose to recommend that both Bills be referred to the electors. In this I am only speaking for myself; for, as I told hon. members at the beginning, I represent no party and no Government on this question; and I hope everyone in the House will use his own judgment and his own discretion, and do what he thinks is right. I propose that both Bills be referred to the people—the Bill as amended at the Premiers' Conference, and the Bill as further amended by the Joint Select Committee; and although I am convinced in my own mind that the Bill as amended by the Joint Select Committee is the one that will safeguard our interests during the next five years, and will allow us time to prepare ourselves for being in complete unison with the rest of Australia after that time, yet I am prepared to agree, for the reasons I have already stated, that both Bills shall be submitted to the vote of the electors. Whatever may be the decision, I shall do my best to inform the people of this country as to the real merits of the measures; I shall do my best to point out what federation means, and I fear very few people yet thoroughly understand the question; and I shall do my best to show, as I have to-night, that it is absolutely necessary for us to pro-

tect our finances in the way the Select Committee propose. If, however, the people of the country decide against what I consider is just and right to this colony, then, at any rate, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have tried to do my duty, and it will then be for me to loyally accept and to try and help forward the decision the people have arrived at.

Plea for Unity of Action.

I am positive that if all parties in this colony are united and really in earnest in regard to this matter, if they really desire federation and desire peace amongst the people of the colony, there is not the slightest doubt whatever that we will obtain the moderate requests or demands we have made. But if this matter is to come into the vortex of dispute and party politics, if the desire is to raise up one side of the community against the other and create discord in the colony, then all I can say is that the colony must suffer. My own opinion is that if we are really in earnest, if those persons on the goldfields and elsewhere who seem so eager for federation are really in earnest and really loyal and true to the country which is giving them bread, and I hope what is more than bread, a competency; if they are loyal to the interests of the country, and will join with those of us who are desirous and eager to do what we can to promote the interests of the country, then we shall be able to enter the federation on terms which will safeguard our interests. I have said all I have to say: I have placed my views before the House; and whether the decision be to enter into the Commonwealth on the terms I suggest, or whether the decision be to enter the Commonwealth on the terms of the original Bill, I hope we will be able to enter federation as a united people, without any enmity or ill-feeling engendered by party politics. I beg to move:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Commonwealth Bill as amended at the Conference of Premiers, and the Commonwealth Bill as amended at the Conference of Premiers with the amendments suggested by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, should be both referred to the vote of the electors, and that the necessary legislation be introduced as early as possible.

MR. MORAN: I second the motion.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): We have at last some pronouncement from the leader of the Government, upon this great question of federation; and to-night, for the first time during this session, we know exactly where we are. We have now to discuss, it seems, only those amendments which were suggested by the Joint Select Committee, the report of which is before the House. The Premier was pleased to refer to myself and others as "federalists at any price"; but I hope hon. members will not take that phrase in its literal sense, because it has been repudiated time after time. I and others have declared we are in favour of federation, not "at any price," but as laid down in the draft Commonwealth Bill, approved at the late Convention and subsequently amended at the Conference of Premiers, and which Bill our own Premier, in conjunction with other colonial Premiers, undertook to refer to the electors. It was the Bill as altered that had to be submitted to the Parliament of each colony for reference to the electors. In that agreement it will be noticed there is no reference whatever to any possible amendments which might be made, either by this or by any other Parliament; and it is hardly a fair taunt, or rather it is a taunt to throw at us, that we are "federalists at any price" when really we only advocate federation on the terms which the right hon. gentleman himself accepted so recently as February last. I shall be prepared to show to hon. members that there is no necessity for us to discuss those proposed amendments, and, as I said only a few nights ago, the little points upon which we federalists and anti-federalists differ are particularly narrow. If it were a question between those who are in favour of federation and those who will not accept federation on any terms whatever, then of course we could understand the position much better. I believe there are hon. members in the House who object to federation on any terms at all, and with such members we can argue; but it is difficult to appreciate the arguments which have been put forward by the Premier, who is the champion of the conditional federalists. One remark which was made use of by the Premier cer-

tainly surprised me, and perhaps it will also surprise other hon. members, as well as the general public. That remark was that, while the question had engaged the attention of the Premier for upwards of 10 years, had engaged his immediate attention during the last two years and his more immediate attention during the last three or four months, he had never consulted his colleagues in the matter. Of course, when a statement like that is made by such a personage as the Premier, it must be accepted; at any rate, for what it is worth.

MR. HARPER: What do you insinuate?

MR. LEAKE: What I said was that the Premier had said he had never consulted his colleagues on this question, and yet we find there is a special reference to the question in the Governor's Speech, and that, moreover, there was an amendment to that Speech which the Premier and his colleagues thought fit to treat as a no-confidence motion. What value are we to place on the statement that the Premier has never consulted his colleagues on the question of federation? Whilst on this question, I would refer to a matter which I alluded to the other evening. These amendments which have been proposed were suggested, or first appeared before the public, in the *Morning Herald* of the 7th September. In the Government organ, the *West Australian*, an article appeared on the 2nd October, I think, to the effect that the statement which I made on that occasion was only made to give point, or, as it was suggested, really was made in order to annoy. At any rate, in the *West Australian*, it was stated that these amendments were not original so far as the *Morning Herald* was concerned, but that the amendments had been conveyed in confidence to the editor of that journal as far back as the 3rd September, and that, consequently, the *Morning Herald* cribbed the ideas from the Premier.

MR. HUBBLE: No, no!

MR. LEAKE: That is what the *West Australian* said. The *Morning Herald*, of course, says that the Government cribbed the ideas of the latter journal. It is the *Herald* on the one side and the Government on the other. It does not really much matter to us who was the originator of the idea, but it is well to observe that even on the showing of the

West Australian, the Government, or the Premier at any rate, had come to the conclusion as far back as the 3rd September that these amendments should be made and would be made, and they were subsequently embodied in the report of the Select Committee. Now the report of the Select Committee was not published until the 19th September, and the conclusion with regard to the amendments was arrived at by the Premier when only nine out of 38 witnesses before that Select Committee had been examined. Consequently, the report of that Select Committee was cut and dried. It was, as I say, determined upon as early as the 3rd September, although not published till the 19th.

MR. HIGHAM: "Rot."

MR. LEAKE: Is that a Parliamentary expression?

THE SPEAKER: I did not observe who made use of it; but it is a very improper expression to make use of.

MR. HIGHAM: I have very much pleasure in withdrawing it.

MR. LEAKE: What I said was that I thought the report of the Select Committee, and particularly in regard to these amendments, was cut and dried as far back as the 3rd September, and we may take it that the matter had before the 3rd September received mature deliberation. Consequently it is not an exaggerated position to assume that before the Select Committee, or at the time the Select Committee were appointed, this determination had been arrived at; and what I say is that it is a pity this House and the country were not taken into the confidence of the Premier at an earlier date than the 19th September. We are justified in saying that the proceedings and deliberations of the Select Committee were hardly calculated to advance the consideration of the subject, but rather to impede the movement altogether.

MR. GEORGE: Are you quite correct about the number of witnesses?

MR. LEAKE: Yes; I think you will find Mr. Diamond was the last one, about the 3rd September. I may be one or two out, but not much. It was suggested by the right hon. gentleman that the alterations made by the Conference of Premiers in February last were alterations for the worse. There, again, one cannot help expressing surprise,

because if they were so bad and were for the worse, what was the necessity for the prolonged silence between February and to-day? Surely, considering the state of public opinion as expressed not only in this House but at public meetings outside, one would have assumed the Premier would have seized upon one of the many opportunities which offered, to express his opinion upon this very important question, and so assist in the education of the public, which he now seems to say was a matter of vital necessity. I cannot agree with the suggestion or the excuse, the justification rather, which the right hon. gentleman makes when he says he has already submitted the Commonwealth Bill to Parliament. If hon. members will bear this question in mind, they will remember there has not yet been a debate on the Commonwealth Bill. No motion has yet been submitted, except that one last week which was introduced by me with reference to the petition presented by the Federal League.

MR. HIGHAM: What about the Select Committee?

MR. LEAKE: I am coming to that.

MR. HIGHAM: Yes, I know; but you said "no debate."

MR. LEAKE: If the hon. member will pardon me, I propose to meet that argument. It was proposed of course, and carried, that a Select Committee should be appointed to consider the Commonwealth Bill; but, and here is a complete answer to the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Higham), on the consideration of that motion we were told by the Speaker that it was not competent for us to enter into a full consideration of the Bill, and that we were not at liberty to discuss the clauses of the Bill; so I am perfectly in order when I say the Bill has not yet been submitted to Parliament.

MR. MORGANS: Was that during the debate on the appointment of the Select Committee?

MR. LEAKE: I think so. I am mentioning a matter which is within the cognizance of the Chair, and, if I am wrong, the Speaker will correct me. I think I am justified in saying the discussion on this question has been baulked, or, if it has not been baulked, it has certainly not been encouraged. One of the arguments used by those who opposed the appointment of the Select Committee

was this: "We do not want a Select Committee to discuss the Bill, but we want Parliament to discuss the Bill: bring down the Bill as a schedule to the Enabling Bill, and we can then discuss it clause by clause in Committee of the whole if necessary, and when there has been a general discussion on the Bill it will be open for us to refer the matter to a select committee." But that course was denied to us, and consequently the Premier is not right when he says he has already submitted this Bill to Parliament. It has not been before Parliament: it is only before Parliament when it comes up as attached to the report of the Select Committee. If the right hon. gentleman had informed the House and the public that he intended to vote for the referendum, it would perhaps have saved a good deal of discussion. But when we find that he does intend to send the Bill to the people, we see it is coupled with a condition, and it is hardly in accordance with the terms of the agreement he came to with the other Premiers in February last, which was that the Bill as altered should be submitted to the Parliaments of the colonies for reference to the electors.

MR. HIGHAM: Parliament is not bound by that.

MR. LEAKE: I am not saying Parliament is bound by it, but I said that the right hon. gentleman was bound to bring down that Bill, and he has not brought down the Bill.

MR. MORGANS: They are bringing it down now.

MR. LEAKE: There are four amendments proposed; namely, the right to divide the colony into electorates, the desire to insist upon the construction of an intercolonial railway, the continuance of the duties for a term of years, and barring the right of the Inter-State Commission to interfere with our affairs during the term, I take it, of the five years. The two last amendments are so closely connected that it is hardly worth while to separate them, and we may consider there are three amendments practically, those three suggested by the *Morning Herald*. On the question of the division of the country into electorates, I have already expressed an opinion, and consequently need not argue it at great length; but of all the suggested amendments, I was opposed

to that one more than any of the others. I would willingly give way on the other amendments, if I thought they were possible and could be brought into the Bill; but I would fight to the very last to maintain the colony, at any rate for the first election, as one electorate, for the reason I stated the other night, that it is better in the representation in the Senate that the colony should send six men as representatives on a national basis, rather than on a restricted and parochial one. With regard to the intercolonial railway, I listened with attention to the arguments advanced by the Premier upon that head, and what I understood him to say was that the railway was so necessary and so vital to the federation that we must have it; and he said that, if you canvassed the whole of Australia, not a single man would be found who would say this was not a fair demand or a fair request to make. If that be so, it follows as a matter of course that immediately we get federation we must have the railway.

MR. VOSPER: The Federal Parliament have no power to deal with it.

MR. LEAKE: I will refer to that. I know it is a pet idea of the hon. gentleman on my left (Mr. Vosper). He says it cannot be done by the Federal Parliament except with the consent of the States affected, namely Western Australia and South Australia. Bear in mind, I am arguing upon the basis put forward by the Premier, who says this railway is so necessary and vital to federation that no person in Australia can be found raising a word against it. Consequently, if everybody in the Commonwealth is in favour of the railway, everybody in each State composing the Commonwealth must also be in favour of the railway; therefore, it is idle to say that South Australia will object to a railway being built through her territory. Again I point out to hon. members that I am taking the argument of the Premier, and I admit I agree with him on that point. I believe this railway is of vital necessity to federation, and that everybody will be in favour of it; therefore, there is no need to make a condition of that which we know will be granted as a right. And if there is no doubt upon that point, I submit with every confidence to this House that we should have a better chance

of getting the Federal Government to approve the construction of the railway, and of getting South Australia to consent to the railway passing through that State, if we could sit side by side with South Australian representatives in the Federal Parliament, or could have a direct representative in the Executive Government under the federation. I consider, therefore, that the arguments in support of the suggested amendment for the construction of this railway are really not worthy the consideration of this House. The third point is, I will admit, more debatable, particularly when we come to reflect that in its consideration is involved the relative advantages of free-trade and of protection. Undoubtedly this suggested amendment is contrary to the federal idea, and to the very basis of federation, namely intercolonial free-trade; and as the right hon. gentleman has pointed out, it was in a spirit of friendliness, and with the idea of making reasonable concessions in recognition of our peculiar circumstances, that the members of the Convention thought fit to include this provision in the Bill; and the instances quoted by the Premier, the dicta which he quoted from the report of the Convention debates, were all uttered long before May of last year, when the right hon. gentleman made his speech in Perth.

MR. MONGER: Where was your speech?

MR. LEAKE: At that time the Premier approved the Bill as drawn and prepared by the Convention; and it is a curious thing that, notwithstanding all those arguments, of which he was well aware, and notwithstanding the time for consideration which the Premier had in regard to this sliding scale, not a word of objection did he raise until this Parliament was practically in session.

MR. MONGER: You had your own opportunities, all the same.

MR. A. FORREST: Give up discussing, and agree.

MR. LEAKE: The question of the advantages of joining as an original State was not discussed at any great length by the Premier; and I was rather astonished at that, because it seems to me this question of joining as an original State is one of the first and greatest importance, because if we were an original State we should have equal representation in the Senate, we should have a voice in framing

the federal tariff, and we might possibly have representation in the Executive; all matters of considerable importance, if viewed from a Constitutional standpoint. I am bound to admit that I cannot estimate those advantages from the standpoint of pounds, shillings, and pence; I cannot put a money value upon those advantages; but no one who will consider calmly this question, from the Constitutional point of view, can deny that there are advantages in joining the federation as an original State. It is more than important that we should join and discuss the tariff which is to affect us; but on that point let us assume that we insist on our amendment or carry that amendment: what is our position then, if we join as an original State? We are admitted to the full advantages and privileges of federation, and we take part in discussing the framing of a tariff which will not affect us for five years. That is the position; and can it be supposed for a moment that our neighbours will regard that suggested amendment as one that is unimportant? It was suggested by the Premier that this was, from the point of view of the other colonies, a reasonable and practically an unimportant amendment; but that is not so, when we consider that we, with six votes in the Senate and five in the House of Representatives, may have a voice in the framing of a tariff which cannot affect us for perhaps seven years.

MR. MORGANS: What advantage will that be to us?

MR. LEAKE: Perhaps it may not be an advantage to us, but it will be a great disadvantage to the other colonies; it will be a great disadvantage to the free-trade colonies if we send protectionist representatives, and it will be a great disadvantage to the protectionist colonies if we send free-trade representatives, because we shall very likely hold the balance of power on that most important question. I do not say that the difficulty cannot be met by fair and honest argument, but it is a reasonable question to put for the consideration of this honourable House, and one that we should well consider when we are advised to demand that our neighbours should grant us this concession. I was somewhat astonished that the Premier should have made pointed references to myself and to the

member for East Perth (Mr. James), who were members of the Convention, and who took part in its deliberations. The Premier asked, somewhat scornfully, and in a manner which I think was hardly becoming in a debate of this nature, who it was that did all the work at the Conventions; and he inferred that the hon. member (Mr. James) and myself did nothing, and that nobody did anything but the Premier himself. Well, to begin with, the member for East Perth and myself, when in Adelaide, took an active part in the discussions of the Judicial Committee which was appointed to consider the clauses affecting the federal judiciary. Other Western Australian delegates were on the Constitutional Committee; others were on the Financial Committee, though we did not, it is true, speak at any great length in the House. But I should not have mentioned this matter, although I must say I have been sorely tempted to do so on several occasions, had it not been for the remarks of the right hon. gentleman; and I may tell the House that neither in Adelaide, in Sydney, nor in Melbourne did the Premier think fit to confer with the other delegates from this colony. In this statement I will be borne out, I am perfectly certain, by other hon. members who were there. The Premier never condescended to discuss this Bill with us upon any one occasion. We had not that opportunity which perhaps we had a right to expect.

THE PREMIER: I frequently spoke to you in Sydney and in Adelaide, and also in Melbourne.

MR. LEAKE: I said you did not condescend to consult us.

MR. MONGER: And quite right, too.

MR. LEAKE: It would have been infinitely better and fairer, in the interests of the delegates, if the right hon. gentleman had treated us more as colleagues upon those occasions; and in many instances I and other members were at a loss to know what were his views, and what were the views of another delegate at the Convention. Mr. Hackett, with whom only the Premier seemed to confer upon matters of considerable importance. Perhaps, however, we need not wonder at the neglect of the other members of the delegation, when the Premier admits to-night that he personally did not under-

stand the questions at issue. He admits that he did not understand the Bill, but yet declares that he did all the talking; and he did that, I presume, with the extreme advantage of having at his elbow the Government Actuary, who was present, as we know, at each of the three Conventions, and whom the Premier consulted on questions of finance; and the Actuary, we may take it, advised the Premier upon the question of this sliding scale of duties. When the right hon. gentleman comes to consider what he has said, I do not think he will feel that it was quite proper for him to taunt the member for East Perth (Mr. James) and myself; and I dare say he included the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), and perhaps the Speaker. . . .

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. LEAKE: In all these animadversions. All those gentlemen were delegates at the Convention.

THE PREMIER: No, no. I meant you two.

MR. LEAKE: Oh! the right hon. gentleman meant us! Now, it is regrettable to think that in a discussion of a great question like this, such personal feeling cannot be kept out of the debate.

THE PREMIER: I did not introduce it.

MR. LEAKE: Why, you immediately say that it was only to myself and to the member for East Perth that you referred!

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. LEAKE: If I go on much further, perhaps I shall get personal; so I shall avoid that question, and will pass on to another point. I have no hesitation in saying that these proposed amendments are impossible. We cannot amend the Bill, nor can we ask for those amendments or insist upon them, if our idea is to join the federation as an original State. Our only course is to stand out of the federation, and to approach the Federal Government when it is established, and ask to be admitted on the terms which these amendments suggest. The Premier, after saying that the amendments were reasonable, and could have been obtained if it had not been for the action of certain people in the colony, which I of course do not believe—after saying that, the Premier, I think, was perfectly right in saying that the Imperial Parliament could

alter the Bill. I am prepared to admit that, or at all events to admit that the Imperial Parliament can impose terms upon which Australia must federate, because we must not forget that this is a concession which federated Australia must ask from the Imperial Government. The Imperial Parliament therefore may be able to alter the Bill; and we should go a step further than that, by saying if the Imperial Parliament can alter the Bill, will the other colonies accept the alterations without a referendum? This is the point hon. members must bear in mind, that whilst the Imperial Parliament may be able to alter the Bill, yet can there be federation on an altered Bill without a referendum? Consequently, if we seek to impose as terms the suggestions embodied in these amendments, which mean that if the Imperial Parliament were to insert the amendments in the Bill that would be tantamount to saying to the other colonies that they must go back and refer the Bill, as amended by the Imperial Parliament, by referendum to the people. The other colonies will not do that.

MR. MORGANS: Why not?

MR. LEAKE: Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia have all practically federated on the terms of the Bill now before this House; that Bill has been approved of after a general election, and in most cases after two referenda; and is it to be supposed, merely in consideration of the whim of this colony, 170,000 against 4,000,000, as I put it the other evening, that they will submit to another referendum and run the risk of federation being killed, or at any rate of the accomplishment of federation not being consummated in the immediate future? It is out of all reason; and I may tell hon. members that I have been in communication with leading Australian statesmen, and have their opinions on this important question. I propose to read to the House the telegrams I have received.

THE PREMIER: Read what you sent to them, too.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; I will read what I sent to them first. I wrote this letter, which was addressed by myself as representing the Federal League in this colony; and I addressed it to each of the Premiers

and to several of the leading politicians in the other colonies, as follows:—

SIR,—I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the Report of the Joint Select Committee of our Parliament dealing with the draft Commonwealth Bill. You will see that the Committee recommend that before this colony adopts the Bill certain amendments should be made in our favour. The Federal League has always advocated the adoption of the Bill without amendment, as they consider it now too late to permit of alteration. If, however, the proposed amendments, or any other, are practicable, and are likely to meet with favourable consideration by your Government, our League will do nothing to hinder the fullest consideration of the Select Committee's proposal. But if you think that no practical effect can be given to the proposals, we will continue to advocate the adoption of the Bill without further amendment. You will greatly assist our efforts if, on receipt of this, you will telegraph to me as President of the League, definitely stating whether or not amendments are in any way possible, or whether, in the event of our colony requiring terms, negotiations must be entered into with the Federal Government when it is established. It is freely stated here that the Governments of the other colonies have expressed themselves as favourable to the amendments which are proposed, and that Sir John Forrest proposed them to the Select Committee in the full belief that they would meet with your approval.

That was sent by me as president of the Federal League.

THE PREMIER: I said what?

MR. LEAKE: In my letter I said: "It is freely stated here"—not you said it—"that the Governments of the other colonies have expressed themselves as favourable to the amendments which are proposed, and that Sir John Forrest proposed them to the Select Committee in the full belief that they would meet with your approval."

MR. MORGANS: I never heard that.

THE PREMIER: Whom was it "freely stated" by?

MR. LEAKE: Surely it is not denied these reports were all over the town.

MR. MORGANS: I never heard them.

MR. WOOD: I never heard them either.

MR. LEAKE: This is an answer which I received:

Sydney, 27th September.—There is no possibility of our Government agreeing to any further Conference being held, or consenting to new amendment to the Commonwealth Bill. If West Australia remains outside now, her subsequent inclusion in the Commonwealth must be matter for negotiation with the Federal Parliament.—B. R. WISE, Attorney General.

THE PREMIER: We shall want better terms, then.

MR. LEAKE: Here is another reply:

Hobart, Tasmania, 28th September.—I have already wired Forrest amendment Commonwealth Bill now impossible.—E. BRADDON.

MR. GEORGE: That is another "Brad-don blot."

MR. LEAKE: Another answer is as follows:

Adelaide, 27th September.—Colonies accepting Commonwealth Bill cannot now consider your Committee's suggested amendment. Further negotiations must be with Federal Government, but great mistake not join unconditionally as original State. In reply parliamentary question by me yesterday, Premier stated impossible entertain any proposal for alteration Commonwealth Bill accepted people Parliament five States.—P. GLYNN.

MR. HUBBLE: Who is he? Is he a Minister?

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Glynn was recognised as one of the best constitutional authorities who attended the Federal Convention.

THE PREMIER: He cannot speak for anyone.

MR. LEAKE: He mentions the Premier of South Australia.

MR. HUBBLE: To whom were your letters addressed?

MR. MORGANS: Is that not the gentleman who wanted separation with the goldfields?

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Glynn states: "In reply to parliamentary question by me yesterday Premier, stated impossible entertain any proposal for alteration Commonwealth Bill accepted people Parliament five States."

THE PREMIER: Why did you go to Mr. Glynn?

MR. LEAKE: I sent this letter to both Mr. Kingston and Mr. Glynn.

THE PREMIER: Why did you choose Mr. Glynn?

MR. LEAKE: Because I recognised him as an authority.

THE PREMIER: There are a lot more there.

MR. LEAKE: The right hon. gentleman will remember, perhaps, that this telegram appeared in the Press as being part of the proceedings of the South Australian Parliament. Then I have

another one dated Melbourne, 3rd October:

Would be very glad to assist in any way possible; but, after making inquiries, find that it would be impossible to now alter the Bill. Mr. Deakin concurs.—GEO. TURNER, Premier.

MR. MORAN: Any other?

MR. MONGER: They are a great lot of telegrams.

MR. LEAKE: Does any hon. member in his senses cast a reflection on the names of the hon. gentlemen who appear as the transmitters of the telegrams? I have respect for these gentlemen: there are two Premiers, a third is a Minister of the Crown, and a fourth is a tried Parliamentary and constitutional lawyer. I submit these telegrams, of course, for what they are worth, to the consideration of hon. members, and in order that there shall be nothing kept back, hon. members will have an opportunity of perusing in print the letter sent by me to these gentlemen, and they can weigh and consider the replies.

MR. MORAN: Are these all the telegrams you got?

MR. LEAKE: They are all I have received up to the present moment.

MR. GEORGE: Did you not get anything from Mr. Reid?

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Reid is not the Premier of New South Wales now. These telegrams have been received since his resignation.

MR. MORAN: Mr. Lyne never sent a reply, did he?

MR. VOSPER: Never sent a line.

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Wise, who is Attorney General in the Ministry of Mr. Lyne, sent a telegram.

MR. MORAN: He did not speak for Mr. Lyne all the same, did he?

MR. LEAKE: Referring to the report of the Select Committee, I should like to remind hon. members that throughout the report, and certainly in the amendments, the evidence which was taken by the Select Committee is entirely ignored, because it will be found that the subject of the amendments was not really discussed, nor were questions put directly to the witnesses on the amendments. It would certainly have been to the advantage of the members of the Select Committee had we known at the time what was in the mind of the right hon. gentleman; but although he had evidently

made up his mind what the report should be and what amendments should be recommended, the Select Committee was kept in the dark, and it would have saved a great deal of time in the examination of the witnesses had we known the latter fact; but long before any witnesses who were in favour of federation were called, I say the amendments were practically cut and dried. I think, of the 38 witnesses called before the Select Committee, only three were in favour of federation, the rest being against.

MR. HUBBLE: You would not call any.

MR. LEAKE: On the question of the duties, the great point urged in favour of that amendment is that we want to maintain our fiscal freedom for five years. I take it when that question was discussed at the Convention it was thought that five years would be very fair terms to give us on this question of fiscal freedom; and we got five years, not from the time, it is true, of the debate, but five years from the introduction of the uniform tariff—and not absolute freedom, but we were granted diminishing duties. In all the arguments which I have taken part in on the question of federation, and they have been a good many, the protectionists, the men who are interested in industries, and the farmers have said in effect, “You give us five years’ protection and we will be perfectly satisfied.” That argument was made use of a couple of years ago when we were discussing the question of the abolition of the food duties; no hon. member can deny that. “Give us” they said “another five years’ protection under the tariff we have now, and we are perfectly satisfied that we can defy competition.” I want to show to hon. members that the Commonwealth Bill as it is drawn, this clause which establishes the sliding scale, practically recognises that protection for the five years, and for the reason that it is nearly two years now since the clause was agreed upon. It would take from to-day quite a year before the electoral machinery could be full working order. We should not be able to establish and fix up everything to our liking for at least 12 months, and it is very probable that it will take upwards of the full limit of two years before the Federal Parliament can agree upon the uniform tariff. It is not to be supposed that the conflicting in-

terests of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia—free-trade on the one side and protection on the other—could come to an understanding in a few months, and, consequently, it is not an improbable position for me to take up, when I say that it will be very nearly two years before the uniform tariff could be established.

HON. H. W. VENN: Not quite so long as that, probably.

MR. LEAKE: What I say is that the position I take is not an unfair position. If hon. members have read the debates on the question, they will remember that Mr. Barton, of New South Wales, and Mr. Henry, of Tasmania, seemed to be of the same opinion as myself on this point. With the 18 months that have gone, and nearly one year it will take to establish the Federal Government, and then two years I have allowed for the establishment of the uniform duties, we have still another year for the full benefit of our protection, and that gives us, say, at the extreme limit, five and a half years. You can allow 18 months for the sake of argument, as a fair margin, and then we have nearly four years of the high-class protection which is advocated in this colony, so that after the termination of the four years or five and a half years, there would be four more years for the diminishing tariff. How can any hon. member say that is not tantamount, or equivalent, to the five years of protection which we clamour for, or, at any rate, which was granted at the Federal Convention. What are we fighting? What is the difference between the federalists on the one hand, and the anti-federalists on the other in regard to the question of duties?

MR. MORGANS: The duties are a very small part of the question.

MR. LEAKE: I should like to ask the hon. member what he considers the largest question, if the question of the tariff be not that?

MR. MORGANS: The question of our finances, the Government finances, is the largest question.

MR. LEAKE: Does not the Premier waive every other consideration?

MR. MORGANS: No.

MR. LEAKE: Does the Premier not say that we want no more than the three amendments?

THE PREMIER: Four amendments.

MR. LEAKE: The three amendments which the Premier refers to are the right to divide our colony into electorates, the right to insist on the intercolonial railway, and the right to maintain our tariff for five years.

MR. MORGANS: That is what I say.

MR. LEAKE: Superadded to which amendments is a fourth, which is practically involved in the third, and it insists on no interference by the Inter-State Commission for the period of the fiscal freedom.

MR. MORGANS: That is what I say.

MR. LEAKE: The anti-federalists are fighting for nothing but these amendments; consequently, we ought to accept the Bill as it is drawn at present, and as it has been adopted and accepted by the other colonies; for so sure as we attempt to suggest amendments with regard to the tariff, which must inevitably affect the fiscal arrangements of our neighbours, we shall be met with objections. It may be that the question of dividing our colony into electorates, or the question of an intercolonial railway, does not affect the interests of the other colonies to any material extent; but the third question must. There is another question to which I want to refer. The Premier, following up I think a statement made both inside and out of this House, said the federal tariff, when it came to be framed, would be a high one and protective against the world.

THE PREMIER: It must be.

MR. LEAKE: The right hon. gentleman says that the tariff must be a high one.

THE PREMIER: Give us your reasons why it should not.

MR. LEAKE: I may not be right, but I will give my reasons for my opinions. I say I do not believe the tariff will be a high one, because I believe it will be a revenue tariff, and not a protectionist one.

THE PREMIER: It will be a high revenue tariff.

MR. LEAKE: A revenue tariff would not be a high one, and I do not call a tariff of 30 or 40 per cent. a revenue tariff. Such a tariff as that would be a protective tariff, and, in many instances, prohibitive. Would the free-trade colony of New South Wales agree to a prohibitive or a protective tariff? Would

such a tariff suit Tasmania or Western Australia? Such a tariff might suit Victoria, but we would have New South Wales pulling with one hand and Victoria with another.

MR. MORGANS: Then Victoria must win, as she would have Queensland and South Australia on her side.

[Interjections by several members.]

MR. LEAKE: Am I addressing the Chair, or are hon. members?

THE PREMIER: Revenue must be got from somewhere.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members ought not to interject and interrupt the hon member.

MR. LEAKE: I must admit that I am on a difficult point, but I assure hon. members I am trying to approach the question in a fair spirit. I am only putting forward what I conceive to be fair and reasonable arguments. I do not for a moment say that these arguments cannot be refuted, but I claim, after all, to be listened to fairly and quietly. I say again, that we shall find New South Wales probably voting for a free-trade federal tariff. Victoria, perhaps, might be in favour of a protectionist or prohibitive tariff, though South Australia might be indifferent, because she would be side by side with her more prosperous neighbour, Victoria. As to Tasmania, I do not exactly know what line she would take, but I should think she would be more likely to fall in line with Western Australia, and exhibit inclinations towards free-trade. I believe myself that the representatives of this colony in the Federal Parliament would be inclined towards free-trade, and consequently would support the New South Wales idea, and establish a revenue tariff as distinguished from a protectionist tariff. It is, therefore, altogether begging the question when hon. members or any persons who discuss this subject say the federal tariff must be of necessity a high one of 30 or 40 per cent.

THE PREMIER: Where else would you get the money for the Commonwealth?

MR. LEAKE: In my opinion the chances are the Commonwealth would get more money through the customs from a revenue tariff than from a protectionist tariff.

MR. MORGANS: But even then it must be a high tariff.

THE PREMIER: The Commonwealth could not possibly do with a low tariff.

MR. LEAKE: According to New South Wales ideas, there will be an enormous revenue from that colony, which is free-trade to-day, and Western Australia would be able to make a very fair contribution; and, though I forget what the figures are as shown by the Actuary, I believe that, at the outside, we shall not lose more than £300,000 on the total revenue. There will be a customs revenue from every colony, and the chances are that even in protectionist Victoria, the income in the customs for the Federal Treasurer will be infinitely greater than it is to-day, because, instead of having a prohibitive tariff, there will be a revenue tariff. It is not fair to assert dogmatically that there must be a federal tariff of 30 or 40 per cent. against the outside world.

THE PREMIER: There must be a high tariff, or there must be direct taxation.

MR. LEAKE: I do not deny the right of the Premier to that opinion, but I am putting my own opinion in a way which I think is fair.

THE PREMIER: Where else would the Commonwealth get money?

MR. LEAKE: So far as direct taxation is concerned, we in this colony need not be much afraid, because the chances are that the other colonies would pay more, being more wealthy; and when it came to a question of direct taxation, those other colonies in protecting themselves would indirectly protect Western Australia, so that we have not much to fear from this bugbear. That was the point which was urged time after time in the Convention; and during the late federal elections, questions were put to gentlemen like Mr. Reid and Mr. Barton, "What is going to be the federal tariff?" And these gentlemen simply replied, "I cannot tell you: that has to be determined by the Federal Parliament." And so it must be determined by the Federal Parliament, and when we come to discuss the point, we are in the realms of prophecy at once, and cannot get down to a more solid basis of calculation than the uncertain basis of prophecy.

MR. MORGANS: Why did the Convention not discuss this question of the tariff?

MR. LEAKE: I can assure the hon. member that this question was discussed

by the Convention, and that it was one of the most vital and difficult questions discussed. Indeed, it was over and over again referred to as the "lion in the path," and it is that to-day, as it always will be. But is it not important that we should join the Commonwealth as an original State, in order that we may have a voice in fixing the basis on which our commerce must ultimately prosper, or at any rate live? Will not hon. members admit that this question of the tariff is one of first importance? It is the very basis of our commercial existence, and it is surely to our advantage to be properly represented in the Federal Parliament, when the tariff is imposed. Consequently, we should hesitate long and seriously before we do anything which will imperil our position as an original State. To join the Commonwealth afterwards, when the tariff has been imposed, may militate considerably against us. We do not know, and cannot say, whether the tariff will be a free-trade, a revenue, or a protectionist tariff; but so surely as we do not enter as an original State, we must ask for terms, and terms may be imposed on us.

MR. HUBBLE: The Commonwealth will be pleased to receive us at any time.

MR. LEAKE: I do not think I have anything further to say, than to ask hon. members to consider whether or not there is so much at issue that the anti-federalists cannot fairly give way. If there are gentlemen who can support views which we know will be put forward by the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), then we know, of course, they are against federation at all. We all respect that hon. member, because he is firm in his opinion, and says, "I will not temporise with you: I will not have federation at all." We, therefore, know what we exactly have to meet with in that member, and he will not support the amendments of the Premier, I am perfectly certain, but will oppose federation on any terms. The Premier, however, does not agree with the member for Beverley, but says "It is a serious matter for us to give up all our power"; but even the Premier frankly tells the House, "I am prepared to do it." The Premier himself says, "I will give up all these powers, if you will grant me those amendments which

the Joint Select Committee have advised." Have I not, at any rate, supplied certain food for argument, or for consideration, in regard to the proposed amendments in the Commonwealth Bill? To my mind it is satisfactorily established that we do not want these amendments, and that we can afford to federate on the Bill as it is. The division of the country into electorates is not necessary, because it is better that we should send our representatives on a national basis to the Senate, which we hope will be the stronger House. We do not want to negotiate for the trans-continental railway, because it is admitted that its establishment is a necessity and a foregone conclusion. We do not want to haggle over the five years' duties, because we have practically what we want. If we have not five years we have two or three, and really we are fighting only for a couple of years' fiscal freedom at the very best; and putting the two years of absolute fiscal freedom against the four years' diminishing duties, there is very little, if anything, to choose. These are my reasons for supporting the Bill as it is drafted; the Bill which has passed the test of the referendum in every colony, and has been approved by every Premier in Australia; the Bill on which we alone in this colony have not yet been permitted to take the popular vote. In my opinion the Bill should be adopted, and I go to this extent, that no compromise at the present moment as far as the federalists are concerned can be entertained. I am for the Bill. I shall vote for it as it is drafted and approved, and anyone who, when the Bill is referred to the people, advocates the adoption of the Bill as amended, will know full well that is not a straight-out question, but an indirect way of voting dead against the Commonwealth Bill as approved at the Premiers' Conference. It will be the duty of those who are in favour of federation to advocate at the referendum the adoption of the Bill as amended, without the amendments which have been proposed by the Select Committee, because voting for the amendments of the Select Committee will be a direct attempt to kill federation, or not perhaps a direct attempt to kill federation, for I will not go so far as that, but it will be declaring that we cannot and shall not join the Commonwealth as an original State, a

question which to my mind is one of the greatest possible importance. If we cannot join as an original State, it is doubtful whether we shall join during the next 10 or 12 years; and I do not feel inclined to run any risk at all, because in my opinion it is of paramount importance that we should, if actuated by that feeling of sympathy and brotherhood which apparently pervades the whole of Australia, follow the lead of the other colonies and adopt the Bill as it is presented to the House.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I beg to move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

Debate adjourned until the next sitting.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO BILLS.

A message from the Governor was received and read, assenting to the following Bills:—Public Education Bill, Dividend Duty Bill, Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill, Municipal Loans Validation Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.6 p.m. until the next Tuesday.
