

measure from all sides, it is proper that it should be referred to the people.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: To the people, not the electors?

HON. H. LUKIN: To the electors, because I consider the electors to be the people. There are one or two other things I would like to mention. Mr. Jenkins said he would refer this great question to the people by means of some electors' rights. But the great question to be decided here is the goldfields vote as against the vote of the rest of the colony.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

HON. H. LUKIN: Strike the goldfields vote out of the referendum, and the Bill would never be carried.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: I doubt it.

HON. H. LUKIN: What I have stated is a great fact. We know what these gentlemen on the goldfields would do, because we had an instance last year, when a petition from them was proved to have been signed over and over again by the same men.

HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

HON. H. LUKIN: A federation petition was sent to the Queen in order to force our hands in the matter, and it has been absolutely proved that a gentleman, who had no business to do so, signed it twice, and made a solemn affidavit before the Governor that all the signatures were genuine. When honest people have to fight dishonest people, the former must be safeguarded in some way; and if we go outside the rolls we have nothing with which to protect ourselves against similar tricks and dodges.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Under electors' rights there could be no dodges.

HON. H. LUKIN: There could, because outside the rolls, what safeguard have we? Like Mr. Haynes, I like fair and square dealing, and if we were safeguarded so that we should only get the votes of the adult males of the colony, I should be prepared to refer the matter to them.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: We can devise some scheme.

HON. H. LUKIN: But we know what has been done, and what has been done once can be done again; and, having no safeguards whatever, we should be over-brown. Although I am in favour of the Bill being referred to the people, I hope

that if the vote be taken fairly and squarely, without any double-dealing, we have still a chance of preventing this colony joining federation at the present time; because to join now would, I am perfectly certain, be disastrous to our best interests.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Am I in order, Mr. President, in rising to make an explanation in regard to remarks which have fallen from Mr. Lukin, who has referred to the fact that I twice signed the Separation Petition?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No names were mentioned.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Mr. Lukin deliberately pointed to me, and said I made a solemn affirmation that no person had signed the petition twice; and it is on that point I desire to offer an explanation.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member may explain if hon. members have no objections.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: This petition was signed by me when it was first brought round for signature on the goldfields, and on the day the petition was to be presented, a schedule having been left vacant for those members of Parliament who were in favour of it, I signed it again as a goldfields representative, and I maintain I was perfectly entitled to do so. I have made inquiries, and I find other petitions were signed in the same way. So far from concealing the fact that the petition had been signed twice by myself, I stated the fact publicly on two occasions, pointing out that I had signed it in the first instance in my private capacity, and in the second instance in my public capacity as a member of Parliament; and that, I say again, I was entitled to do.

HON. H. LUKIN: A lawyer's quibble.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It is a perfectly fair explanation.

HON. C. SOMMERS (North-East): I crave the indulgence of the House as a new member. I had no intention of speaking to-night, and would not have done so but for the possibility that the debate might end without my having an opportunity of saying a word on the part of some moving spirits who live on the goldfields. In regard to the rolls, I can only confirm what has been said by Mr. Haynes—that the people of the Eastern goldfields have had no proper opportunity

of enrolling their names. The population of the Eastern goldfields is, I believe, set down at something like 80,000, and if a referendum were now taken of the electors actually on the rolls, there would be no possibility of getting an expression of opinion of the Eastern goldfields population. I know in the contest I recently fought there were only something like 1,858 names on the roll, whereas, had all the people entitled to vote been on that roll, there would have been something like 5,000 or 6,000 electors.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Whose fault is that?

HON. C. SOMMERS: The fault is in not providing an electoral system such as prevails in the Eastern colonies; hence it is so difficult to get on the roll. I can only say, if it is the wish, and I believe it is the wish of all right-thinking people, that an expression of the people's opinion should be taken on this great subject, then it is not a question of taking the votes merely of the people who happen to own a few acres, with a few cows and sheep depasturing on them—

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Many of them even are not on the roll.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Many of them are not on the roll, and I have read in the Press recently of the numbers who have been struck off; but there is no possible chance of getting a true expression of public opinion unless we do refer the Bill to the people. We know that woman's suffrage will soon become law.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It has become law.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Then why should not the women have the right to vote on this question? Why should not every adult be granted the same privilege? I maintain that the only way of getting from the people a true expression of opinion is by allowing every adult to vote. I agree with the suggestion of Mr. Haynes that any person who has resided six months in the colony should have a right to vote on this question. True, such persons may not have property; but we know that in all the other colonies where a vote has been taken, it has been a vote of the people. Those goldfields people have not come here for the purpose of staying for six months only, in order that they may be able to vote on this question. After hearing the argu-

ments used in this debate, one would think that those goldfields people paid their passages from the Eastern colonies on purpose to get votes and carry the Bill through. But the people are here with the intention of staying, and it is the duty of the Government of this colony to make those people stay; and this can be done. We know the resources of this great colony, and I am sure, inducements are held out to these people to stay here, we shall make this colony what it should be. Mr. Lukin and Mr. Whitcombe, early in their speeches, said "Let the Bill go to the people"; but they qualify that afterwards, and say "Let it go to the electors."

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No; I did not say "the electors," either.

HON. C. SOMMERS: Is it proposed to cut off the goldfields people and take a referendum from the others?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Nobody suggested that.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: You would do it, if you had your way.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I think the first suggestion was, if we cut off the Eastern goldfields—I believe that was the remark—and allowed the people in the settled districts to vote, then the hon. member would be satisfied.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member (Hon. C. Sommers) is mistaken.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I was only drawing a comparison.

HON. C. SOMMERS: I believe the people of the Eastern goldfields, representing something like half the population of this great colony, were referred to as a few speculators who followed shifting and uncertain occupations. Well, I think if the hon. member (Hon. F. Whitcombe) would only visit those goldfields a little oftener, he would find that we have interests in the country which are very great indeed.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: You have Toorak there.

HON. C. SOMMERS: We have Toorak and a Piccadilly, as well as Boulder. But I say, were the system of electoral rights introduced, there would be no way of falsifying the votes by any means, whether by duplication or otherwise; and there would be far less danger of falsification than there is at

present, because it is patent to anyone that even the people now on the electoral roll can vote twice if they wish to.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They often do.

HON. C. SOMMERS: In towns like Boulder, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, which are near to one another, a man could, if he wished, vote several times on the same day.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: If he voted unlawfully he would be liable to prosecution.

HON. C. SOMMERS: So he would be under the system proposed by Mr. Haynes. I would say that this great question is very dear to my heart; and unless the Bill is sent to the people, more stringent steps will be taken by those who are now called the shifting population of the Eastern goldfields. I trust such legislation will be brought in as will enable the opinion of the whole of the people to be taken on this great subject of federation. (General applause.)

On motion by HON. A. B. KIDSON, debate further adjourned till the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 5.40 o'clock until the next day at 4.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd May, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Fishery Regulations—
Question: Branch Railways (private) on Goldfields
—Sessional Orders—Address-in-reply, adopted—
Motion: Duties on Imported Meat; Amendment
passed—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Regulations (new), made under Mineral Lands Acts 1892 and 1899.

By the PREMIER: 1, By-laws of municipalities of Bunbury, Coolgardie, East Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Northam, Perth, Busselton, Fremantle, Roebourne, and Day Dawn; 2, Further Correspondence re position of colony in regard to federation.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—FISHERY REGULATIONS.

MR. GEORGE asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: 1, Whether he had taken any steps to remove the regulations restricting fishing in the Southern waters; 2, Whether he was aware that such regulations had caused widespread distress among a hard-working industrial population.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—1, No steps have been taken in the direction indicated; 2, I am not aware that there is widespread distress owing to this closure. From careful inquiries I find that there is almost the same number of persons employed in this industry at the present time, in the Southern waters, as were previous to the regulations referred to.

QUESTION—BRANCH RAILWAYS (PRIVATE) ON GOLDFIELDS.

MR. VOSPER asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether it was true that two branch lines of railway or tramway had been constructed from the Kalgoorlie and Kanowna lines by private enterprise; 2, If so, what were the terms of the concession or authority granted; 3, What was the gauge and length of the said lines; 4, Under what legal authority the Government had granted such concessions or authority; 5, What consideration the Government had received for such concessions; 6, Who were the persons to whom the concessions had been granted; 7, What running powers they had.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied:—The questions should have been addressed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, as the Land Act provides for the construction of such tramways. The Railway Department has