

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 4th October, 1905.

	Page
Ministerial Re-elections, Swearing-in	831
Obituary: Mr. R. G. Burges, York	831
Ministerial Statement, Bills for the Session	832
Bills considered: 1, Workmen's Wages Act Amendment, report stage. 2, Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs Amendment, 2r.	833
Order: Referendum (Legislative Council) Bill, to discharge; Motion opposed, debate, division	834
Adjournment (consequent on negative decision), division	843

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 8.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS.

THE SPEAKER (Hon. M. H. Jacoby) reported the following election returns received since the change of Ministry, namely:—Guildford, the Hon. Cornthwaite Hector Rason, re-elected on acceptance of office as Premier, Treasurer, and Minister for Justice; Menzies, the Hon. Henry Gregory, re-elected as Minister for Mines and Minister for Railways; Roebourne, the Hon. John Sydney Hicks, re-elected as Minister for Commerce and Minister for Labour; Sussex, the Hon. Frank Wilson, re-elected as Minister for Works; Bunbury, the Hon. Newton James Moore, re-elected as Minister for Lands and Minister for Agriculture. These members (except the Hon. N. J. Moore, absent) took the oath and their seats.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Retirement of Police Corporal Tyler—Papers. 2, Moneys granted for Agricultural Shows and Halls—Return showing. 3, Mining Accident Cases admitted to Kalgoorlie Hospital—Return. 4, Applications received for Forest Lands—Return showing particulars. 5, Statement of Accounts between the Midland Railway Company and the Government. 6, Aborigines Department—Report for year ending 30th June, 1905.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, List of Exemptions Granted on Leases from 1st July, 1904, to 31st July, 1905. 2, Amended Regulations under "The Mining Act 1904." 3, Return of Expenditure under "The Mining Development Act 1902."

By the MINISTER FOR COMMERCE: 1, Trade Unions—Third Annual Report by the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

OBITUARY—MR. R. G. BURGESS, YORK.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason): Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I think it will be the wish of the House that some record should be made in its journals to show the estimation in which the late member for York, Mr. Richard Goldsmith Burges, was held by hon. members, and that a message of condolence should be sent to his widow and his family. I do not intend to take up the time of the House at length. This House, and another place also, have shown in no small degree the respect in which Mr. Burges was held, by the attendance of hon. members at the funeral of the deceased gentleman yesterday. But I feel that I am only echoing the sentiments of every member, no matter what his shade of political opinion, when I say that Mr. Burges had travelled a very great distance along that uphill path, open alike to peer and to peasant, which leads to the highest pinnacle of estimation in which a man can be held by those who have the honour and privilege of knowing him. Mr. Burges had reached a very high altitude. He was held in respect by everyone with whom he had come in contact. He was a good settler, a good husband, a good father, a good man. Western Australia can ill afford to lose men such as Mr. Richard Goldsmith Burges. Western Australia, as well as this House, is the poorer for his loss. I beg leave to move—

That a message of condolence be sent by Mr. Speaker on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, to the widow and family of the late Richard Goldsmith Burges.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I rise to second the Premier's motion; and in indorsing the remarks of the hon. member, I would say that while the relatives of the deceased are mourning the loss of a husband and father who was near and dear to them, we, as members of this Assembly, are mourning the loss of a friend, and the State is mourning the loss of a loyal and patriotic son, one who devoted all his energies to the advancement of this his native land. Especially will the agricultural industry

lose a champion whose place it will be exceedingly hard to supply. We all remember the enthusiasm which animated the utterances of our friend when he was advocating the claims of that great industry in which he had played so prominent a part, and with such advantage to the State. In common with his relatives we mourn his loss; and we feel confident that the public fully appreciate the great efforts which he made for the advancement of his native country.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): Being I think the oldest member of this House, I have much pleasure in rising to support the motion of the Premier. Not only the members who have spoken, but all who are present, although many have known the deceased for a short time only, must feel as I feel, who have known him throughout his whole life, and who have been associated with him in many undertakings connected with the industry in which he engaged. I desire most cordially to indorse the expressions of condolence uttered by the Premier; and I trust that God may give to the widow and family of our late friend sufficient strength to bear their heavy loss.

Question put and passed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

BILLS FOR THE SESSION.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. C. H. Rason): Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I beg the indulgence of the House in order that I may make a brief statement as to the course of business to be transacted by the present Government. First of all as to the finances and the Financial Statement, I can say with confidence that I hope to deliver the Financial Statement and to present the Estimates to this House, certainly this month, probably within the next fortnight. As to the amount of legislation other than Bills appearing on the Notice paper, some of which I intend to move to have discharged, we intend to present to the House—the Aborigines Bill, a Bill which has been circulated in the Council, a consolidating and amending measure on the lines of the Bill submitted last session. Also a Bill dealing with secret commissions. That is the measure introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament,

and similar legislation is being introduced in the Parliaments of the other Australian States, with a view to preventing secret commissions being paid or received. A Companies' Bill, very much on the lines of the Bill left by the late Government, to provide for branch registers of local companies and local registers of foreign companies. A short amending Bill to the Municipal Institutions Act. I do not intend to ask the House to consider the very lengthy Municipalities Bill now before us, but intend to introduce a short amending Bill this session, leaving until next session a comprehensive measure such as has been introduced. Also an amendment to the Stamp Act, requiring the use of impressed stamps on bills of exchange and promissory notes, and amending the fees payable under the Stamp Act so as to considerably increase the revenue. An amendment to the Jury Act, which will be a very short measure and will extend the scope of the jury list available in Perth to the metropolitan area. A Bill for the Registration of Clubs, so as to prevent some of the scandals in connection with so-called clubs which have occurred recently. A Bill for the Regulation of the Registration of Racecourses, providing for the licensing of racecourses and preventing to a very large extent the holding of race meetings upon unregistered racecourses, having regard at all times to those race clubs already established by statute. A Bill to enact a Duty upon Totalisators, which will give to the State a percentage of the takings of the totalisators and of the undistributed fractions and unclaimed dividends. A Statutory Fees Bill, a very small measure, providing that all fees paid under certain enactments to either Ministers or officers of the Crown shall in future be paid into Consolidated Revenue. A Bill to amend the Fire Brigades Act, which will extend the powers of the Fire Brigades Board and substitute the Governor-in-Council for the Minister for the necessary consent being given to such borrowing. A short Bill to amend the Health Act, dealing only with the most pressing recommendations of the Central Board of Health, and leaving the consideration of a consolidating amending measure of the whole Act to be dealt with during recess. A short amendment to the Criminal Code

Act, dealing with the amendments to the Code which have suggested themselves during the last three years since the Criminal Code Act has been in force. A Bill to amend the Life Assurance Act, the effect of which will be to give greater protection to policy-holders as against creditors in bankruptcy up to a certain amount and also, at the same time, giving greater security to life assurance societies themselves. A consolidating and amending Bill is in course of preparation with reference to the Agricultural Bank. With regard to the Workers' Compensation Act, we intend to introduce a short Bill providing that a worker shall not be entitled to take civil proceedings against an employer both under the Workers' Compensation Act, and independently either under the Common Law or the Employers' Liability Act. We intend to provide that here, as in England, the worker shall elect which of the many remedies offered to him he will adopt, and having made his election he shall stand or fall by it, and shall not be at liberty to first shoot out of one barrel and then out of the other.

MR. NEEDHAM: I suppose that is progress.

THE PREMIER: I think so. Also we propose to introduce a short Bill dealing with the consolidating and amending of the Fisheries Laws, and a Bill to provide for Statutes Compilation. In regard to the last Bill, I may say that it is one on the same lines as the Act passed in New Zealand facilitating the reprinting of Acts which have been amended by subsequent legislation. If this Bill passes through the Parliament of Western Australia, as I hope it will, it will be possible for the Attorney General or the Crown Law Department to print a new Bill showing all the amendments—in fact, the Bill as amended during the course of many years, and then to bring that Bill down to the House and ask the House to pass it *pro forma*. Should that system be adopted, we shall be able to present Acts as they really are the law in Western Australia, instead of having to refer to perhaps a dozen different statutes to find out what is really the law. That is a brief sketch of the legislation the Government intend to submit during this session.

Business on the Notice Paper was then proceeded with.

BILL—WORKMEN'S WAGES ACT AMENDMENT.

REPORT STAGE.

On motion by the PREMIER, the report from Committee of the whole House was adopted, and the third reading made an order for the next day.

BILL—FERTILISERS AND FEEDING STUFFS AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill comes to us from another place, where it was dealt with rather fully and passed through all stages. It is a very necessary amendment to the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act of 1904. That Act was intended to afford some protection to agriculturists from dishonest sellers of fertilisers and feeding-stuffs, and was copied to a great extent from the South Australian Act on the same subject; but it was an omission, no doubt, or an oversight, that amendments to the South Australian Act were not embodied in the Act of 1904. This amending Bill is on the lines of the South Australian amending Act to which I have referred. It is a perfectly harmless Bill, its sole object, as I have stated, being to afford a very necessary protection to agriculturists who purchase their fertilisers and foodstuffs against adulteration, or the selling of an inferior article instead of the article which the agriculturist believes he is purchasing. The principal omission sought to be removed in the Bill is a reference to phosphates: the term "phosphate" is altered to "phosphoric acid," and the next amendment, and indeed the only clause worth drawing attention to, is in the definition of "dealer." The definition of "dealer" under the Act of 1904 means, "Any person who sells or exhibits or offers for sale any fertiliser or food for cattle, and whether such person carries on any other business or trade or not." Under that definition it is necessary to prove that the person who has adulterated fertilisers or food in his possession has them in his possession for sale. That has led to considerable difficulty in obtaining

convictions against persons who had such adulterated stuff in their possession: they had only to argue that although the stuff was in their possession it was not for sale. Under this Bill a dealer will mean, "Any person who carries on business as a manufacturer, importer, vendor, or dealer in any fertiliser or food for cattle, for purposes of trade, and whether such person carries on any other business or trade or not." It will not be necessary, if this Bill passes, for the prosecution to prove that the adulterated article was held by the person for the express purpose of sale: the mere fact of its being in the possession of the dealer and being adulterated will be sufficient to secure a conviction. I do not think it is necessary to urge the Bill at any greater length on the attention of the House. It is absolutely necessary, and offers no infliction on those persons who are doing their business in an honest and straightforward manner, but it is intended to protect an important industry against dishonest persons. I beg to move the second reading.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

ORDER—REFERENDUM (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL) BILL.

MOTION FOR DISCHARGE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. C. H. Rason): As I pointed out when the House was good enough to allow me to address it, that there were some Bills appearing on the Notice Paper which the Government would feel they could not possibly go on with, I wish to say at once this is one of the measures to which I alluded. I shall move before resuming my seat that the Order of the Day be discharged, and my reason is this, that the Bill itself, even admitting the principle of the referendum, as submitted would place the issue before the electors in an utterly false or misleading manner.

MR. A. J. WILSON: We can amend the Bill, you know, without throwing it out.

THE PREMIER: I contend that this question should be submitted at a general election in the ordinary course; that a man seeking election, wooing the suffrages of the electors, says whether he is in favour of the abolition of the second

Chamber or not. That issue, provided it is an issue which is exercising the minds of the people to any great extent, is put before the people in the ordinary course at a general election; and the people, whether they return the man who holds the opinion that the second Chamber should be abolished or that the dual system should continue, by that vote record their opinion, to my mind in a much more satisfactory way than if they were asked to record it by a referendum such as is proposed in the Bill. I submit also that the schedule to this Bill is in itself misleading and proves the argument I have submitted, that the average elector would not be able to give such a vote as would satisfactorily represent his true wishes. The ballot paper submitted to the elector is, "Are you in favour of a single-Chambered Legislature? Yes, No. Are you in favour of household suffrage in the election of members of the Legislative Council? Yes, No. *Direction:* If you are in favour of the proposal, strike out the word 'No.' If you are against the proposal, strike out the word 'Yes.'" Then, what is the proposal? There is no proposal there. That in itself is intensely misleading. "Are you in favour of a single-Chambered Legislature?" The man holding strong opinions that he wished to do away with the second Chamber would vote "Yes," but he might, and naturally he would, think that if he could not succeed in obtaining the abolition of the second Chamber, he should vote for a reduction of the franchise, for household suffrage; yet he could not under the form of the ballot-paper vote for both. I think I have convinced the House that there are reasons in the Bill itself why it should be discharged from the Notice Paper; but I go farther, and say that any Government has the right to stand or fall by its own principles, and has no right to adopt an attitude like this: "I have fixed and determined political opinions, but they can be altered; so you tell me what you want, and I will do it." That is practically what this referendum is in regard to this measure. The Government which introduced the Referendum Bill did not say, "We have fixed opinions either one way or the other." They say "Tell us what you want; it by no means follows that we shall

carry out your wishes, but first of all tell us." This Government, at all events, has the courage of its convictions. [MR. A. J. WILSON: Oh!] Has the courage if its convictions. Ministers do not believe that it would be to the advantage of Western Australia at the present time to do away with the second Chamber. I submit that in the Legislative Council already, and with its present franchise, we have one of the most liberal Upper Chambers in Australia, certainly the most liberal with the exception of South Australia; and I have yet to learn that the second Chamber, the Upper House, has by word or deed done anything of such injury to the interests of the people of Western Australia that it should be abolished. Briefly, that is our conviction. We do, however, believe that the franchise for the Upper House might be lowered, and it is our intention to submit to the House a Bill providing for a reduction of the franchise; but we are distinctly opposed to this Bill of the previous Government, providing for a referendum in the slipshod way in which it does. It really means nothing; it does not put the position clearly before the people of Western Australia. Therefore I beg to move

That the Order for the second reading of the Bill be discharged from the Notice Paper.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Are you opposed to the referendum?

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I remember the hon. member outlining some measures that he intended to introduce this session of Parliament; but I failed to catch among them one dealing with the franchise of the Legislative Council. When delivering his policy speech the Premier certainly stated that it was the intention of the Government to liberalise the franchise in connection with the Legislative Council, but the hon. member has not stated to the House that it is his intention to move in that direction during the present session. It is true he said, in concluding his utterances just now, that he intended to take action in this matter, but he did not say that he intended to do so this session. I would like from the hon. member a statement as to whether it is his intention to deal with this question during the present session. I do not desire to go into a discussion on the merits or demerits

of the present Bill before the House, and which the hon. member desires should be discharged, but one would think, listening to the utterances of the hon. member, that we were in Committee on the Bill and that he was drawing attention to some slight defects. It is useless for any member to say that we can get an expression of opinion at a general election by making the question portion of the policy of the Government as laid before the country. Any member knows we cannot get such an expression of opinion as to justify this House in saying to another place, "The people desire one thing or the other." We should give the people an opportunity of expressing their opinions on this question as to whether they desire the other place to exist, or whether they desire the franchise to be liberalised by granting household suffrage; and it is useless for the member to say that in the schedule the matter is not laid clearly before the electors of the State. The two questions would be laid perfectly clearly before the electors, who would have an opportunity and could give an intelligent vote in connection with their desires in relation to another place. One would not be so much inclined to oppose the discharge of the Bill from the Notice Paper if the hon. member assured us that he would, during the present session, give us an opportunity of discussing this great question. During the last election I venture to assert this question was discussed in every constituency in the State, but we did not get that expression of opinion that the late Government desired to get from the people. The hon. member practically criticises the late Government because they desired to get an expression of opinion from the people of the State. Before introducing any measure, I venture to say advisedly that I would prefer to get an expression of opinion from the people of the State before coming to a decision. We are here representing the people, and it is right to get a decision from the people before coming to a decision. It is not for us to dictate to the people of the State, but for the people to dictate to us, and the late Government did desire to get the opinion of the people of the State on this matter. I desire to protest against this Bill being discharged from the Notice Paper, principally on the

ground that the hon. member has not fulfilled the promise which he gave at Midland Junction in his policy speech, that it was the intention of the Government to provide for reform of the Upper House. I would like the hon. member to assure the House that he intends to carry out the promise and give members an opportunity during the present session of discussing the question, before I agree to discharge this measure.

MR. W. NELSON (Hannans) : I should like to refer to one matter to which my friend the leader of the Opposition has not alluded, and that is the exceedingly unworthy imputation which the Premier sank low enough to prefer against the late lamented Government. He insinuated that they were in favour of a referendum on the question before the House because they lacked the courage to stand by their convictions and carry out a definite policy in this House. The hon. member knows perfectly well that prior to the last general election a referendum on the Upper House was one of the planks of the Labour party; and therefore, instead of our resorting to a referendum in order to evade our responsibility for our opinions, we adopted the referendum because we were returned by the people who desired that policy with reference to the second Chamber. I therefore cannot help deploring the fact that although the hon. member, who only a few months ago preached such an exceedingly eloquent and moral sermon here on the wisdom of conducting political affairs from a high moral standpoint, has since being elevated in one sense degenerated in another, and is guilty of the very wickedness he used to denounce and deplore.

MR. MORAN : A general vote of want of confidence would settle such a deplorable man as that, very soon.

MR. NELSON : I am afraid that a general vote of want of confidence would settle a good many more people. No one respects the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) more than I do; and if I do not to-day move a vote of want of confidence, it is because I have no desire to suddenly terminate the political career of that member. It appears that the hon. member does not appreciate my many virtues, which only proves, I am afraid, he is not

sufficiently developed to reach my high moral standpoint. At any rate, I desire to say I entirely agree with the leader of the Opposition that in a question of a fundamental character of this kind we cannot get a definite expression of opinion of the people of this country when the question of another place is bound up with a great number of other questions. In order to ascertain thoroughly whether the people in this country do or do not desire the continuation of that other place, it is necessary that we should dissociate that question from other questions and submit it clearly to the people. I am one of those who believe that we entered into a moral compact when we adopted the great principle of federation, that just as in proportion certain governmental functions were to be transferred to the Federal Parliament, our political machinery would be diminished accordingly; and I am of opinion that one Chamber in this country is quite sufficient to carry on the affairs of the country. I hold, in fact, that we have not the political ability, to say nothing else, for two Chambers; it requires all our brains to carry on one; and I believe it would be to the interest of the people of this country and in accordance with the wishes of the majority of them that we should save the expense and time involved in the existence of the bicameral system. I therefore regret that the Premier has decided to take the course of action he has. [**MR. NEEDHAM :** Let us defeat it.] I would just like to say that I am strongly of opinion that the best way of dealing with the other place is to reduce the franchise, to make a wider franchise; and when addressing my electors about six months ago I expressed that opinion. I am quite prepared to accept a modification of that kind, and I say distinctly that I would even submit, without very serious protest, to the elimination of this Bill from the business sheet, if the Premier can promise that he is in earnest on this matter, and that he will introduce at an early date a measure which will provide for a more democratic franchise for the election of a second Chamber. I believe that in that way the people of this country would return men broad-minded enough to pass liberal legislation, and possibly in time to destroy and wipe out

of existence altogether the obsolete second Chamber.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest) : I do not desire to detain the House on this question, other than simply to offer my protest against this House on an important question such as that now under discussion denying the right to the people of the country to say whether they will or will not have a second Chamber in this State. Personally, I feel very strongly in regard to the rights of the people at any time to say by means of a referendum whether or not the system of Government which at present obtains in this State should continue for any longer period. I do not see how we can be interfering with the dignity of this Chamber, even although the position pointed out by the leader of the House may be perfectly true, that in the Bill now before us there may be certain merely insignificant defects. But after all, these are things which, if proved to be real defects and real difficulties, can at any time in Committee be easily and satisfactorily remedied. However, I have no doubt that the Government are here to-day in sufficiently strong numbers to enable them to discharge this notice from the paper; and I only desire at this stage to enter my emphatic protest against this House refusing to give the people in the country a right to say whether or not they shall have the present system of Government continued.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth) : The existence of the present state of things in this the people's Chamber is to my mind the only valid and good reason to-day for the existence of another Chamber. It does not matter what the franchise is or how the Chamber is elected, or how it is kept, when the noble institutions of representative government are degraded as they are here to-day, by a party that puts forward valiant words, which are only blank powder after all, such as those uttered by the member for Hannans. In the face of that, all this talk about the people's rights is trash. Let the people know that the hon. member who has spoken so valiantly will not take the legitimate step in this matter to bring respect to this Chamber, to arm the Chamber with due authority, and to strengthen it in the opinions of the

country, by seeing that it does represent the people. He hesitates, and implores and begs every member of his party, and says publicly that he will not support any motion which will go to restore responsible government, even if it means defeat of me or himself or anyone else. In the face of that, I say those words are idle and empty. There is one man I congratulate to-day in this Chamber : I congratulate the Premier on taking charge of the business of this House and moving to discharge Bills in which he does not believe. He is pursuing the right course; he is carrying out his promise to the people of Western Australia to proceed with the business of the country. He will very soon find out whether his tenure of office is to be long or short. But we congratulate him on stating clearly and openly that he is not going to be dictated to; that he is going to uphold the dignity of the position of leader of the House. The existence to-day of this anomaly of responsible government is a disgrace to the Lower House of Western Australia, and at once justifies the existence of another Chamber in this State. Members know that my professions are that the unicameral system is sufficient under Federation. I have already stated in this Chamber at the same time that the Upper House in this country has blocked nothing. It appeals to me to-day as being more of a dummy than anything else, or it would be so were the destinies of this Chamber in charge of men who are true to the instincts of responsible government. Promises were made to us by the member for Menzies (Hon. H. Gregory), the member for Sussex (Hon. Frank Wilson), the member for Boulder (Mr. J. M. Hopkins), and by other men who preached federation so glibly when it was before the people and urged that we would have a reduction in the cost of Government—many of them predicted that one House would do, this being amongst other pretty things held forward for our admiration and comfort regarding federalists. These are the very men who to-day make no effort whatever to carry out one single promise they made when inducing this country to enter into another form of government. Not one promise has been realised. The federal leaders to-day stand condemned as being

utterly unworthy as public men. They either wilfully or through the absence of the rudiments of political knowledge led this country to vote in a way that was to bring cold blessing, and has brought nothing at all. I firmly believe in responsible government. We have heard a great deal of talk lately about the abolition of party government. None would more gladly support that, if it were feasible, than I would to-day. But I am afraid that those who have been loudest lately in talking about the ins and outs, the abolition of party government, have only used that cry to draw a red-herring across the track with the idea of avoiding a dissolution of this Chamber. [MR. NELSON: Generosity!] I am satisfied on this point. I have watched the antics of some of the wonderful democrats of Western Australia. Their democracy is branded with a trade-mark, forsooth; yet I would be sorry indeed, whatever my convictions were, to be such a coward as to evade the natural responsibility of the side of the House on which I sat. In reference to this referendum, it is, I freely admit, my own opinion that the proper way to go to work is to reduce the franchise of another Chamber. I am not against the referendum. I do not think it would do a great deal of good; but I voted for it in the last Parliament, and I voted for its inclusion in this Parliament, and I am going to vote against the discharge of this notice from the paper to-day. I have no dread or fear of any ill consequences from a referendum to the people of this State, provided it is an educational referendum; but I do dread referenda which are taken at moments of heat when a populace is stired up by false issues, as in the case of federation. I dread those. I think nobody can go so far astray, and that no greater harm can be done by anybody, and no more irrational verdicts could ever be given in the world than are given by a heated populace. I think democracies are capable of going very far wrong at times, and one objection would be to put an issue like this before the people unless it is to provide education. My ambition is that we shall be governed by one House in Western Australia, in a few years to come. I would like that verdict to come from the people who have property, as well as those who have none; I would

like it to be the result of education; I would like it to be the result of meetings of delegates held in various parts of this State to discuss the matter. There is no hurry, but something must be done in this State of Western Australia to reduce the cost of government. I think that a bad time is coming, no matter who may be in power; that those controlling our finances will have a hard row to hoe, and that too much money is expended to-day in keeping up the many branches of the administration which we needed when we were an independent State. Those are my opinions. I regret that the lower Chamber to-day is not respected by the people. Those who ought to be the first champions of democracy are those who in this Parliament are damaging it most. They are damaging the cause of democracy more than those who are not looked on as true blue because they have not surrendered all their individuality. That is true. I should like to-day to see a general election. Whatever that might have meant to myself, I tried my hardest to get the Labour party to see the problem in the light in which it appeared to me: I tried to get them to give the present Premier a fair chance. He is entitled to that; he is entitled to know whether or not he has the country behind him. Even if we were all wiped out, that would be better for Western Australia, provided that the Premier came back with an overwhelming majority. The people would have been satisfied. The present position of affairs is unsatisfactory; it is disgraceful to the name of responsible government. The disgrace does not lie on this (Independent) bench, the members of which have, I maintain, been consistent and honourable throughout the piece. As I say, in order to stand by that party with which I have been working in the House, and to do my very best to restore majority rule in the House, I must vote against striking the title of this measure off the Notice Paper. At the same time I congratulate the Premier on his having the courage to take in his hands the control of the House. This is his duty, his due, his right; and so long as he does that, I maintain that he must command our respect, even if he does not secure our support.

MR. E. NEEDHAM (Fremantle) : There is one phase of the question which may have escaped the attention of some members, but is very clear to me. I think that the Premier has thrown out a direct challenge to the House to-day; and the position is somewhat similar to the position some 15 or 16 months ago, when the Labour party were in Opposition, and the then Premier, Mr. James, threw out a challenge so as to ascertain whether he had the confidence of the House. The Opposition took up the gauntlet. The present Premier, by attempting to discharge from the Notice Paper the Bill for a referendum, has likewise thrown out a challenge. [**MR. TAYLOR :** Let us accept it.] I for one am prepared to accept it. After listening very attentively to the remarks of the Premier, I do not think that he has the slightest intention of dealing again with this matter during this session; and even if he had, that is not the question with which we are now faced. There is on the Notice Paper a measure which I believe the people are prepared for, and anxious to see enacted. The very first act of the Premier after taking office is an attempt to discharge that order from the Notice Paper. If there were any flaws in the measure, they could be remedied in Committee. There may be a technical flaw in the proposed method of getting an intelligent answer from the electors; but it is evident from the Premier's remarks that he is opposed to the referendum, and that he has not the slightest intention of introducing a similar measure this session, or of dealing with the subject in any shape or form. Consequently, I cannot see what else to do but to oppose his motion for the discharge of the Order of the Day; because the Bill contains a principle which this party (Labour) at least cannot abandon. Personally, I shall certainly oppose the discharge of the order.

MR. C. C. KEYSER (Albany) : I intend to vote against the discharge of the order. At the last general election the feeling in my constituency was strongly in favour of a reduction of the Upper House franchise. Apparently the Premier is not prepared to trust the people of the State on any question whatever. He is apparently unwilling to submit this question to the people. The Labour

party require it to be submitted to the people, and are prepared to abide by their verdict. If the people favour the abolition of the Upper House, then we shall move with a view to secure its abolition. If the people favour a reduction of the franchise, we are determined to bring about such reduction. The Premier is evidently not sincere. In his policy speech at Midland Junction he said he was prepared to bring in a Bill reducing the Legislative Council franchise from £25 to £15. But in giving to-day an outline of the business to be submitted to Parliament this session, he has not touched on this question at all; and it is evident that he does not intend to bring it before the House. Yet, in spite of this, the former Premier (Mr. James), who included the present Premier in his Ministry, advocated in his policy speech reform of the Upper House, and included a liberalisation of the Council franchise in the policy of the James Government; and if I remember rightly, the member for Guildford himself, during a former election campaign, touched on that very question of Upper House reform. Certainly, 22 members of the Labour party were returned to vote in its favour. How can the Premier say that this subject can be efficiently dealt with during a general election? For instance, A may favour an unimproved land tax, and may oppose the reform of the Upper House. On which plank is he returned, if returned at all? During a general election it is impossible to gauge the feeling of the people, because a candidate may favour some reforms to which those who return him are opposed, though they return him because he favours a greater number of reforms which meet with their approval. For that reason it is impossible to ascertain the feeling of the people, unless we submit to them one question only. With the remarks of the member for West Perth, and leader of the Independents (Mr. Moran), who stated that the present position was brought about by the Labour party, I beg leave to disagree. I say the position is due entirely to the action of the Independents, who have not been prepared to identify themselves either with the Labour party or with the Opposition. The Independents have been content to play the part of a third party; and

rather than submit to their ruling and their dictation, I am prepared to give the present Government a reasonable support. The Independents are only four men. They are not, and cannot be called, a party. To what section of the electors are they responsible? What policy, what convictions have they? The hon. member states that he was returned as an uncompromising opponent of the then Premier, Mr. James; and because the present Premier was a follower of Mr. James, the hon. member is prepared to oppose the Premier, notwithstanding that the Premier's policy may be altogether distinct from the policy of Mr. James. So, after all, with the leader of the Independents this question is not one of policy but of personality; not of opposition to the policy of the present Premier, but of opposition to him personally.

MR. MORAN (in explanation): I cannot allow such an unwarranted statement to go forth. The present Premier knows that it is utterly incorrect. I have no personal feeling against the Premier. For many years we have been together in Parliament. He respects me, and I him. I fight him on public grounds entirely; and I will not allow any half-educated boy to come to this House and make such a statement.

MR. KEYSER: I thank the hon. member for his very generous remarks. The hon. member has used that line of argument in this Parliament, and of late on the public platform; and to-day he is again trying to throw the blame on the Labour party.

MR. MORAN: I must again correct the hon. member. Of late I have not spoken on the public platform at all.

MR. KEYSER: To-day he is trying to sheet home the blame to the Labour party; yet the blame rests entirely with him. The hon. member, anticipating a dissolution in the near future, is trying to disguise the part he has played. He now wishes the electors to believe that if any section of the House is to blame for the present undesirable position of affairs, that section is the Labour party.

MR. MORAN: I say the blame rests entirely on your party.

MR. KEYSER: And I say we can conclusively prove that the blame rests entirely on the shoulders of the hon. member.

MR. MORAN: Why?

MR. KEYSER: The position can be easily explained, and it will be explained. The whole tale will yet be told, and told on the public platform. It is unnecessary to tell it here; for we are not so much concerned as the people. To come back to the question of the Bill, I will oppose the discharge of the order from the Notice Paper, simply because I believe that Upper House reform is a burning question in the State; a question on which the people are prepared to vote, and on which they should be allowed to vote.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): This country is groaning for the want of some legislative work. We have met to-day hoping to do some. But it appears we are starting on a worse course than ever. How long will this last? The objection raised to the discharge of this Bill appears to be of the slightest. The abolition of the Upper House was a plank in the Labour party's platform. The Labour party did not introduce a Bill with that object, but introduced a Bill asking the people to settle the question. We all know that even if such a Bill were passed, it would not affect the Upper House as at present constituted. The Upper House cannot be abolished by this House. Nothing of that sort can be done save with the sanction of the Upper House. Only with the consent of that House can the Constitution Act be amended therefore; this is all a waste of time. The country desires us to work, and we begin with an absolutely purposeless wrangle. Why? The electors will probably answer that some day, but I must protest against the time of the House being now wasted on a debate which can have no result, when everyone desires work to be done.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) appears to have put this question in a nutshell. The matter under discussion is not, to my mind, one of urgent necessity. Even if a Referendum Bill were submitted tomorrow to the people, it could have no immediate result. As to the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), so far as he has expressed his opinion I agree with him that the people should be educated prior to making such a movement as the Bill proposes; and the matter should be

in order to support the measures in the platform of the Labour party. We are on our own platform. We are here to put forward measures we think in the interests of the country, and to express the opinion that we are putting forward quite sufficient work to carry us through this session. We have not only the measures which the Premier has indicated, measures which are necessary to the good government of the country, but we have our Estimates to get through. We have to make financial provision for carrying on the State for the next twelve months. We have any amount of work before us, and very little time to do it in. If hon. members are wishful to advance the prosperity of this country, they will cease quibbling on matters of this description. If they do not wish to advance the prosperity of this country, they will go on as they do now, raising every opposition and obstructing, so that the affairs of the country must of necessity be retarded, if not stand still. Again I ask members, if they consider this of vital importance, not to charge us with insincerity, because heaven knows we are sincere enough. The country asks for work. We have announced sufficient work to last this session, and we intend to go that length. If members think this is a question of vital importance to this State, and if they feel that they have a majority to carry this measure, they will vote against the motion and give a decided opinion one way or the other, which we will be very pleased to abide by.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kauowna) : If hon. members agree with the Minister for Works that this is a matter of no importance whatever, and that it is not a matter of vital importance to the country, I should strongly advise them to vote for the discharge of this Bill from the Notice Paper; but the view taken by hon. members, at any rate who sit in this House, is that this is a matter of vast importance, and also one that almost every member of this House is personally responsible for to his electors. The member for Sussex says it is not a matter of immediate importance, and he informs us that the country is crying for a large amount of work to be performed by this Government. That certainly is true; but

the country also wants us to maintain and vote for the position we have taken up. I would remind the hon. member that legislation is not passed by the Government, but legislation is passed by the House, and that each member of the House is responsible for it. All we have asked is that the House shall have an opportunity of saying what, if anything, is to be done with the Upper House during this session of Parliament. Surely it is not too much to ask of the Premier that he will carry out his promise, and give the members of this House an opportunity during this session of saying what shall be done with the members of the Upper House. We must remember that, before this House meets next session, there will be the ordinary election of a portion of members to the Upper House, and if we are sincere in our desire, that is if the majority of the members of this House are sincere in their desire that a reform should take place in the Upper Chamber, surely that reform should take place before the next election for the Upper House. If we do not so do, it means that we postpone the proposed reform for another two years. It means that we do not propose to legislate for three years for the reform of the Upper House. I trust the Premier will seriously consider that aspect of the question, and assure us of an opportunity being given during this session of Parliament to consider the question. Personally, I must say that I am one of those who believe that one House can discharge all the duties required from Parliament much better than two Houses; and I cannot agree to the deletion of this Bill from the Notice Paper, not from any hostility to the Government, but simply as a responsible member of this House. I hope this question will not be unduly debated, but that the promise which will be given by the Premier will be of such a satisfactory nature that we will be able to go on with the business of the country.

THE PREMIER : By way of reply, I shall use but few words. First as to the question of sincerity, let me remind hon. members that this is the very Bill that appeared on the Notice Paper during the whole of last session; and if hon. members opposite (Labour party) were so sincere in their wish to have it brought into law, surely they could have given

fully discussed, in order that we may ultimately get a practical expression of opinion on this momentous question. As the hon. member has said, we cannot get a satisfactory answer in a heated moment. If to-morrow we referred the question to the people, we should probably have agitators on one side or the other travelling over the length and breadth of the land, and we should get a decision which was not the result of mature consideration. Let the question be first raised at a general election, and then threshed out on the hustings, and members returned not merely to this House but to another place pledged to support the abolition of the Upper Chamber; and then we shall get a decision once and for ever. I am surprised that hon. members will persist in throwing the charge of insincerity against the Premier. If there is one man in this country at the present time who is sincere in regard to this question and every other question with which he will deal during his term of office, it is the member for Guildford—absolutely sincere; and he has not been returned to this House, nor have I, nor has any other of his colleagues, to support the platform of the Labour party as published from time to time; and we have not been returned here to support the abolition of the Upper House, and we do not intend to support it. We have not been returned pledged to pass a Referendum Bill with this object, and we do not intend to support it.

MR. JOHNSON: Are you pledged to a reduction of the franchise?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We have no intention of supporting a Bill of this description; and therefore the Premier takes the honourable course open to him at once, and moves to have this Bill discharged from the Notice Paper. The Bill as it stands is not in keeping with the pledge of the members of the Labour party themselves. It is not in keeping with the Labour party's platform; because, as pointed out by the member for Beverley, the particular plank of the Labour party's platform is the abolition of the Upper House. We are opposed to that, and we throw down the gauge. If Labour members do not like the Premier's motion, there is one course open to them, that is to refuse to

have this measure discharged from the Notice Paper and have a vote on it. I should like to point out to members opposite that we (the Government) are here with a full sense of our responsibility. We have been to the country lately and have had an expression of opinion from our electors at any rate; and it is idle to charge us with being insincere on this matter, or on any other matter. We were not challenged on the question of the Referendum Bill when we went for re-election. True, we were opposed by hon. members opposite who, I think contrary to their expressed opinions in this House, took upon themselves the duty of opposing almost every member of this Government who went up for re-election. Why did they not raise this question, if it were a burning question, when we were before our electors; and why did they not challenge us for an expression of opinion themselves? We put our views clearly before the electors wherever we went for re-election; I in Sussex, the Minister for Lands in Bunbury, and first and foremost the Premier in Guildford, and the Minister for Mines in Menzies; and was there any mention made of this most important measure that these hon. members think so vital to the prosperity and well-being of this country? Never a word. What was the answer that the Premier got in Guildford to the policy he put before his electors? A majority which was astounding in its magnitude, and which, certainly to my mind and to the minds of 90 per cent. of the people, showed conclusively that the policy, no matter whether it was right or wrong, that the Premier put before the country was acceptable to the large majority of the people. We believe it was their unfaltering decision, and we are prepared to stand or fall by it. If the leader of the Opposition wishes to test it, let him rally his forces and oppose this motion of the Premier's; and, if he has sufficient numbers to put us out of office, let him do so.

[Interjections from Labour Members.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I want to emphasise once more that neither the Premier nor any of his colleagues has come back to this House to take charge of the business of this House and State

some greater proof of their sincerity than we have before us. However, that is merely by the way. It has been suggested, in fact it has been said that upon all important questions the people should first be consulted. All questions that are submitted to this House should be important if they are not; and will the hon. member who brought forward that argument go the whole length of the argument, and say that there should be a referendum to the people on every Bill? If there should be a referendum on such a question as the reform of the Upper House, why not a referendum on every other important question also? I have no wish to adopt an attitude which would be lacking in courtesy to this House. I intend to begin to-day as I hope I shall be able to continue, by treating the House with due deference and due courtesy; but when it is suggested that I should give a promise to introduce a Bill this session dealing with a subject that I mentioned in the policy speech at Guildford, in order, I submit without offence, to purchase votes of the gentlemen opposite, then I respectfully decline to give that promise. The policy that this Government enunciated will be the policy that will be carried out in its own proper time and when the members constituting this Government think is the proper time. It has been suggested that we should not have adopted the attitude we have adopted to-day but for the promise to which reference has been made that we were not to be opposed by hon. gentlemen sitting opposite. No such promise has been made to me. A promise has appeared in the papers it is true; but in regard to this question, if hon. members are inclined to think their votes influenced by such a promise, so far as the Government are concerned, we relieve them of it, relieve them entirely of any such promise and let them vote as their consciences dictate. As for the insinuation that I should not be speaking as I am to-day but for the fact that I have been re-elected, and that I am not prepared to trust the people, I think my answer to that is very apparent. So far as I am individually concerned, I am prepared to trust the people of Western Australia now or at any other time. I cannot give a promise in the circumstances that a Bill dealing with this subject will be introduced this session.

Question (discharge of the Order) put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	18

Majority against ... 2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Carson	Mr. Bath
Mr. Faulkes	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Connor
Mr. Harper	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Holman
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Horan
Mr. Isdell	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Layman	Mr. Keyser
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Lynch
Mr. S. F. Moore	Mr. Moran
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Needham
Mr. Quinlan	Mr. Nelson
Mr. Rason	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Frank Wilson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hardwick (Teller).	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gill (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, assenting to the second Supply Bill (£491,375), passed before the late Government left office.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn.

Question put, and a division taken (Opposition front-bench members and others crossing to the Government side) with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	25
Noes	...	...	...	10

Majority for ... 15

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Angwin
Mr. Brown	Mr. Connor
Mr. Carson	Mr. Holman
Mr. Faulkes	Mr. Horan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Lynch
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Moran
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harper	Mr. A. J. Wilson
Mr. Hastie	Mr. F. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Needham (Teller).
Mr. Hicks	
Mr. Isdell	
Mr. Johnson	
Mr. Keyser	
Mr. Layman	
Mr. Lynch	
Mr. McLarty	
Mr. S. F. Moore	
Mr. Nelson	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Scaddan	
Mr. Frank Wilson	
Mr. Gordon (Teller).	

Question thus passed. The House adjourned accordingly at nine minutes past 5 o'clock, until the next day.