

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 15th May, 1934.

BILL: SECESSION, 2R. PAGE 263

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—SECESSION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 1st May.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.35]: I am glad to have the assurance of the Premier, fortified as it is by legal opinion, and that of the Leader of the Opposition that a vote for this Bill does not necessarily mean that one is in favour of Secession, nor that he supports the Case that has been drawn up in connection therewith. Nevertheless one cannot help thinking that in certain quarters a vote in favour of the Bill will be construed as though one were supporting Secession. I fancy I shall feel myself partly guilty if I vote in favour of the Bill, because I cannot help thinking that it will be at least a gesture in that direction. But I do not wish to be misunderstood in my attitude, and although I intend to support the second reading of the Bill I wish to make it clear that I neither favour Secession nor think much of the Case that has been prepared in support of it. Going through the figures of the recent referendum I find that of the total electors who were entitled to vote, only 59 per cent. voted in support of Secession, and that there were 41 per cent. who either voted against it or whose votes were informal or who were not sufficiently interested to record a vote at all. So after all, when we consider the figures the decision of the people, even at the referendum, which in itself could not necessarily be effective, was not so overwhelmingly in support of Secession. I know through reading the Case and through listening to the remarks of the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) that it is claimed that the State is a member of the Federation because the leaders at the time the original vote was taken were cajoled or constrained into Federation by force of external origin. In that regard we had some rather interesting re-

marks the other evening from the member for Nedlands. It is alleged that a telegram from Joseph Chamberlain had an influence on the attitude of the electors at that time. There was, as we all know, a strong agitation on the goldfields for separation for Federation in the event of this State not agreeing to federate as a whole. Joseph Chamberlain on that occasion very rightly pointed out that if this State did not enter as an original State, it could not expect to enter at a later date on the same terms as were being extended to it then if it agreed to federate. Nor was Joseph Chamberlain wrong, if it was he who pointed out that the goldfields, in view of their attitude towards Federation, were entitled to have their claims considered for separation for Federation if the State did not agree as a whole to enter the Federation. We notice that the poll at the referendum taken for the purpose of deciding whether or not the State would federate, showed an overwhelming majority in the goldfields areas for Federation. As a matter of fact 26,330 electors in the goldfields districts voted in favour of Federation, while 1,812 electors voted against it. But excluding the goldfields vote, we find also there was a majority for Federation in the country districts and the Perth and Fremantle districts. In the country districts there was a decided feeling against Federation, but still even in those districts there was considerable support for it. In the final figures, the country districts had a majority of 3,582 against Federation. But taking those districts and the Perth and Fremantle districts jointly, and leaving out the goldfields figures, there was a majority of 592 votes in favour of Federation. It is significant that at the recent Secession referendum the goldfields districts were still favourable to remaining within the Federation, and it becomes more significant when we consider that all the Assembly seats on the goldfields are represented by members of the Labour Party, who took no active part in the campaign. There were several of those seats in which candidates had an unopposed return and in which the question of Secession was not actively debated. Nevertheless those districts still voted against this State seceding from the Commonwealth. From the attitude as disclosed in the voting, and from what I know to be the general feeling of the people of the goldfields on this question of Secession, I conclude that if it is possible for the State to secede by

the means that are being pursued, the change that will be made through those means will not be the last that will be made; a movement for separation from this State for Federation will again arise on the goldfields. I am satisfied that if this State can get out of the Federation by the means that are being pursued, the goldfields by the same means can break away from this State and retain the Federal connection. Although secessionists are making quite a lot of fuss about the result of the referendum, we must realise that the referendum taken last year was entirely different from referendums as they are generally understood. I do not know of any other referendum that was on all fours with that of last year. It is quite usual for a Government to pass legislation authorising a referendum on a particular question that has been exercising the minds of the people if it is within their power to give effect to the decision, but the Government had no such power in this instance, and so the referendum became merely a gesture or expression of opinion on the part of the people. The Government who made the referendum possible had no means within their power to give effect to the people's decision. Consequently, the referendum of last year differed entirely from any that had preceded it. It was a referendum that did not involve a change of policy or a change of administration; nor did it affect the Government in any way whatever. Actually, it was availed of by many voters as a means of voicing protest; they knew that the Government had no power to give effect to the decision. By other voters it was regarded as merely an expression of opinion that this State suffered greater disabilities under Federation than it should be called upon to bear, while other voters probably considered that a "Yes" majority would strengthen the hands of our representatives at meetings of the Loan Council. How many people who voted at the referendum thought for one moment that a majority in the affirmative would effect the object in view? Eminent K's.C. in this State have expressed the opinion that an affirmative vote would be a first step, and that it would influence the Imperial Parliament in our favour. They have gone so far as to say that the Imperial Parliament, having passed a measure to make Western Australia part of

the Federation, could also pass a measure to release us from the Federation. When K's.C. speak on subjects of that kind, subjects involving constitutional issues, many people sit up and take notice. The advice, however, is not quite so convincing when we recall that in the past some of those K's.C. have expressed quite a contrary opinion. I believe that a majority of the people of Western Australia appreciate the fact that the passing of an Act of Federation was a different proposition from the passing of an Act to bring about a dissolution. When the States agreed to enter the Federation upon the Constitution drawn up at the time, they entered into a contract which was as binding as any other contract into which they might enter. They signed on the dotted line, and although subsequently some of them were not as pleased with the terms of the contract as they had been in the first instance, that does not permit of their withdrawing from the contract, any more than a private individual would be permitted to withdraw from an ordinary contract. It seems to me that the attitude of secessionists in this State amounts to an act of repudiation. They desire to repudiate the contract into which they have entered, and are seeking from the power that enabled them to enter into the contract, permission to withdraw from it. As I have pointed out, I do not consider that the referendum can be interpreted as representing the voice of the people. One might allow that a majority of the people of Western Australia said that they want secession if a sufficiently strong case can be made out to influence the Imperial Parliament to grant it. But the referendum does not go beyond that. It cannot be interpreted as a desire on the part of the people for secession if, to get it, they have to breach the Federal Constitution. Nor does it even remotely suggest that the people consider that resort to illegal measures would be justified to bring about the possibilities of which some of the more ardent secessionists have been boasting. Whether this State should secede from the Commonwealth is, in my opinion, a question that should be answered by the whole of the parties to the Federal compact—the whole of the people who entered into the contract known as the Federal Constitution. Only

some of the people expressed their opinion at the referendum: only a majority of a section of the people voted for secession. If the goldfields districts were desirous of constituting themselves a new State within the Federation while still a portion of this State, they could not do so unless a majority of the people of this State agreed to it. No section of a State may form itself into a separate State unless the people of the original State are agreeable. An analogous position presents itself regarding the States that constitute the Federation. The retention of every State of the Federation within the Federation is an essential part of the contract into which the States have entered, and in my opinion that position cannot be altered without agreement by a majority of the people of Australia as well as a majority of the States. We have had an expression of opinion in this State on the question of whether the people consider they would fare better outside the Federation than within it. The referendum amounted to little more than that. The Government, of course, have to live up to the promise given to electors that, if a majority of the people favoured secession, efforts would be made to give effect to the decision. Where legal men are involved, a layman can never be too sure of his ground. As I stated previously, if by the presentation of an Address to His Majesty and of petitions to the Imperial Parliament, we were permitted on certain terms to withdraw from the Federation, I am satisfied that that would not mark the end of the changes that would ensue. I am prepared to support the second reading of the Bill, as it will settle an issue which has had a disturbing effect upon the community. I do so with the reservation that if the goldfields of this State declare their desire to remain in the Federation, as the vote indicates. I shall be behind the move that I am sure will be made to give effect to that desire. I am not afraid of the Bill, of the petitions, the Address to His Majesty, or of the Case itself, overriding the solemn obligations of this State that were entered into some 33 years ago. The Case is a monument to the industry of those who drew it up. After reading it very carefully I consider that the answer to it is to be found in the Case itself. Its chief burden of complaint is against the tariff and interstate free trade, which are said to be

penalising our primary industries and hampering our secondary industries.

Mr. Lambert: That is not the only case we have against the Federation.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is the chief burden of the complaint contained in this Case. The remedy suggested is secession, so that we may have our own low tariff to foster primary industry, and build up our secondary industries at the same time. The proposition is contradictory. Victoria, as one of the Eastern States, has enjoyed a high tariff for many years, and under this high tariff its secondary industries have been brought to their present state of organisation. Anyone who puts up a proposition of this kind to the primary producers of Western Australia, that we will reduce their costs by means of a low tariff, and under that tariff build up our secondary industries, is only endeavouring to deceive those who have to work hard in our primary industries, and who possibly have not as much time as we have to delve into these subjects and ascertain the absurdity of such a contradictory proposal. I have read the Case very carefully. Although we may all disagree with some aspects of the Federal tariff, the customs, and particularly the excise duties, and feel that some relief is required in connection with certain industries that are not quite big enough to foster within the Commonwealth, nevertheless we can also agree that in the present state of the world's affairs a strong case can be made out for the protection of secondary industries, for the building up in the country of large secondary industries, so that we may create a decent market for our primary industries. When I read through the Case, it appeared to me as if it had been drawn up by ardent freetraders who had fallen behind the times. I am reminded of the report of the Agricultural Commission which, many years ago, recommended the introduction of coolie labour into this State. If this Case is to be taken literally, it is a case for freetrade, low wages, and cheap labour. The workers of this State are to-day enjoying wages which, compared with those earned by workers under a low tariff, are good. They will only be doing themselves a disservice if they support secession, with its corollaries, a low tariff and freetrade. I feel inclined to agree with the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) as to the procedure that should

be adopted in this matter. I may be wrong, but if I am I shall be pleased to be set right. I may be wrong with regard to the petitions. It is said there is no precedent for a recommendation of this kind. On the other hand, I know of no precedent for presenting a petition to either the House of Lords or the House of Commons for the introduction of legislation into either of those Chambers. This matter of presenting petitions to the Imperial Parliament is quite common in the Old Country in connection with legislation that has been brought down, but I know of no case in which petitions have been presented for the introduction of legislation into either of the Houses of the British Parliament. I remember that the petition for the separation of the goldfields from Western Australia was sent Home in the form of an address to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. There was also a petition from the western part of Victoria in 1862, sent by way of an address to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. It seems to me that this question of petitioning is confined to matters relating to legislation that is already before the British Parliament.

Mr. Lambert: That was only asking Her Majesty to exercise her prerogative. This is an amendment to an Act: quite a different matter.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: We are proposing to send an Address to His Majesty, requesting him to do certain things to give effect to our desire to secede from the Commonwealth, and to bring the matter under the notice of the British Parliament. We then send petitions to both Houses of the British Parliament, suggesting that His Majesty will take no notice of the Address that is sent to him.

Mr. Lambert: Merely because in the two cases you mentioned—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is the point I have to make on this matter. We should not have anything to do with the petitions to either House of Parliament, but should confine ourselves to the Address to His Majesty the King. From what I can learn, the right to petition the British Parliament is now only confined to legislation that has been introduced, but that as a matter of fact the whole business has become more or less a mechanical affair. I have here a quota-

tion from a book written by a barrister named Montgomery dealing with petitions to the British Houses of Parliament. He says—

The right of petitioning Parliament still exists, and it is still used, but it has been shorn of its former power, and is becoming a mechanical affair. The introduction of a controversial measure brings to Parliament a shoal of petitions, which furnish arguments for or against the Bill. The member presenting the petition writes his name across the top, and drops it into a box hanging behind the Speaker's Chair, and fills up a form, naming the petitioners. The Committee of Petitions examines the petition, and issues a report giving the purpose and details of the petitioners and the number of signatures, and if the petition is of sufficient importance, or is of peculiar interest, it may be issued as an appendix; then no more is heard of it.

He is referring to the appendix to the Bill before the House on which the petition is coming forward.

No debate is allowed on a petition without the permission of the House, but the petition may be read by the Clerk of the House, if requested.

We can gather from that that if this House agrees not to send a petition to the British Houses of Parliament, not much will be lost. This authority says the form is still in use, but it has been shorn of most of its former power. It is evidently an antiquated procedure. At least we might rely upon the Address to His Majesty on this subject, and give him credit for taking our desires into consideration, and bringing the matter before the British Parliament as we would be asking him to do. The matter might then be left at that.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.15]: I support the Government in their endeavour to send a delegation oversea in furtherance of the desire for secession expressed by the majority of the people of Western Australia at the recent referendum. I wish, at the same time, to applaud the Government for their efforts to bring about the desire of the people. I have read the Case thoroughly, and in my opinion the proposals therein contained do not go nearly far enough. I hold that the Government should send a deputation comprising not merely a member of the Ministry and the leaders of the two other parties, but also those gentlemen who drew up the Case.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How many members would that be?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That would be nine members, including the six gentlemen in question. As regards interjections from various members opposite, I shall at a later stage test the sincerity of those hon. members, to see whether they are game to oppose the voice of the electors of Western Australia. For my part, I regard their attitude as mere camouflage, and this I shall endeavour to prove later. In the matter of the Case, I consider that Parliament went behind locked doors. We appointed a committee to draw up the Case for Secession. That committee, in my opinion, fell down on the job by delegating it to a body of outside public men, including two ex-Ministers of the Crown. That body drew up a good Case why Western Australia should secede. Now we have the spectacle of the hypocrisy of a few individuals endeavouring to upset the Government, endeavouring to belittle the Premier, who went before the electors and stated that he would use every possible means to give effect to their wishes. The members in question seek to belittle the Premier by asserting that secession is not in the interests of the Labour cause. I shall endeavour later to show whether it is in the interests of that cause or otherwise. Let us put those members on the pedestal on which they propose to stand. The factors leading up to secession were outlined on a recent evening by the member for Wilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert). The hon. member pointed out clearly and distinctly, supporting his argument by conclusive figures, that the Eastern States had never considered Western Australia in any shape or form. From the aspect of defence he showed that Western Australia's extensive coastline has never been given any security whatever by the Eastern States. I consider that the hon. member made an excellent speech. Following that, we had the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) preaching about the Labour cause and placing every conceivable obstacle in the way of the sending of a delegation overseas. What does an expenditure of £3,000 or £4,000 on a delegation matter if the effect will be to carry out the wishes of the people of Western Australia?

Mr. Withers: Will it stop at £3,000 or £4,000?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the hon. member interjecting makes an estimate of the expenditure, how much will it be at a total of

more than £3,000 or £4,000, or possibly a maximum of £5,000?

Mr. Withers: The members of the delegation might be away for a year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No. I understand that before the delegation leaves, the Government of this State will ascertain from the Imperial Government the date on which they can meet the delegation in conference, and the days on which the delegation will be permitted to make appeals to the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Those appeals having been heard, the delegates will return; and on the case put forward by them the decision will depend. We have had the spectacle of the Federal Prime Minister coming here to appeal to the people of Western Australia and failing to get a hearing. Why did he come here? Simply because the Commonwealth cannot afford to lose Western Australia. To my mind it is a ridiculous contention that we should appeal to the Federal Parliament first of all. The Federal Constitution is being broken every day. Even if we do secede from the Commonwealth, we shall remain just as much an integral part of the British Empire as we are to-day. I repeat, I want to see a delegation consisting not only of three members of Parliament but also comprising the six men who did the groundwork, the field work, and put up an excellent Case. Those men should assist in putting Western Australia's claim before the Imperial Parliament. If that course is adopted, I feel sure we shall have secession from the Commonwealth. I do not want to go on the delegation myself. I have no ambitions such as those animating some of my friends opposite. However, let me point out the hypocrisy of the member for Guildford-Midland and other members opposite. Let me show the insincerity of the whole contention they put forward. Where is the justification for their objections? Where is the cause which, according to them, is crying out so loudly? The objections raised spring merely from the narrow-mindedness of the member for Guildford-Midland and the member for Northam. The member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) has seceded from South Australia, come to Western Australia, and secured a seat in the Western Australian Parliament. The hon. member talks about butchering the taxpayers of this country by sending a delegation to the Imperial Government. Truly a fancy way of butchering!

Did the hon. member reflect for a moment how he was butchering the timber workers of this country because they would not contribute to the funds of his political organisation? When he was travelling about the South-West and talking on those lines, did he reflect how he was butchering them because they would not pay him for going round the country on that errand?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I suppose the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir. This all refers to the argument put up by the member for Northam when he was telling the men in the South-West to break away from the timber workers' organisation. When he came across from the Eastern States to Western Australia, he butchered men because they would not pay into his political organisation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member had better stick to the Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member talks about butchering the taxpayers of this country by the expenditure of a measly £5,000 to put a case before the Imperial Government.

The Premier: Now you are spoiling a good speech.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We on this side applaud the Government of Western Australia for obeying the dictates of the electors expressed at the referendum. During the general election the Premier and all his supporters said, "This is not a party question. If the people of Western Australia desire to secede from the Commonwealth, then we, if elected, will adopt all possible ways and means within our power to bring about the fulfilment of their desire." The Premier is now endeavouring, in all sincerity, to make good that promise; and what do we find? That men on the Government side of the House, small men, little men, not men with the courage of their convictions, men who would not go on the public platform and say, "We are going to oppose the secession movement and fight it in every possible way"——

Several members interjected.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They would not take that stand because they were afraid for their political lives. However, when the Government introduce legislation to fulfil the desire of the people, we find those members

saying, "We must go back on the referendum vote because we have unification as a plank in the platform of the Federal Labour Party." They contend that they must combat secession, because of their organisation. That organisation consists of very few to-day, as the Minister for Employment can testify. The hon. members I have in mind argue, "We have to force the workers to pay into the funds of political organisations, and therefore we must combat secession and go for the Federal Labour platform, which includes a unification plank." Apparently they have forgotten the right of initiative and referendum. The initiative and referendum plank has been a prominent plank of the Labour platform for many years. It is Labour's contention that the people must rule, but the hon. members to whom I refer have forgotten all about the initiative and referendum and the right of recall. Let me say that I have represented the Nelson electorate for many years, and that I shall continue to do so. What is the opinion of Labour supporters with regard to the initiative and referendum? It is a plank that was carried unanimously. Nevertheless, those hon. members have forgotten all about it. I wonder whether the member for Northam will give a moment's consideration to the right of recall. I wonder whether, in view of the referendum having resulted in favour of secession, the hon. member will send in his resignation to you, Mr. Speaker, and go back to Northam and tell the people, "I am prepared to stand or fall on the question of secession. I have been an obstructionist on the Secession Bill. I do not wish Western Australia to secede. I am putting every spoke I possibly can in the wheel of the Government with regard to the question of secession. I am going to throw a spanner into the secession machinery. I am going to use every means within my power to prevent a delegation being sent Home to secure secession for Western Australia." I wonder whether our friend will go back to the people of Northam and tell them, "I shall continue to stand where I stand now. I shall oppose the sending of any delegation. Do you, the people of Northam, wish to recall me from the Parliament of Western Australia?" I do not for a moment suppose the hon. member will do anything of the kind, because he is, in my opinion, a professional politician. He came here from South Australia, battered on the workers——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Northam is not under discussion at all. The hon. member must speak to the Bill and the Case, or else sit down.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Northam recently expressed the wish that I had died many years ago. I am going to live for many more years, I hope, and continue to be a spoke in the wheel of the member for Northam. I shall endeavour to prove his insincerity to the people of Western Australia.

Mr. Hawke: He pays his debts, anyhow.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Well, I pay my debts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will address the Chair.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I hope the common sense of members will be used to permit the Bill to be passed without more undue opposition. I hope the measure will not be amended, and that the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) and others who have indicated their desire to move, or to support, amenduents, will become reconciled to the fact that the majority of the people have spoken in favour of secession, and will justify themselves on the ground that Western Australians desire to secede from the Commonwealth. The member for Northam (Mr. Hawke) proposed that a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth as a whole should be taken! Is there anything more ridiculous than a member of Parliament could suggest than that? He talked about butchering the taxpayers of the State in order to send a delegation to the Old Country, and in the next breath suggested that we should take a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth!

Mr. Hawke: One will have to be taken in the end.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Which will cost the more? In his attitude, there was trimming all along the line, in his anxiety to do everything to obstruct and evade the means by which effect can be given to the will of the people.

Mr. Hawke: You are a squib.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If we regard the cost of sending a delegation Home as between £3,000 and £4,000, and then consider the probable expenditure involved in holding a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth, which does the hon. member think will be the more costly? If the member for Northam were sincere and if the member for Guildford-Midland and other Government members who think with them, were sincere,

why did they not take their stand on the platform during the last general election and say to the people, "We are directly opposed to secession for Western Australia. We are believers in unification, which is a plank in the platform of the Federal Labour Party, and we cannot get away from that platform." They did not do that. On the other hand, they took shelter behind their leader who, as Leader of the Opposition at the time, said, "If the people say they desire secession, by all means in our power, if we are elected to the Treasury bench, we will put the claims of secession forward and advocate them." What do we find? We find that the Government have acted in all sincerity—a little belatedly, I admit—and have taken the necessary steps to give effect to the will of the people. Although the Government have shown their sincerity, we have had the spectacle of other politicians, whose political hides are not worth twopence, opposing the Government's measures and giving voice to opinions that were not heard during the general election. They have embarked upon obstructive methods in every direction possible. Even when the Premier sought leave to introduce the Bill, the member for Guildford-Midland endeavoured to embarrass the Government in, so he said, the cause of Labour. What is this "cause of Labour?" Was there any sincerity behind the member for Guildford-Midland and his plea for the "cause of Labour"? There was no sincerity behind the hon. member's attitude at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nelson is not in order in accusing any other member of the House of being insincere.

Mr. Hawke: It is a compliment from him.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is distinctly against the Standing Orders.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I want to show the insincerity of the member for Guildford-Midland.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is against the Standing Orders and I will not permit you to do so.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Then, Mr. Speaker, I will not mention the word "insincerity" again. I desire merely to add one word in that regard. Members like the member for Guildford-Midland stand up for the cause of Labour in one direction, and advocate unification in accordance with the platform of the Federal Labour Party, but they forget the pledges they signed as members of the State Labour Party, including the plank

relating to the initiative and referendum. In adopting such an attitude they take themselves outside the State sphere altogether, and their advocacy was in favour of the cause of Federation. Their advocacy was of unification as against secession for Western Australia. They have shown themselves to be Federalists and unificationists. To-day they are State politicians, and they forget the platform they have signed as members of the State Labour Party.

Mr. Raphael: Did you not sign that, too?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: When they signed the party's platform here, they bound themselves to abide by the will of the people, as indicated at a referendum. The people decided for themselves in this instance, and those members are in duty bound to carry out the people's wishes. On the other hand, by every devious means and side-track that they can conceive of, they have endeavoured to influence outside organisations to pass motions, such as that we read of in the member of Guildford-Midland's constituency, the object of which has been to influence and dictate to the Government of the State. The other night we had the spectacle of the Premier having to rise on the floor of the House and defend himself and his Government respecting the mandate of the people.

Mr. Hawke: And that was not the first time.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier had to defend himself against his own supporters, against men who, in compliance with their principles and doctrines, should have supported him. The Premier had to protect himself against the insidious tactics of men who have no Western Australian outlook, against the actions of "blow-ins" who have come to Western Australia with no sympathy for this State, men who are merely opportunists and are here for their own good. It is wrong that the Premier should be forced into such a position as to be compelled to defend himself against the attacks of such opportunists. Parliament, in no uncertain terms should tell such individuals where they stand. Parliament should tell them that they have their "cause," their pledges and principles, their organisations and their methods of forcing sustenance workers to pay so much per week to political organisations, and that, knowing all these things, they should be sent back to abide by the pledges they

themselves have signed, and bow to that plank which relates to the re-call. Then let those members go back to their electors and if they do that, they will quickly find out where they stand.

Mr. Hawke: Go and have a drink!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Northam invites me to have a drink. I will have one, but I will pay for it. I wonder how the member for Northam will get on when he goes to that town to-morrow. I believe he is to attend a meeting at Northam, but I am afraid only his supporters will be there. In two years' time when he goes before the electors of Northam, he will find out where he stands.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member had better leave the member for Northam alone, and get on with the Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Perhaps in two years' time, he will not be seeking the Northam seat, but a seat in New South Wales or somewhere else.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Are you, by any chance, supporting the Bill?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) trimmed a lot in his speech. He spoke about the petition going to the Imperial Government. I would remind him that if a deputation comes to the city to wait on a Minister of the Crown, almost invariably the member of Parliament for the district is asked to introduce the delegation. If he were not invited to do so, the member would most certainly object to being overlooked. Now when the most important question affecting the people of Western Australia is to be placed before the Imperial Parliament, the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe objects to direct representatives of the State being sent Home in support of our claim for Secession. Where is there any sincerity in that attitude?

Mr. Raphael: We do not object to the delegation going, but we object to giving them return tickets.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is not the slightest shadow of sincerity in such an attitude. I hope that members on the Government side of the House who have adopted this contrary attitude, will not succeed in having effect given to their views. Let us contrast the trimming attitude adopted by the member for Perth (Mr. Needham), as well as by the members for Guildford-Midland and Northam, with that of the

member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), who was obviously sincere in his remarks.

Mr. Hawke: He nearly convinced himself.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I can just imagine what the feelings of the Premier must be, and how difficult it is for him to understand the attitude adopted by some of his own supporters.

The Premier: It is very hard.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Premier has adopted a masterly attitude. Before the referendum was taken he said, "This is the policy of the Labour Party: This is not a matter for us; it is a matter for the people. We are not going to take any part in the discussion at all." That was a very shrewd move indeed on his part. In effect, he said that the Labour Party members were not interested, and, from the political standpoint, that they would not take sides at all. On the other hand, he said, "If the people decide in favour of Secession, then we will do everything in our power if elected, to take charge of the Treasury bench, to carry out their wishes." What must be the Premier's feelings, in view of the attitude of some of his followers now?

The Premier: I am absolutely angry.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He finds opposition where he did not anticipate such obstruction. I warn those members who have spoken in opposition, that their actions will recoil upon them, and I believe the electors will not forget. I believe that the electors will tell those members that theirs was a sacred duty to fulfil, and that they had fallen down on their job. It is time those members woke up and realised the duty they have to carry out, but they are too little; they cannot see any further than their noses. No wonder the Minister for Employment has been travelling throughout the Eastern States endeavouring to secure unity within the ranks of the Labour Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member had better get back to the Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Those members are willing to sacrifice the interests of the State in favour of those of political organisations in the Eastern States. Why did they not show their sincerity by advocating unification in public, and let

the people know where they stood? Will they now abandon their demagogue and the planks of Federal party politics that they have to sign? No, they will not do it. The people have carried the referendum and it is desired now that a delegation shall go overseas, but our friends will use every power they have to prevent that delegation carrying out its mission. Is there any sincerity about some of the members opposite? If they were in any way sincere, they would stand to their principles. Why do not they go back to their electors and ask those electors to endorse the attitude they are now adopting? They are not game to do it. Their object is to defeat this measure in every way possible and to adopt every means to prevent the delegation going overseas. The Bill should have been put through on the first night of our meeting here and there should not have been one dissentient voice. The representatives of the State should have been on the water before this. What does it mean now? It will probably mean a delay of another six months. There must be an ulterior motive behind it all on the part of these die-hards. But they will get their desserts in two years' time. There is no sincerity at all about them. The delegates should have been in England by now putting the case before the Imperial Government. But the position is a long way from being so far advanced. It means that when the Bill passes this House it will have to go through another place.

Mr. Hegney: You are not giving it a chance.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am game to express my opinion and that is more than the hon. member is prepared to do. He is afraid of the Federal octopus which is pulling the strings of unification all the time. If we had carried the Bill when we first met, we would not have had the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) putting up obstacles as he now proposes to do, but instead the delegates would be on the water, or perhaps in London, and next week the prayer of the petition would be granted. What will happen now? Our Parliament is due to meet again in July and the probability is we will find the whole thing shelved until next December. It is a scandalous state of affairs that men who pledged themselves before the electors to carry out the wishes of the people should come to this House and obstruct legislation.

Mr. Hegney: Pledged to what?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Pledged to the referendum. I repeat that it is a scandalous state of affairs and the electors will not forget it in a hurry. They will not stand for all this bickering, all this underhand business that is going on, and all this scheming in the hope of appealing to the masses. It is dreadful to realise the scheming that is going on.

Mr. Hegney: Are you supporting the Case?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am, entirely, and I am concerned about the vote cast by the people of Western Australia, irrespective of individuals. Who they are or what they are is just the same to me. I do not play up to the big junker and I do not scheme; I am doing what I think is right.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member's position is not in question at all. He must confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have said all I have to say and I think I have exposed some of the individuals sitting on the other side of the House, those who try to make us believe that they have studied the Case but who, in fact, have never looked at it. If they have looked at it they have done so from a purely party point of view. They have said, "I will not damn it, but I will do everything in my power to obstruct it." A wonderful case has been made out by the member for Guildford-Midland and there is no doubt about what he and his supporters are going to do, and how they are going to vote! Personally, I want to see the Premier form one of the delegation, if that is at all possible. He can afford the time to go.

Mr. Hawke: He could afford to send you.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To my mind the ablest man in the Commonwealth is the Premier of this State, and we cannot afford not to send him. Indeed, he must go. The Premier and the other delegates should be accompanied by the six gentlemen who did all the spade work, those who prepared the Case; and it is a good Case. I defy anyone to say that it is not. What does it matter whether the cost of sending this delegation will be £7,000? What is £7,000 when a matter of this description is involved? It will be worth while, and if we send the delegates and those who framed the Case, we shall then be able to put forward the best possible case in the interests of Western Australia.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco [5.55]): At the outset I desire to deprecate the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. At all times he is one of those I am particularly desirous of listening to; but this evening he reminded me of one of Shakespeare's quotations when the question of insincerity came up, "Methinks he doth protest to much." The ethics of the Case as propounded by the hon. member were submitted in his characteristic style, and his sole desire seemed to be to import into his argument irrelevant matters that only prejudiced what might seemingly have been the good case he wanted to present. The manner in which he went out of his way to castigate members on this side of the House does not commend itself to anyone. No matter how those members, with whom he does not see eye to eye, may view the Bill before the House, surely they are entitled to speak as they feel. It then will remain for the people they represent to approve, or otherwise, of their actions, and this, no doubt, is what will happen at the end of their term. The electors will then be able to say whether their representatives have done those things which they should not have done, or have left undone those things they should have done. The genesis of the Case is, as we all know, the disabilities from which this State has suffered since it has entered the Federation. I was extremely pleased this evening to hear the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) draw attention to the menace of low tariffs. As an integral part of the Empire, whether we are assisted or not, the fact remains that this country boasts of certain potentialities and characteristics which, with the adaptability of the people, must ensure the maturing of secondary industries. According to the Case, it is proposed that some species of low tariff shall apply. This, however, to my mind lacks foundation. I stand to the pledge I gave that the will of the people would be implemented, and I am in accord with the principle that there shall be a proper representation when it comes to the question of submitting the Case to the Imperial authorities. But when it comes to subscribing to a suggested low tariff, I cannot even think about it. The thing does not sound right, and indeed it is not right. Probably those who put it there know that it is not right, but

it is there perhaps as a sophism to suggest a possible benefit that the granting of secession will provide for the people of Western Australia. As to the question of address or petition, the time has arrived when it is not so very material; the main thing we should be concerned with is that the people themselves have determined that they desire something. From the time when King John at Runnymede was forced to accede to the demands of the barons, it has been an axiom with the British race that the rule of the people shall prevail, and in this case certainly the majority of the voters of the State have a right to be obeyed. The Government are standing up to their obligation in that regard, and for that they are to be commended. When it comes to the questions whether a dutiful address will be in accordance with the Constitution, and whether it shall be augmented by a petition, these matters are mere accessories. The main point, as I declared on the Address-in-reply, is that we require strong advocacy in support of the Case. We profit by the mistakes of the past, and benefit by the trend of affairs in the future. It is wonderful the benefits we can derive by delving into history, where we read of men such as Shakespeare, Bacon, Lincoln and others who have blazed the track and shown us the trend to follow. A study of history is of benefit, not only to ourselves but to the whole human race. I do not agree with the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) that we should send a whole battalion Home to present the Case. The Bill provides for a reasonable number, and it is all a question of the calibre of those who go. On the Address-in-reply I indicated that we should send men of the calibre of the late E. A. Harney, who practised in Perth at one time. We have other capable men in the Legislature, and we should not begrudge the few pounds it will cost properly to put up the Case. We know just how the thing has been generated, and we know the implications contained in the acceptance of a seat on the delegation which will place the Case before the House of Commons. When we do a job, let us do it thoroughly or leave it alone. In this instance, let us send Home a reasonable delegation and tell them to do their best. If they do their job well, even though they do not achieve that which they set out to do, nevertheless the people of the State will realise that they are men of merit, men who have acted up to the obligations they accepted, and so will be grateful to them. Certain statements have been made about the

speech of the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke). The castigation that hon. member has been receiving from certain people is entirely unmerited. There was not a word uttered by him to which any advocate of Secession could take exception, save that he expressed his opinion as to the bulkiness of the Case, and in regard to certain parties that were mentioned. He concluded by saying he was in accord with the Case and would act up to the obligations he had given to the electors. As one strictly impartial, I say the member for Northam did nothing to warrant the vehemence of those who are traducing him by declaring that he is opposing the implementing of the will of the people. So we come to the phase introduced by the member for Nelson, who pillories the party of which I am a member. He imports into the Case certain things not relevant to it. However, I have no desire to rebut those things.

Mr. Hawke: They are not worth it.

Mr. MOLONEY: I do not think that even a member possessing the scintillating wisdom of the member for Nelson should utilise it in so mordant a manner.

Mr. Hawke: Scintillating stupidity!

Mr. MOLONEY: I had not intended to address the House, for I think the Case, although it contains certain anomalies, is based on a principle which we must embrace. In conclusion, I say that as a member of the Government party I have a perfect right to vote whichever way I choose for, so far as I know, there are no trammels imposed on members of the Government side. As for all this piffle and insincerity on the part of other members, I leave it to the House to accept them for what they are worth.

Mr. WILSON: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	..	15

Majority for 9

AYES.

Mr. Clithier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Troy
Mr. Latham	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Withers
Mr. Moloney	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOMS.

Mr. Brockman	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hawke	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Manna	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Warner
Mr. North	Mr. Welsh
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Doney
Mr. Piessie	

(Teller.)

*House adjourned 6.12 p.m.***Legislative Council,***Wednesday, 16th May, 1934.*Adjournment, special: Retiring members ... **PAOR**
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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.*References to Retiring Members.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 22nd instant.

It is expected that the Secession Bill will pass through another place to-morrow evening, and will be here on Tuesday next. On that occasion I will move the first reading and then ask the House to agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to make my second reading speech. Then, if members so desire, the debate can be adjourned until the following day.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.36]: My only object in rising is to say a few words of farewell to my fellow members because, as they all know, I have announced my retirement from active politics and my occupancy of this seat expires on Monday next.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Unfortunately.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I desire to take this opportunity of saying goodbye to members, and to thank them for the many courtesies and kindnesses they have extended to me during the long period I have been a member of this Chamber. I should like to have had a chance to speak

against the Secession Bill which the Chief Secretary has told us will reach this Chamber on Tuesday next, but unfortunately that will not be possible. I sincerely thank all members, and I include Labour members as well, for their many kindnesses, and express my regret that after to-day I shall not again be with them.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.41]: I wish to refer to the services rendered to the State by another of the retiring members, the Hon. Edwin Rose, who is leaving us after an honoured 18 years of duty. I should also like to include the other members who will no longer be with us when their term expires next Monday. I shall always have happy recollections of my association with Sir Edward Wittenoom, and particularly with my colleague, Mr. Rose. I regret very much that the conditions are such that Mr. Rose has felt it incumbent upon him to retire from public life, and I should like his name to be bracketed with that of Sir Edward Wittenoom, because of the splendid services he has rendered to Western Australia.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.43]: I should like to endorse the complimentary remarks concerning those members who have decided to retire after long and faithful services given to this House. There is no doubt about it that these gentlemen have rendered most distinguished service to the State of Western Australia, and we shall miss their presence here very much indeed. We became accustomed to seeing them from year to year and we shall feel that we are weaker in our deliberations without their sound advice. It is pleasing to know that when a man feels that the time has come for him to retire, he is retiring with the goodwill of those with whom he has been associated for so long, and that those he is leaving behind will retain the high esteem in which they always held him. The services rendered by our friends who are about to retire will, I am sure, always remain as an example for us to follow and we shall be spurred to do our duty as they did theirs, so well and so faithfully.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.54]: I also desire to associate myself with the regret that has been expressed at losing the services of Sir Edward Wittenoom, Mr.