

Mr. Harris. For over 30 years I had intimately known and had been connected with our late friend. To me his passing is a personal loss as he was one of my close friends and confidants. The private life of the late Mr. Harris was above reproach, and he was all that a good son, brother, friend and citizen should be. His public life was a long and varied one, and it can be summed up in the two words—unstinted service. So long as any hon. member of this House, contemporaneous with the late Mr. Harris, endures, I am sure he will appreciate and extol the good service rendered by our departed friend to the State in general and to this House in particular. Though the late Mr. Harris was for a long time aware that the end might come at any time, he did not let up in his work as a member of this House. So it can be said of him, as it can be said of a good soldier, he fought valiantly on without regard to the end and died practically in harness.

Question passed; members standing.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.5]: I intend presently to move the adjournment of the House out of respect to the memory of the late Mr. Edgar Harris. In the first place, I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 1st May.

**HON. J. M. MACFARLANE** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.6]: I am wondering whether the Chief Secretary has in mind the fact that the Legislative Council elections will take place on the 12th May, and in view of that whether it would not be advisable to adjourn over that period. Certain members of this House will be engaged in contests and it will be awkward for them to attend the sittings here at about that period. Perhaps the Chief Secretary overlooked that fact.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [5.7]: But for the death of Mr. Edgar Harris, I should have asked you, Mr. Deputy President, to suspend the sitting until 7.30 this evening when I would have been in a better position to decide whether it would be necessary to sit at any period of next week. Out of respect

to the memory of our late friend, however, I am asking the House not to continue to-day's sitting. My desire is that members who have to contest seats at the forthcoming elections may be able to get into the country, and it is with that object in view that I suggest we should not meet until Tuesday week. It is not expected that the Secession Bill will reach us before then, and in the meantime members may be able to go into the country; but should there be longer delay in the Assembly in passing the measure, I shall communicate with those members who are away, particularly the country members, and inform them that it is not necessary for them to attend on the 1st May. I have discussed this matter with the Deputy President, but we shall require a full attendance of metropolitan members and also those country members who will not in any way be connected with the elections.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.8 p.m.*

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## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 19th April, 1934.*

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

### BILL—SECESSION.

*Paper Presented.*

The Premier presented the report of the committee appointed to prepare the case for secession.

*Standing Orders Suspension.*

On motion by the Premier, Standing Orders suspended to permit of the introduction and passing through its second reading of the Bill at this sitting.

*Message.*

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*Leave to introduce—As to procedure.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.35]: I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act relating to the preparation, completion, and presentation of a dutiful address to His Majesty, and humble applications to the House of Lords and to the House of Commons in the Parliament of the United Kingdom in furtherance of the desire of the people of Western Australia to withdraw from the Federal Commonwealth established under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial) and for other purposes relative thereto.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [4.36]: The motion as read by the Premier is rather lengthy and one could not follow the wording, but I was able to gather sufficient to cause me concern, in that he is asking for leave to introduce a Bill. This question of leave to introduce a Bill is the first intimation we have received of the procedure to be adopted to give effect to the expression of the will of the people by a majority vote taken at a referendum directed by Act of Parliament. I feel it my duty to question whether the introduction of a Bill is the correct procedure to adopt. I think such procedure is wrong and may cause delay by its being questioned to the detriment of the matter under review. I admit that we have a definite responsibility to give effect to the expressed will of the people, but I submit that it is possible to discount such expression by departing from the right course in the progress from expression to ultimate decision. Any attempt to adopt a new course—a course which is in conflict with established constitutional practice—will, in my opinion, cause argument and delay which may prove fatal or vital to ultimate finalisation. I cannot find any precedent for the procedure proposed, but there is ample authority for the course I suggest to forward the question for decision by the Home Government. The established practice is for an address to be presented to His Majesty by resolution of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. Such address could recite all the facts. It could recite (1) That an Act was passed directing

that on the day of the general election a definite yes-no vote of the people should be taken on a clearly defined subject; (2) That on a given percentage vote of those qualified to vote, the counting disclosed the result as so-and-so; (3) That Parliament subsequently decided that a special committee of citizens should be appointed to prepare what in the committee's opinion constituted those matters which influenced the majority vote, (4) That the report of the special committee was presented to Parliament and was read, etc.; (5) That the necessary resolution of both Houses was passed authorising the transmission of an address to His Majesty praying that the case as presented be laid before the Parliament of the United Kingdom for decision. This procedure, I claim, is all that is necessary. It would correctly place the question before the Imperial Government. If, on the other hand, a Bill is introduced, it will divert the flow from its rightful course and bring the matter, not before the Parliament of the United Kingdom, but before the Parliament of Western Australia. The vote was taken, not to have a Bill introduced here, but to address His Majesty so that a Bill might be introduced into the Imperial Parliament to grant us this severance in accordance with the majority vote. I appreciate that the Bill could provide for the contents to be transmitted as in the case of an address, but the Bill must become, not the prayer of the people, but the application of the Parliament of Western Australia. That is the difference between my point of view and the point of view of the Government. I say most definitely that the prayer of the people should be transmitted exactly as the people desire it to be transmitted, supplemented by the work of the special committee, but immediately we transfer that expression, plus the work of the special committee, into this Parliament, we make it the subject matter of this Parliament, we elevate it to a different plane and divert the flow from the correct course that should be adopted when matters of this kind are to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament. If the Government are prepared to accept the responsibility for the application for secession, they must do so on their own responsibility. They will certainly not do it with any assistance from me, and I question greatly whether the voice of Labour would endorse an application of the kind. However, I do not wish to be mis-

understood. I believe that the referendum having been taken and the people having made their declaration, we must send on their request, but we should not divert it from its proper course. By introducing a Bill and adopting the procedure proposed by the Government, we shall be transferring it from that course and endeavouring to approach the Imperial Parliament in a manner for which I can find no precedent. To give authority for the procedure I suggest, I direct attention to a somewhat analogous case in Newfoundland. The Parliament of Newfoundland addressed the Crown asking for new letters patent to suspend Parliamentary and responsible Government and substitute Government by commission. That was done by resolution of the Newfoundland Parliament and it is headed, "An Address presented to His Majesty by the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Newfoundland."

Mr. Latham: That was after the Imperial Parliament had made inquiry.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That, of course, does not matter. Indeed, one could understand that a different procedure from the usual would be adopted in the case of Newfoundland, the Imperial Government having appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the position and the report of that Royal Commission having been submitted to the Imperial Government. In that case, an understanding common to both Parliaments having been arrived at in regard to the Royal Commission of Inquiry and its report, one realises that a Bill might be introduced. But even in exceptional circumstances a departure from the usual course might be justified. Newfoundland did not depart from, but followed, the established practice of approaching His Majesty the King.

Mr. Latham: There can be no analogy, because Newfoundland was not a part of Canada.

The Premier: That does not matter very much.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know it can be argued that the case of Newfoundland is not on all fours with our case, but I am outlining the procedure adopted there as a procedure which is applicable to the case we have under review to-day. I have searched for authorities diligently for the last week or two, and I can find no authority for the introduction of a Bill on the lines suggested

by the Premier. The Newfoundland address says—

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. Most Gracious Sovereign, We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Council and Assembly of Newfoundland, humbly approach Your Majesty praying that. . . .

Then the petition proceeds to recite the detailed matter which had been agreed upon by the Royal Commission. It concludes with a prayer—

And further that Your Majesty may be graciously pleased to cause to be laid before the Parliament of the United Kingdom at its present session such a measure as may enable them to be given immediate effect.

Subsequently a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons. The address had been presented to His Majesty. His Majesty started it again on the usual course of reaching the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government thereupon introduced the Bill, the preamble of which states—

Whereas an address has been presented to His Majesty by the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Newfoundland in the terms set forth in the first schedule of this Act. . . .

The Bill then reproduces the schedule by which the address proceeded from the Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Newfoundland to His Majesty the King for consideration by His Majesty's Government. The danger of diverting consideration of the subject to an argument on the form of presentation was brought home forcibly to the Western Australian Parliament in 1907. In August of that year the Parliament of Western Australia petitioned the Commonwealth Government. I do not want to deal with the matter at length, but on the 19th September, 1907, Lord Northcote, then Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, wrote to the President of the Federal Senate as follows:—

The Governor General transmits herewith a copy of a resolution passed by the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of the State of Western Australia, and forwarded by His Excellency the Governor of that State, on the subject of the proposed Federal Tariff.

The communication despatched from this State outlined the case against the tariff. It was signed by Henry Briggs, President of the Legislative Council, and T. Quinlan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, of Western Australia. The President of the Federal

Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives replied acknowledging the letter, and subsequently, under date of the 20th September, 1907, wrote as follows:—

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt, through His Excellency the Governor General, of joint communications from the Houses of the Parliament of Western Australia to our respective Houses on the subject of the tariff now under the consideration of the House of Representatives. The question of the intervention of a State in a matter which, under the Constitution, has passed into the "exclusive" control of the Commonwealth (see Sections 86 and 90 of the Constitution), involves very serious constitutional considerations, and we have, with every desire to afford the fullest opportunity for any State to place its views before the Parliament of the Commonwealth, very fully considered the question, but regret we are unable to find any warrant or precedent which would enable us to lay your communications on the Table of our respective Houses in their present form.

I do not wish to read the whole of the letter, but it is interesting to note the reply which went from Mr. Briggs and Mr. Quinlan. Portion of that reply reads—

In all the British Dominions where constitutional government exists, every subject has the right to bring forward by petition a personal grievance or a protest to the Parliament which governs him; but when either House of Parliament desires to enter a protest against the action of some superior authority or to request such authority to take action which is vested in it, to remove or remedy a grievance, the invariable practice is for the House to proceed collectively by an address. Thus we find that in the Imperial Parliament addresses are presented to the Sovereign on all occasions when he is requested by either House to take any action which rests with him. Similarly in all the States of the Commonwealth the State Parliaments approach the Sovereign, the Imperial Houses of Parliament, and the State Governor, by address. This being so, it seems to follow that a State Parliament should, by the same method, approach the Parliament of the Commonwealth. . . . We had anticipated that His Excellency the Governor General would, on receipt of the despatch from the State Governor enclosing our communication, have transmitted the same to your respective Houses by Message in the usual way, and that your respective Houses would then have taken the matter into consideration, and we respectfully suggest that this is the proper course to adopt.

I shall read the rejoinder to that reply, just to show how dangerous it is to get off the proper course, because thereupon one is met with the argument that one is approaching the subject in a wrong way, and not following the established constitutional

method, the result being that one gets an argument on the method rather than on the principle. The rejoinder of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives includes the following passages:—

The fact pointed out by you that Houses of Parliament in British Dominions have the right to approach the Sovereign by means of address does not, in our opinion, bear any analogy to the present case, and the provision that certain State Parliaments have embodied in their Standing Orders, authorising the sending of addresses to the Commonwealth Parliament by those Parliaments, cannot be said to create any right. We would point out that in making the statement that we were unable to find any precedent for such a mode of approaching our respective Houses as that sought to be carried out by the Parliament of Western Australia, we were guided by the practice in the United States of America, Canada, and other Federated Dominions, as well as by the state of affairs which has prevailed in this Commonwealth. The constitutional method by which any State can make its views known to the Parliament is, of course, through any one or more of the representatives of that State in the Parliament.

There is a case in point where Western Australia adopted a certain procedure and got a great amount of correspondence in regard to that procedure but no result whatever on the subject matter of the petition. I contend that the flow of events from the original direction of Parliament, that a referendum be taken, has been straight and smooth, but that just when we are reaching the climax we are about to get into a whirlpool of constitutional argument and of differences which will prevent a speedy decision in regard to the desire of the majority of the people of Western Australia. I appeal to the House to appreciate that we have to give expression to that desire, and that precedents show how that is to be done. It is generally done by address to His Majesty. In adopting that course we do not bring the subject into Parliamentary discussion, but simply relate the facts and pass them on. If that course is adopted in this instance, the Case as prepared by the special committee remains the Case as presented by the special committee. But if the Case is embodied in a Bill, the Case is endorsed by Parliament and instead of being the case of a special committee becomes rather a case prepared by a committee for submission to the State Parliament, and the State Parliament's endorsement thereof.

The Premier: Is there any provision with respect to this in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I cannot say.

The Premier: That shows you know nothing about it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not concerned, and I do not think this Parliament can be concerned, with the procedure of the House of Commons. What we want to do is to reach the House of Commons in the most proper and the speediest way. We do not want to try to reach the House of Commons by other than the established course. In my opinion we require to be cautious in this matter. We should not bring an expression of opinion of a majority vote on a referendum into Parliament and pass a Bill with regard to it. The passing of a Bill would make the application one from this Parliament.

Mr. Moloney: Do you object to its being ratified?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but I object to any interference with it in any shape or form. I contend that we have no right to do other than forward the petition on. We have done very well up to date. We have followed a straightforward course so far, but now we are failing to appreciate that that course directs us in the one way all the time. We are now proposing to divert from that course and to bring the decision of a majority of the people of Western Australia into the hurly-burly of party politics, into a debate in Parliament. I challenge the contention that this House can endorse word for word the case as prepared by the special committee. Of course we cannot endorse it in that way. Therefore we are preparing a Bill to embody the Case as prepared.

The Premier: Have you seen the Bill?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No.

The Premier: Then what are you talking about?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am not foolish enough, Mr. Premier, to give you authority to introduce the Bill and thereby enable you to say later on, "You gave me authority to introduce the Bill. Why did you not protest at the right time?"

The Premier: You have not seen the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If you wanted me to see the Bill, there was a proper way of enabling me to peruse it. I have no right to go to you, Mr. Premier, to ask you for the Bill, and if you had desired me to under-

stand the Bill, the proper way would have been to approach me regarding the matter, so that I might understand it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the hon. member should address himself to the Chair.

The Premier: The proper way to deal with the matter is to know first what the Bill contains.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, it is not.

The Premier: Well, we shall see.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course we shall see, and that is why I am saying what I think about this matter.

The Premier: Of course.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have the right to differ from you, just as anyone else has that right. I do not mind what the terms of the Bill may be.

The Premier: You do not know.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: My point is that the introduction of the Bill means dealing with the matter in the wrong way. I do not mind anything about the terms of the Bill. Why are the Government introducing the Bill, and elevating this matter into a declaration of Parliament?

The Premier: I was about to explain that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The trouble is that when the Premier explains the matter, it will be too late for us to enter a protest.

The Premier: Then go ahead.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know too much about parliamentary procedure and debate not to realise that if I do not pursue this course now, I shall be accused later on of not protesting at the right time.

The Premier: Then go ahead.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The proper time to enter a protest is at this stage.

The Premier: Go ahead!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Premier has asked in his motion for leave to introduce a Bill, and I say emphatically that leave should not be given. The introduction of a Bill in connection with this matter is wrong. I do not desire to repeat myself but, as one who is jealous of the welfare of Western Australia, equally with the Premier, with every desire to adopt the right course and with every respect for the declared views of the people and the correct way of sending forward the expressed views of the citizens, I assert there is grave danger involved in this method of procedure. I do not know where the Government got their advice from to introduce the matter in this way.

The Premier: I wonder where you got your advice?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I got mine from where I could.

The Premier: Where did you get it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I got it from myself.

The Premier: You are an exception.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This cross-examination of members is quite out of order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As soon as I read in the "West Australian" that it was proposed to introduce a Bill, I endeavoured to get into touch with the Premier regarding this matter. I did not get into touch with him, but I discussed it with others associated with the Premier. Having been told that the recommendation of the Government's advisers was that a Bill should be introduced, I endeavoured to find out upon what grounds such advice had been based I went to all whom I could reach. I went to the Clerk of Parliaments, Mr. Grant, and asked him to direct me to where some authority could be found for the course that had been suggested. I looked up all the authorities I could secure. I went to the University of Western Australia to find out whether I could get any help, but I failed to get any authority for the advice that had been tendered to the Government. The Premier seems desirous of chastising me for having been active in this matter. On the contrary, he should applaud me.

The Premier: I do!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course you do, but I do not like the way you say it! I am not in the habit of taking action of this description without going as deeply into the matter as I can, according to my ability to do so.

The Premier: Not only your ability, but your motive as well.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is imputing motives. I have no motive whatever.

The Premier: We shall see about that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This cross-examination by members must cease.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If the Premier looks for it, he must expect me to reply.

The Premier: You want it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Premier has suggested motives on my part. My only motive is to protect the movement with which I have been associated so long. We

are involving the Labour movement in this matter, and Labour has not been consulted regarding it. I may have erred in this instance, but I have erred thousands of times before in endeavouring to protect the cause of Labour in such a way that no one could say that Labour had ever been used for any purpose other than the protection of the general welfare of the people and of the State.

The Premier: I can say something about that, so far as you are concerned.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: You can say what you like.

The Premier: I will too; you be pretty careful!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will keep order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I invite the Premier to say anything he likes regarding my motives in connection with the Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! It is not in order for the member for Guildford-Midland to invite any hon. member to do anything of the sort; it would be distinctly out of order. I must ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If interjections are made—

Mr. SPEAKER: They are out of order.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will not have motives imputed to me; that is unfair.

The Premier: I can say more than motives. You challenged me! I can say something.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I challenge you to say anything you like and know regarding my motives. The information that I sought was information everyone should have. I went only to those I had a right to approach. I consulted those I had the right to consult. I have done nothing to be ashamed of. The Premier is welcome to say what he knows with reference to me regarding this or any other matter he cares to allude to.

The Premier: Very good.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am one of those who have been in the Labour movement—

The Premier: Too long!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: —for many years and I have been careful to see that, during my years of association with the movement, I have not been involved in anything that might cause a difference of opinion, or to cause division within the party and make the difficulties greater than those existing to-day. I want united action and thought. I want this matter to be car-

ried out correctly. According to my interpretation of the principles governing the Labour movement, there is a definite way of dealing with this subject without introducing party politics, or involving any endorsement by Parliament of the case as presented by the Citizens' Committee. I want it sent forward in a straightforward way so that the Imperial Parliament will be able to consider the case on its face value. I do not want to discount it or elevate it to the plane of a parliamentary decision. I want the actual facts to be submitted, and there is a correct way of doing that. I say definitely that the Labour Party cannot agree to the introduction of a Bill of this description.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [5.8]: In the course of a long experience in this House, I have never before listened to a more extraordinary speech than that just delivered by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson). What is the basis of his complaint? Not that the case for secession, as decided by the electors, should not go forward to the King and to the Imperial Houses of Parliament, but to the motion, by which means it can go forward.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is, the motion.

**THE PREMIER**: The motion is for leave to introduce a Bill. Of the contents of the Bill the hon. member knows nothing, and he has not had the decency to allow the motion to be proceeded with, the Bill to be introduced, or to hear the case in support of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is too late now.

**THE PREMIER**: The hon. member is talking rubbish. Too late! What does he sacrifice? Here is the Bill; I hope the hon. member has not seen it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have not.

**THE PREMIER**: Yet the hon. member has been talking about the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is a dirty insinuation.

**THE PREMIER**: Of course, I know he has not seen it. What did his speech consist of? It embraced arguments against what might be contained in the Bill. He argued that the case should be sent forward to the Home authorities by way of a resolution, or in some other form than that represented by the Bill. What does it matter which way it goes forward, so long as it is properly forwarded, after deliberate consideration by this House? The hon. member could not even exercise sufficient patience to wait to hear what were

the contents of the Bill. The time for the delivery of a speech such as he has just delivered would be next week on the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It would be a different speech.

**THE PREMIER**: Of course. It would be characteristic of the hon. member's different speeches! What is his objection to the method of presentation? I do not desire to say anything unfair, but I understand his protest was that the method proposed might mean delay in the presentation of the Case.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear, and you will find it will.

**THE PREMIER**: I do not think that statement will carry weight with any member of this House. I could understand him arguing along such lines if, after the Bill had been presented to the House and I had been permitted to deliver my second reading speech in support of it, he had had an opportunity to read the Bill. I could understand him then saying, "This is the wrong way of presenting the case. This will delay giving effect to the decision of the vote of the people." I could understand him adopting that attitude. On the other hand, he has lodged his objection before he knows one word of what the Bill contains, or one word of what I might say in support of the Bill. The attitude the hon. member has adopted savours to me of that of a man who is looking for opposition on any ground whatsoever. He desires the case to go forward; he said he does.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is so.

**THE PREMIER**: And he objects to the motion for leave to introduce a Bill to enable the case to go forward.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, I say the case could be presented in a different way.

**THE PREMIER**: Perhaps so, but the proper time to consider that would be during the second reading debate when the Bill was before the House, at which stage members would know what the Bill contained. That is the time for the House to decide whether the matter should go forward by way of a Bill or otherwise. The hon. member could not contain himself.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It would be too late then.

**THE PREMIER**: Rubbish! In the course of my experience, which extends over a good many years, I have known objection to be taken to leave to introduce Bills. I have

joined with other members in such opposition, but it was done because we did not want the Bill introduced, as we knew what it was about. The member for Guildford-Midland now opposes leave to introduce a Bill before he knows anything about the contents of the measure. He does it under the pretence of the statement that it might delay the presentation of the case to the Home authorities. I have no doubt that before making that statement he had recently studied up the secession vote in the Guildford electorate. He does not wish to be misunderstood in that direction. He says the course proposed to be taken is simply introducing the question into the arena of party politics. How does he know that it will have that effect, since he has not seen the Bill? Had he been reasonable he would have waited until he saw the Bill, knew its contents and heard my remarks on it; then he might have been in a position to make some of the remarks he has made this afternoon. I can only conclude that he made his remarks—I do not know for what reasons—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are in "Hansard."

The PREMIER: Of course, and many other gems by the hon. member are embodied in "Hansard."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will find them consistent.

The PREMIER: Perhaps not, perhaps there is not anything much there, but there is a good deal not there which might well be there and will perhaps be there before very long.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It would be most interesting.

The PREMIER: Yes, it will be of interest to the people of the State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Very well, you go ahead. I will welcome it.

The PREMIER: Yes, you will.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: What is the hon. member's objection to the granting of leave to introduce the Bill? He says it will possibly delay the Bill in going before the proper authorities. Will any member accept that as a genuine reason? What is the hon. member's objection? Could he not have allowed the motion to pass and the Bill to come up for second reading? Then, having seen the Bill and heard what I shall have to say in support of it, he could have opposed it if he thought fit. Still, next

week he will be in a position to criticise the Bill, and the manner in which it is proposed the Case should be handled. For the moment the hon. member says he opposes the introduction of the Bill. Very well, he can oppose the Bill next week. I have no doubt the hon. member, next week, will endeavour to find in the Bill justification for what he said this afternoon; in fact, I can imagine a speech by the hon. member next week justifying the speech he made this afternoon.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That will depend on the terms of the Bill.

The PREMIER: I care not what the hon. member thinks about the Bill and the proposed methods. All that the Government are concerned in is the carrying out of the will of the people of the country, and carrying it out by the best and most effective method. We are introducing the Bill because we are advised by legal authorities and others quite as eminent as the authorities quoted by the hon. member, as to the best method of carrying it out. That is all the Government are concerned in, and that is why the Bill is being brought down. If we thought the Case could best be presented by motion or some other method, the Government would adopt that method. The Government have adopted the present method because we are advised that not only is it the best and most effective method, but that it is the only method whereby the Case can reach the British authorities. Still, the hon. member, although he has not seen the Bill, knows some other method quite different from that embodied in the Bill. However, I submit that our authorities are quite as reliable as the authorities he has selected.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced.

*First Reading.*

Bill read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.21] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is pursuant to the Secession Referendum Act, 1932. The question of taking a referendum on secession first came before this House on the 18th November, 1931. The Bill failed to become law, because of differences between the two Houses on amendments proposed by another place. A further Bill for taking a referendum was



introduced in this House on the 16th November, 1932. It was carried by both Houses, and there was no division on the second reading in either House. A referendum to give effect to the Act was held on the 8th April, 1933. The result of the referendum, as is well known to members, was a vote of 138,653 in favour of secession and 71,706 against secession, or a majority of 67,947 in favour. An alternative question submitted at the referendum was the proposal for a convention. The vote in favour of a convention was 88,275, and against a convention 119,031, or a majority of 30,756 against. Forty-four Assembly electorates favoured secession, returning a majority of 70,479 votes. Against secession there were only six Assembly electorates, their net majority being 2,532, leaving a net majority of 67,947 in favour of secession. I have the figures from all the electorates, and they make it clear that the vote was entirely free from local political consideration. An examination of the results in the various electorates which returned members of the Labour Party, the Nationalist Party, and the Country Party respectively, clearly demonstrates that the vote was entirely free from local political considerations. On the 29th August, 1933, consequent upon the result of the referendum, I moved in the House the following motion:—

In view of the result of the referendum taken under the provisions of the Secession Referendum Act, 1932, this House is of opinion that it is the indispensable duty of the Parliament on behalf of the people of Western Australia to endeavour by a dutiful address to His Majesty and humble applications to both Houses of the Imperial Parliament to procure such legislation by the said Imperial Parliament as may be necessary to effectuate the withdrawal of the people of the State of Western Australia from the Federal Commonwealth established under and by virtue of the provisions of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial); and that a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed to consider and recommend what action shall be taken in relation to the preparation, completion and presentation of the said address and the said applications in order to give effect to this resolution.

This motion was passed without division in both Houses, and the following joint committee was appointed:—

Council—Hons. J. M. Drew, C. F. Baxter, W. J. Mann, J. T. Franklin and A. M. Clydesdale.

Assembly—Hons. P. Collier, N. Keenan, K.C., Messrs. C. G. Latham, A. R. G. Hawke and F. J. Withers.

This joint committee presented a report on the 19th September, 1933, recommending that a committee be appointed consisting of Messrs. C. J. Dudley, J. Lindsay, A. J. Reid, J. Scaddan, J. L. Walker, and H. K. Watson to prepare all necessary papers for presentation to the Imperial Parliament to give effect to the referendum vote, and to submit the case to both Houses of the State Parliament—which is being presented this afternoon. This recommendation was approved by the Legislative Council on the 20th September, 1933, and by this House on the 21st September, 1933. The committee sat and elected Mr. J. L. Walker, Crown Solicitor, as chairman. The report was presented to the Government on the 26th March of the present year. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the report, it must be conceded that its compilation has involved a great amount of time, research, application, and ability.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Undoubtedly the report will prove to be a historic document. It has covered the whole of the development of the State both before and since Federation. Our thanks are due to the enthusiastic gentlemen who acted in an honorary capacity on the committee. The next step is the introduction of the Bill under consideration. The Crown Solicitor advises that a Bill is necessary in preference to any other method of procedure for several reasons. The Imperial Parliamentary authorities will have to be satisfied that the petitions and the Case for Secession are authenticated by the constitutional representatives of Western Australia. I think that answers a good deal of the argument of the member for Guildford-Midland. I am not a lawyer, but I should say that "authenticated" means the passing of an Act of Parliament, not a motion. All the documents will be published in England for the purpose of giving effect to the referendum, which was itself authorised by an Act of this Parliament. Dealing with petitions and manner of presentation, let me say that the petitions must be signed by representatives of the people of Western Australia, who can be satisfactorily authorised only by Act of Parliament. If members look at the schedule to the Bill they will find a space for the signatures of the Speaker, the Clerk of Parliaments, and others, and also for those of the leaders of parties, and I think close

examination of the Bill will convince members that that is necessary. It is necessary to authorise someone to deal with the presentation of the petitions, and to transact all business to ensure proper consideration. The most satisfactory means of accrediting them is by Act of Parliament. This is what I am advised by the Crown Solicitor, and I think the Government are justified in accepting his advice. This answers any argument that may have been or may hereafter be raised as to whether this method is the right and proper one by which to present the case. The petitions will raise a matter unique in British history and will be viewed as of the utmost constitutional importance. The State Parliament should regard the matter in the same light and should emphasise it by legislative act. Again that is my answer to some of the arguments that may be raised later on—the State Parliament should emphasise it by legislative act. In addition to the considerations already mentioned, the Crown Solicitor advises that the proceedings could not be undertaken by a resolution of Parliament, as the Imperial authorities could take practically no notice of a resolution. But they could not ignore the provisions of an Act.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a reflection on His Majesty.

The PREMIER: His Majesty would not handle it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes, it would go to him.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows perfectly well that those in Parliament, and not His Majesty handle such matters.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But His Majesty passes it on.

The PREMIER: This is the manner in which the Crown Solicitor says it should be presented to His Majesty. I ask the hon. member in all sincerity whether he imagines that His Majesty—I do not think we should mention His Majesty in the matter at all—is more likely to be influenced or guided by a resolution of Parliament than by an Act of the Parliament of Western Australia.

Mr. Latham: Even Ministers very often are not influenced by resolutions. It is an Act of Parliament that brings them up.

The PREMIER: The member for Guildford-Midland knows well—in fact no one knows better—that the Government of this State are not at any time compelled to act under a resolution of this House. Nearly

every session Parliament passes resolutions—it has done so in all its history—worded to give direction and instruction to the Government, and the Government ignore them because they are not committed or compelled by any resolution. The Government are committed to give effect to an Act of Parliament; resolutions count for nothing. If I may digress again, the hon. member knows that frequently members do not waste time in debating a motion because they say that it does not matter whether the motion be carried or lost, it does not commit anyone to anything, and the Government take no notice of it. That is not merely my opinion; I am stating a fact. An entirely different matter is an Act that has received the sanction of both Houses constituting the Parliament of this State, and an Act of Parliament would have an entirely different bearing on a Case presented to the Home authorities than would a resolution of this House, of another place or of both Houses. I recommend to members a study of the memorandum attached to the Bill, which explains the circumstances leading up to it and the various provisions. If the hon. member had had more patience and had made a study of the memorandum, his attitude might have been different. As is explained in the memorandum the Case for Secession cannot form part of the petitions, because the British Parliamentary rules do not permit it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You do not approach by petition, but by address.

The PREMIER: That may be the hon. member's opinion of the constitutional aspect, but it is not mine. The hon. member draws a distinction between a petition and an address.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There is a distinction.

The PREMIER: Perhaps there is. I know sufficient of the procedure of the House of Commons to say that the only way in which that body can be approached is by petition. It may be that His Majesty is approached by address, but not so the House of Commons. That body must be approached by petition and by no other means.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Our channel of approach is to His Majesty by address. We do not petition the Houses of Parliament.

The PREMIER: We do; it is an address to His Majesty, and petition to the House of Lords and to the House of Commons. That is what the Bill provides.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That follows in order after it has gone to His Majesty.

The PREMIER: I am afraid that the hon. member is not au fait with the constitutional history of England.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have read it up during the last few days.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member has consulted authorities that are not reliable. I have read a little about it and my reading is not along the same lines as the hon. member's has been.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We will compare notes later.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I can produce my authority.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: It is necessary that we should educate the British Parliament and people concerning the secession movement so that the petitions may be competently considered. Hence it is advisable to distribute copies of the Case to every member of the Imperial Parliament and to other responsible British people. As early as possible a sufficient number of copies for this purpose will be sent to the Agent General, so that every member of the House of Lords and of the House of Commons will be supplied with a copy. Whether those members will have time to read the documents, of course, is another matter. Owing to the magnitude of the Case it is not feasible to make it part of the Bill, but a copy, together with a copy of the committee's report, has been laid on the Table of the House, and a copy of the Case has been supplied to every member of this Parliament. My next remark bears upon a point raised by the member for Guildford-Midland, but on further consideration he might alter his opinion. The Bill authenticates the Case as laid on the Table of the House, and authorises its printing and publication in Western Australia and beyond the State. I hope that due consideration will be given to the word "authenticates." In accordance with the resolutions passed by both Houses of Parliament in August last the Bill provides for an address to His Majesty as well as for separate petitions for presentation to the House of Lords

and House of Commons. That bears out what I said. His Majesty is approached by address, and the Parliament by petition. There is quite a distinction between an address to His Majesty and a petition to Parliament. The Bill provides for an address to His Majesty and for separate petitions to the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The Address to His Majesty and the two petitions to the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively are necessary because the British Parliament consists of His Majesty the King, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How do you present the petition?

The PREMIER: I am coming to that. The subject matter both of the Address to His Majesty and the petition to the British Parliament will be practically the same except as to such formalities as are necessary in addressing His Majesty compared with petitioning the Houses of Parliament. The opening addresses generally comply with the prescribed form of Address in each case, and are not subject to alteration. The subject matter of each document, as contained in the Bill, is presented for consideration by this Parliament, members of which can debate the subject matter and amend it, or do what they like. It will only go forward as an Address to His Majesty and as a petition to the British Parliament when it has been ratified by this House and another place.

Mr. Stubbs: No amendment will be allowed that will alter the will of the people as expressed by the referendum?

The PREMIER: I think not. The hon. member need not worry about that. Knowing my colleagues, I do not think many of them are daring enough to put forward anything that goes very strongly against the will of the people.

Mr. Latham: They would be very foolish if they did.

The PREMIER: I do not know many who would be courageous enough to put forward something contrary to the will of the people who elected them. There may be one or two amongst us who would do so, but I am not claiming any heroism myself in that respect.

Mr. Thorn: You should ask them to stand up and let us look at them.

The PREMIER: I do not think that would be necessary. The opening addresses of

each document and the subject matter are included in the First and Second Schedules of the Bill. In order to obviate repetition in printing the subject matter of various documents, the opening addresses of each are prescribed in Parts I., II., and III. of the First Schedule. The subject matter of each, which will be the same in all, is printed in the Second Schedule. This is open to amendment by this Parliament if desired. It will be realised that the subject matter of the Second Schedule has been carefully prepared to conform to the subject matter contained in the Case. It is therefore desirable to exercise very great care if any amendment is contemplated to the Second Schedule, to see that it does not suffer in relationship to the Case. Although this schedule is apparently a long one, the Crown Solicitor advises that it is essential, to ensure proper consideration of the Case by the British parliamentary authorities. As addresses and petitions must be written by hand, in accordance with the rules in England, the Bill makes provision that this shall be done under the supervision of the Clerk of Parliaments. In Clause 5 the following are authorised to sign the Address and the petitions on behalf of the people of Western Australia:—The President and Clerk of the Legislative Council, the Speaker and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier, the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, and Leaders of the Country and Nationalist Parties in the Legislative Assembly. It will be obvious that the President, the Speaker and the Clerks of the two Houses should sign in order to authenticate the documents, but the Bill provides for the signatures of the other members of Parliament to whom I have referred. I have already pointed out that the vote had little or no connection with party politics, the electorates returning members for all parties having favoured secession. The purpose of the other signatures, that is of the Leaders of parties, as distinct from those of the President and the Speaker, is to demonstrate this fact and make it clear that each political section in the aggregate voted for secession. That is rather an important point. I do not think any of us will endeavour to escape from its significance or implication. One of the principal matters for consideration is the method by which the Case shall be placed before the Imperial Parliament. This is where a considerable

amount of debate may ensue, and where there may be strong differences of opinion. The Bill provides for a certain way, and that represents the views of the Government. Parliament may amend it, and the Bill will then go forward as the decision of this Parliament. The Address to His Majesty and a copy of the Case must be presented through regular official channels, and will be forwarded through the Lieut.-Governor. Petitions to the House of Lords and House of Commons must be presented in accordance with the rules of the British Parliament. The ordinary procedure, as I understand it, though it may not be in accordance with the views of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), is for a petition to be laid on the Table of the House by a member. If it is received it remains there until referred by resolution to the Standing Committee of the House on Petitions. No one can appear at the Bar of the House to present a petition unless a special privilege is conceded by resolution of the House. Petitions may be presented as they are presented to this Parliament. On that subject our Standing Orders follow pretty closely those of the House of Commons. No one can appear here before the Bar of the House unless privileged to do so by special resolution. The Government have instructed the Agent General to endeavour to secure this privilege for an authorised person to appear before each House in support of the petition. The Government are asking that this petition be presented at the Bar of the House by a member of the delegation, and not handed in as is usually the case with petitions. No finality has been reached on that question as yet, so that the Bill in Subclause 2 of Clause 6 covers any manner of presentation which may be approved by the British Parliament. That is necessary because the British Parliament may not agree to our request that the petition should be presented at the Bar of the House. If that should happen to be the case, it is provided that the petitions may be presented in any way approved by the British Parliament. That is done in case of emergency or in case we are not able to present the documents in the manner we desire. Whether permission for a delegation to appear before the British Parliament be granted or not, the Case will still have to be examined by the Committee on Petitions.

It is important to remember that this Committee on Petitions has all the powers of a Royal Commission, as we understand the powers of such a body in Australia to-day. They can summon witnesses, take evidence on oath, and do all that a Royal Commission can do or may do in this State. The Case for Secession as presented here will not necessarily be accepted by that committee as evidence. All the official reports, tables, and authorities referred to in the Case will have to be made available as evidence. In other words, the Committee on Petitions will be a judicial body, and will not necessarily accept the case presented to them. Having the authority of a Royal Commission they can call and examine witnesses, and take evidence in any direction that may appeal to them. The reports and tables associated with the Case are being prepared for despatch to England so that they may be available to the Committee on Petitions if desired. The Government feel that something more than a formal presentation of the petitions is necessary, in compliance with the Standing Orders of the House or Commons. It cannot too much be emphasised that this is not an ordinary petition. It is the result of a vote of a large majority of the people of Western Australia. It raises a question not only of the most vital importance to every citizen of this State both now and in the future, but also of great constitutional interest to the whole of the British Empire. Will anybody deny that statement? Whether the decision of the people is right or is wrong, it does raise that question. It is fraught with perhaps grave consequences to this or some other Dominion of the British Empire in the future. Therefore, as I say, this is not an ordinary petition. It is exceptional. It is unique. It is being sent as the result of a vote cast by a majority of the Western Australian people that certain action should be taken. Therefore nothing must be left undone by the Government or by Parliament to ensure that the Case is presented in its strongest possible form; I say strongest, having regard to the vote of the people. Accordingly the Government are of opinion that justice can only be done to the great majority who voted for Secession, by providing for presentation of their Case by personal representation. It is anticipated that the Petitions Committee of the House of Commons will make an exhaustive examination of the Case before re-

porting to the House. Just as a Royal Commission here examines a case that is presented to it and then makes a report or recommendation, so does the Petitions Committee of the House of Commons make similar exhaustive examination before presenting a report. It is essential, therefore, that the Case should be supported by someone capable not only of ensuring its proper presentation to the British Parliament, but also of explaining it to the Petitions Committee, and transacting all business arising out of the inquiry which that body will institute. That cannot be done by documents. The Petitions Committee might want to hear evidence, might want someone there to give information upon many aspects of the Case, and this could not be done unless there was somebody on the spot in a position to appear before the Petitions Committee and give whatever evidence or information the committee might desire. The deliberations of that body may be protracted, and whoever is entrusted with the work may have to remain in England until it is completed, although I do not anticipate that the matter will cover many months. Accordingly the Bill provides—and perhaps many members may disagree with this—for a delegation of four persons. Many considerations make it essential that the personnel of the delegation should not be dealt with in the Bill, but should be left to the determination of the Treasury, together with the amount of remuneration and allowances. I imagine that if the Government embodied the names of the personnel of the delegation in the Bill, round about that subject alone, which would have nothing very much to do with the Case for Secession, endless debate might range as to who ought to go—any one of us, or somebody else.

Mr. Ferguson: There would be 50 different opinions.

The PREMIER: I do not suggest that we would all vote for ourselves, but at any rate there would be many differences of opinion. Therefore the Government think it highly desirable that the selection of the delegation—whatever number Parliament might approve of, either the number embodied in the Bill or a greater or a lesser number—should be left, as I said, to the Treasurer, which is my humble self. It should be left to the Government; because I do not think Parliament could properly employ its time in discussing who should be the members of the delegation.

The real question is whether a delegation should be sent, and if so, what should be the number of the delegation. The Bill says that a delegation should be sent. It provides that it should consist of four members, the idea being that three should be sent from Western Australia, and the fourth to be the Agent General in London. That will be a fruitful subject for discussion on the part of hon. members. I need hardly repeat that this is not a party Bill at all. Of that fact I think we have had evidence to-day already. So far as the Government are concerned, every member on this side of the House is free to vote in any way he likes with regard to any aspect of the measure. I know that it is so also on the other side of the House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Will the Loan Council be consulted in regard to the remuneration of the delegation?

The PREMIER: I would not like to suggest that as a question which I should bring up for consideration at the next meeting of the Loan Council. After all, I think we get on better there by including our requirements in a round lump sum, without giving details as to how it is proposed to expend the money. No doubt the question may be asked by the Loan Council.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Naturally!

The PREMIER: However, there it is, and I will not enter into an argument on that phase of the question.

Mr. Stubbs: Is the Agent General's name mentioned in the Bill?

The PREMIER: No names whatever are mentioned in the Bill; only the total number, four. It is the Government's intention that one of the four should be the Agent General, and that three members should be sent from this State. It will be recalled that the failure to confer necessary authority on delegates caused much trouble, delay and expense during the consideration by the Imperial Parliament of the Bill for Federation. I mention that because of a certain clause in this Bill. Many unforeseen questions must arise during the presentation and consideration of the petition, and it is essential that the delegation should have power to deal with such matters properly. Clause 7 of the Bill gives delegates this power, without permitting them in any way to commit the Government or the State to any obligations. It is merely a provision to avoid unnecessary delay and expense. I want to make it clear—and I state this on

the authority of the Crown Solicitor—that to vote for the Bill does not imply that any member doing so either is a secessionist or approves personally of the arguments and the Case put forward, or expresses his opinion one way or the other on the subject. I hope hon. members will study the Bill carefully from that aspect. In voting on the Bill we shall not be voting whether we approve or disapprove of Secession. The Bill is pursuant to the vote of the people at the referendum, giving effect to the vote, be it right or be it wrong according to our individual judgment. Sometimes we think that the majority of the electors are entirely wrong. I should imagine the Opposition would say that the vote of the electors at the last general election was entirely wrong. I have been in such a position myself. As regards the last general election, I think the electors were entirely right.

Mr. Latham: They were wrong on one subject.

The PREMIER: There it is. But for the time being, if we believe in democracy as we understand it, that the voice of the people shall rule, we must, if we are honest, do all we can to give effect to the decision of the people. The position is that as the result of a definite expression of opinion by the people, Parliament appointed a committee to draw up a Case for Secession. The Bill authenticates and authorises the document prepared as a Case for Secession. It does not necessarily indicate the opinion of hon. members on the question. There are differences of opinion among members, just as among the people. However, I am assured by the Crown Solicitor that the Bill has been drafted in such a manner as to ensure that a vote in favour of the measure cannot be interpreted as acquiescence in the subject-matter of the Case. That, of course, is proper. In voting for the Bill we shall not be saying that we support the whole of the matter contained in the Case. As a Parliament we are merely the agents of the people to carry out their wishes. They have declared for Secession. We have appointed a special committee to draw up a Case on their behalf. That Case is now ready, and we are asked to give it the authenticity which is required before it can be officially accepted by the Imperial Parliament. As an illustration, the petition can be compared with a plaintiff's statement of claim in a legal action. The Case for Secession can be

compared with counsel's brief for the plaintiff. The British authorities, as the court, will not accept anything either in the petition or in the Case for Secession, but will require everything to be proved by evidence given in the proper manner. It is necessary that the British authorities shall be satisfied that the petition and the Case for Secession are properly authenticated, before they will consent even to hear the petition. I emphasise that the Bill is not in any way a party measure. I have already pointed out the non-party nature of the referendum vote. Action to give effect to the vote must be of a similar nature. That is all I have to say on the matter, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 24th April, 1931.*

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

### BILL—SECESSION.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 19th April.

**MR. LATHAM** (York) [4.53]: On Thursday last the Premier moved the second reading of the Bill and gave a full explanation of its contents, as well as a comprehensive history of the steps that led to the introduction of the measure. I am afraid I may weary the House to some extent because I will have to follow largely the remarks made by the Premier. I want the House to understand that Opposition members support the Bill and the principles underlying it. During the life of the present Parliament, no

other Bill has been introduced of such paramount importance as that now before us. It is very difficult for the House to say just what effect the measure will have on the future welfare of the State. That will have to be determined for us, but by the measure we will conclude the steps necessary to approach the Imperial Parliament, who will decide the issue for us. I am convinced that if we can give effect to the wishes of the people as expressed in the overwhelming majority in favour of secession, it will operate to the great benefit of the State. We can commence our deliberations regarding the Bill in the belief that we are doing something that will be of great advantage to Western Australia. Of course, the Bill is something of a preliminary nature. It represents the third step taken by Parliament towards giving effect to what the expression of the people's opinion shows they require. A Bill was introduced originally by the then Government to give the people the right to express themselves at a referendum, and members know the result of that vote, which was overwhelmingly in favour of secession. Then last session, by way of resolution moved by the Premier, Parliament decided to appoint a committee consisting of representatives of the people, not of Parliament, to frame the Case in support of secession, on behalf of the people themselves. Now the third step is the introduction of the Bill, which will enable the Case to be submitted to the proper authorities. There is nothing new in this move, nor did the pro-secession feeling originate during the last few years only. Almost immediately the effects of Federation made themselves felt in Western Australia, an agitation was commenced to enable this State to be released from the Commonwealth. In 1906 the then member for York, the late Mr. F. C. Monger, moved a motion in this House. It was carried and sent to another place where it was also endorsed. In order to carry the matter further, the member for York introduced a Bill in this Chamber. Not much progress was made with it because the then Speaker ruled that as the Bill committed the Government to expenditure, the member for York could not proceed beyond the second reading stage without a Message from His Excellency the Governor. Because of that, the Bill lapsed with the closing of the session. The measure was not taken up by the Government, and the Premier of the day explained why that was not done. He showed