

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th November, 1899.

Paper presented: Motion—Lotteries on Horse Racing—Subiaco Tramways Bill, third reading—Registration of Firms Act Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Petition of Federal League: motion to approve (words struck out), Amendments, Divisions (3)—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Report of Public Works, 1898-9.

Ordered to lie on the table.

MOTION—LOTTERIES ON HORSE-RACING.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (South-East): moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the practice of promoting lotteries upon horse-racing has become a social scandal, and it is necessary in the interests of public morality, that the law prohibiting these lotteries should be rigorously enforced.

In the wording of the motion he had been most careful to avoid debatable matter, so that hon. members might see their way to vote for the motion. It simply asked the House to call upon the Government to carry out certain laws which the Parliament of the country had seen fit to pass. It had been pointed out over and over again that Bills had become law, and had not been enforced, as in the case of lotteries on horse-racing. Gambling was demoralising the rising generation, and perhaps members had no idea to what extent gambling was carried on in Perth. From the inception of the sweeps got up by Mr. Charles the amount of money that had passed through Mr. Charles's hands amounted to half a million pounds, and the amount of money which had been paid to Mr. Charles for sweeps from the first of October to the first of January amounted to £63,750; these sweeps were carried on against the laws of the country. Children of tender age were allowed to take tickets, and people paid money into these lotteries and allowed their accounts due to tradesmen to remain unpaid, because the whole

of the floating money in the place was being used in gambling.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The hon. member had good authority for saying that, he supposed.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It was the universal opinion that the whole of the money of the colony was being placed in gambling transactions instead of being carried to its proper source. There had been of late sums of £20 or £30 locked up in sweeps. Not only were sweeps carried on in Perth but on the goldfields. A huge amount of money was being collected by sweeps, and, with a few exceptions, tobacconists' shops, were used as a cloak for "tote" shops where children of tender age were encouraged to invest their sixpences and shillings on horse races. It had come under the notice of members, through the Press, that during the last two or three months children of tender age had been convicted of having stolen stamps and other things, and the excuse which had been given for the theft was that the children had taken the stamps to buy tickets in the totalisators. This spirit of gambling was utterly demoralising the youth of the colony, and should be put a stop to. In New South Wales the authorities saw the extent of this evil, and at a great and absolute loss to the colony, as far as the revenue was concerned, in the interests of the people, the Government drove out of New South Wales Mr. Adams, who promoted Tattersall's sweeps. It had been said that if the gambling was stopped in this colony the money would go elsewhere; nothing of the sort. To take tickets in sweeps, which were got up outside the colony, necessitated a person going to the post office, taking out a post-office order, and sending it away by post. A few thousand pounds might go that way, but nothing like the sums going at present.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Where would it go to?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It would stop in the pockets of the people. At present people were induced at every corner of the street to gamble with two or three shillings that belonged to other people. Wherever people walked on the goldfields there were tote and sweep shops staring them in the face. It was demoralising, and putting about £2,000 a month into one man's pocket. This was absolutely

carried on against the law, and he asked members to say that when a law was passed the Government should be requested to see that it was carried into effect.

HON. D. McKAY: The hon. member (Mr. Crowder) was to be commended for moving in this direction. It was high time that the Government should move in regard to the subject, and it was no use temporising with the matter. The evil could be stopped if the Government were in earnest about it. When there was a will there was a way, and when there was not a will there was always a way out of it.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It was rather absurd for Mr. Crowder to bring forward this motion, as there was a proposal in another place to amend the Act in a way that would be acceptable to the whole of the people of the colony, the object being to place sweep promotions under proper control, so that there could be no question as to the proper manner of carrying out the law. He might be inclined to support the hon. member, if his motion went so far as to enforce upon the Government the necessity of rigorously carrying into effect the provisions of every Act passed, instead of selecting one. The reasons given by the hon. member for selecting this one did not commend themselves to his mind. He said that £63,750 had passed through the hands of one sweep promoter.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Half-a-million of money.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The hon. member said £63,750 in the last four months.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Half-a-million since the sweep was started.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If the hon. member said it, he did it in such an indistinct way that it was not heard by anyone in the House. The motion was brought forward just at the season of the year when sweeps could be promoted. The hon. member laid emphasis on the fact that £2,000 a month was going into the pockets of one man, but did not show the benefit derived by the colony through the conduct of those sweeps, and he certainly failed to show any one instance in which great harm had resulted from them. He said that money paid into sweeps went

there instead of paying debts due, but he afterwards said that if the people did not invest the money in sweeps they would keep it in their pockets; so there would be no special benefit derived in that particular direction by the motion brought forward. If he thought the hon. member were in earnest in bringing forward the motion, he might be inclined to agree to it, but after what happened in the House last night, when he delivered an able speech directed against a particular measure which he looked upon as most dangerous, and wound up by stating that he would vote for the measure.—

HON. F. T. CROWDER rose to a point of order. He had been entirely misrepresented. The hon. member said he (Mr. Crowder) stated that although he was against the motion he would vote for it. He said nothing of the sort. He said he would oppose the motion with all the ability he possessed, but that he would vote for the Bill going to the people. There was a clear difference.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That was not the motion before the House.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: After what was said by the hon. member last night, and after that peculiar reversal of intention or opinion, he did not think any member could conscientiously accept his utterances in relation to this matter as genuine expressions of opinion. The motion must have been brought forward for some peculiar reason—whether through pique or personal motives it was impossible for anyone to say. On looking into the question he (Mr. Whitcombe) considered it a very debatable matter. The first two lines of the motion said: "That, in the opinion of this House, the practice of promoting lotteries upon horse-racing has become a social scandal." It was easy for anyone to say a thing had become a scandal, but surely it was incumbent upon one to show that such was the case and that harm resulted to the community, or to indicate in some way that the motion was justified.

Question put and passed.

Ordered that a message be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly requesting their concurrence in the resolution.

SUBIACO TRAMWAYS BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell), in moving the second reading, said: The principal Act, passed in 1897, has a defect which the amending Bill seeks to remedy. Section 11 of the Act reads:

Any person who shall fail to comply with any of the provisions of this Act shall, on conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds for the first offence, and for every subsequent conviction to a penalty not exceeding one hundred pounds.

By an oversight, no means were provided in the Act for enforcing these penalties; and the Bill gives power to recover the fines in a court of summary jurisdiction.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

PETITION OF FEDERAL LEAGUE.

MOTION TO APPROVE (WORDS STRUCK OUT)—AMENDMENTS.

Debate resumed from previous day, on question raised by Hon. A. P. Matheson for approving of petition of Federal League; that question having been amended at the instance of Hon. F. Whitcombe, by striking out all words after "that," with a view of submitting these words: "at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony."

Amendment thereon moved by the COLONIAL SECRETARY for submitting both Bills to electors.

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West): In resuming the debate, it is not my intention to speak at any length, in view of the many forcible speeches which have already been delivered. Almost every argument against responsible government has been adduced by those who favour the reference of this Bill to the people; and I can only say I am entirely in accord with the Colonial Secretary and those who share his views. I fail to see what the colony will gain by joining federation, or what reason there is to rush into union at the present time. I am perfectly satisfied with the progress the country is

making, and feel assured that, with the many resources we have, we are better able to develop the colony under the present system and constitution than we would be under a Government 2,000 miles away. If we join federation now, settlement on the land will cease and every industry in the colony will be hampered, if not ruined. In a small community like this, with industries just starting, it would be impossible to successfully compete, and the markets here would be completely swamped, if I may use the expression, with the produce from the larger colonies. As a consequence the population would be depleted, because the small industries now carried on would be ruined, and the people would at once have to leave the colony and seek employment elsewhere. I listened with attention to the speakers, in order to ascertain what we are going to gain by federation, and invariably I found that the benefit anticipated was in the direction of defences; but if that is the only reason for our joining the union, I do not regard it as sufficient. Another argument in favour of federation is that the Commonwealth would be in a better position to borrow money, because there would be better security to offer to the English investors; but we have had no difficulty in the past in borrowing all the money we required, and I am not sure it would be to our advantage to borrow a great deal more. We are now going on very well, and if we are not too ambitious and do not want to go too fast, when we require money to develop the country we will be able to get it without joining federation. Mr. Briggs, who in a flowery speech last night advocated federation, admitted the colony would sustain a loss, and told us the Dividend Duty Act lately passed would, to some extent, help to make up the deficiency. But I cannot agree with the policy of introducing fresh taxation for the purpose of supplying the deficiency which must result from federation; and if companies have to be taxed to the extent of £90,000 or £100,000, I hope the money so raised will be applied to a better purpose than making up a loss we have no occasion to incur. When I visited the exhibition held under the auspices of the Chamber of Manufactures, in the Queen's Hall, I was impressed with the many industries

that have been started in the colony. I had no idea so many new industries were in existence, or that so much employment was by this means given to the people; and, although the beginning may be small, there is every probability of substantial development of our manufactures. I believe that at present local industries afford employment to some 10,000 people, most of whom will be thrown out of employment and their families left destitute, if this colony join the Commonwealth; and in view of these facts, we ought to pause before we open the ports of this colony, and give our markets away to neighbouring colonies. At the rate settlement is progressing, we will very soon be in a position to meet our own requirements; because year by year our production is increasing, and we have already overtaken the demand for chaff, while this season potatoes are at a discount in the colony.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Potatoes are a very good price now; £6 a ton.

HON. E. McLARTY: I should be very glad if the hon. member would give me an order for potatoes at £6 a ton, because I find a difficulty in getting £4 10s. in the market, and have seen good potatoes which it is difficult to sell at any price. But these are only some items of importance, and it is very plain that if we go on as at present, we shall soon be able to supply our own wants. The argument is frequently used that if we do not join federation as an original State, we shall not be allowed to join afterwards, at any rate on such good terms as are now offered. But I have no apprehension on that score, because this large colony, with its immense wealth and resources awaiting development, will attract an increasing population, and when we are ripe for federation, the other colonies will be only too glad to take us in on as good or even better terms than are now proposed.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They want to "take us in" now.

HON. E. McLARTY: We are told that we can trust the other colonies, but what do we find in the matter of the mail boats, for example? If the calling of the mail boats at this colony caused a delay of an hour, and the Government of the other colonies had the power, I have no hesitation in saying that the vessels

would not be allowed to touch at Western Australian ports. Again, I think there is no stronger argument against our federating than the fact that many of the principal statesmen in the other colonies did not hesitate to tell us at the Convention that Western Australia was not ripe for federation. Mr. Crowder read a number of extracts to that effect last night, and in looking carefully through the Convention debates, I was struck with the practical unanimity of opinion amongst the leading politicians of the other colonies, that Western Australia could not join federation except on special terms. We are told now that as a result of our joining the union, we shall lose £300,000 per annum, and though some members regard that as a mere nothing, I do not think that figure represents the total loss to this colony, and I want to know what we are to gain by way of compensation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There will be extra taxation.

HON. E. McLARTY: When we find leading politicians of other colonies candidly admitting, from their knowledge of this country, that we are not prepared to federate, and that it would be unwise for us to do so, surely we are not going to rush in and give away our freedom, our markets, and everything we have, without any compensating benefits. I am at an utter loss to understand why hon. members in this House advocate federation for Western Australia.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not an hon. member in this House wants federation.

HON. E. McLARTY: I do not intend to repeat all the arguments that have been used in favour of the attitude which I am now taking, but I desire to make known the course I intend to pursue on this question. I have given the matter a great deal of careful consideration, and I confess I have been somewhat puzzled to know the right thing to do; but I have arrived at the conclusion that my proper course is to support the amendment of Mr. Whitcombe. I am not afraid to express and act in accordance with my opinions here, and I must say I see no benefit to be gained by sending the Bill to the people. The action of hon. members who vote against the referendum will be appreciated by a large number of people in the colony, and in my own con-

stituency the feeling is, I believe, that it would be in the best interests of the colony to throw the Federal Bill out altogether and by that means stop the present agitation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Question?

HON. E. McLARTY: There is no doubt the question of federation is unsettling the minds of the people and doing a great deal of injury to trade and business. People are afraid to embark in business or investments; and, in fact, you hear people every day saying, "Well, if this colony joins federation, I shall sell my property and clear out as soon as I can." I have heard that remark time after time, and my opinion is that the day we join the federation, property in this colony will go down, I was going to say 50 per cent., but it will go down a considerable amount in value. I want to know why we should rush into this federation to depreciate our property. We have worked for this country many years, and we have striven to make it a great country. Are we not doing that? People ought not to be dissatisfied with the progress we have made, and the prospects in front of us. I am not going to give my vote to throw the whole of our resources into the hands of other people to profit by them. I am not going to repeat the arguments which have been used. I listened to Mr. Crowder's speech with great attention last night, and I think the quotations which he made from the speeches of members at the Convention are conclusive that the other colonies know, just as well as we do, that it is not in our interests to join the federation. I intend to vote for Mr. Whitcombe's motion, and I do so with the full knowledge of the responsibility, and with the full conviction that I am doing what is best in the interests of Western Australia, and in the interests of those I am sent here to represent. I know perhaps it is a bold stroke to throw the Commonwealth Bill out altogether, but any member who has reason to believe he is doing right, and acting in the best interests of the country, should adopt the course which his conscience dictates to him. I have no hesitation in saying that my conviction is that the course I intend taking is the proper one to adopt—to try and stop this agitation altogether. We shall soon have an election for members to the Legislative

Assembly, and I think that will be the proper and fitting time for people to express their opinions on this subject. Let candidates go before the people and declare themselves for or against federation. If a majority of candidates in favour of federation are returned by the constituencies, I think this House then can take it that the country desires federation. At the present time we have nothing before us to justify the conclusion that federation is demanded by the country, that the people want it; but we have sufficient and substantial reasons to know that it would be a great loss to the country for us to join the federation at the present time. In these circumstances I shall support Mr. Whitcombe's motion.

HON. W. T. LOTON (Central): The substantive motion before the House is to the effect that it is not desirable at the present juncture to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony. To that an amendment has been moved by the leader of the House that it is desirable to submit the Commonwealth Bill which was agreed to by the Conference of Premiers—

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Without authority.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Also the same Bill with the amendments suggested by the Joint Select Committee of this Parliament, to the people. I desire to explain briefly the position I intend to take up on this momentous question, and there is no doubt it is, as far as all the colonies are concerned, a very momentous question. It is one I think that possibly many of the representatives of the people, at all events in Western Australia, have not given that serious and general attention to which they might have given. In the year 1890, or just at the beginning of 1891, immediately after the adoption of responsible government in this country, the Parliament of this country—that is to say both Houses—elected delegates to attend a conference in Sydney on federation. The conference was held and attended by delegates from all the Australasian colonies. At that time New Zealand attended the conference. A draft Bill was prepared, but for various reasons, which I do not intend to refer to now, the Bill was dropped. In 1897, six years afterwards, the question of the federation of the Australian colonies was mooted,

and the various colonies, with the exception of Queensland and New Zealand, agreed and passed enabling Bills giving delegates from the various colonies power to attend a Convention to be held, in the first place, in Adelaide. This colony elected certain members to the number of 10, the same number as the other colonies, to attend the Convention. I may say, at that Convention I had the honour of being present for a fortnight or three weeks. All the delegates from this colony returned after the Convention had been sitting about three weeks. Select committees were appointed on various subjects—finance, constitution, and legal—and so soon as these select committees finished their labours the delegates from this colony returned; therefore, the Western Australian delegates did not take part in the general debate which followed. That was the last Convention I attended. Owing to illness I was not in a position to attend the Convention which was held in Sydney in the same year, and I felt it my duty, in order that this colony might be represented to the full number of delegates, to resign so that some one else could be appointed in my place. That Convention adjourned to Melbourne, when a draft Bill was formulated. Under our Enabling Act, after the draft Bill had been agreed to or formulated by the Convention, the Bill was to be submitted to the Parliament, and if approved it was to be sent to the people. There was a clause in our Enabling Act saying that unless New South Wales agreed to the Bill we should not take further action. The draft Bill was submitted to the people of New South Wales to vote upon. There was a provision in the New South Wales Enabling Act that unless a certain number of votes were recorded in favour of federation, federation for the time being was at an end. The number of votes required were not recorded by the people in New South Wales, therefore the fact of federation having been declined by New South Wales, so far as we were concerned, the delegates had no more powers, and our Enabling Act fell to the ground. After that, and very soon after, a conference of Premiers of the various colonies was summoned to meet in Melbourne: they did meet, and agreed to certain amendments in the draft Bill. That draft Bill, as members are aware,

has been submitted to the vote of the people of each of the other colonies of Australia. Queensland was not represented at the Convention, but arrangements were made for the electors of Queensland to vote on the question; and the draft Bill as amended by the Premiers has been submitted to the vote of the people in all the Australian colonies, except this colony, and the people of the other colonies have accepted federation under that draft Bill. Whether it was constitutional or not for the Premiers to amend the Bill, and submit it to the people, I am leaving out of the question. We have arrived at this position: a Bill was agreed to by the Premiers, and the electors of the various colonies have accepted that Bill. The Premier of this colony agreed that this amended draft Bill should be considered by Parliament. We have arrived at that stage. After considerable discussion and agitation, and dissatisfaction to a certain extent because the Bill was not submitted at an earlier date, we have arrived at the stage when the amended draft Bill has been submitted to Parliament. We have arrived at a further stage: Parliament referred that draft Bill to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, and has received the report of that Committee. The Joint Select Committee suggested further amendments in order to meet the case of Western Australia, and the only point I wish to make in connection with that is this: if the Premiers of the various colonies had any right or constitutional power to amend the Bill and submit it to the people of the various colonies without any mandate from the people, the Parliament of this colony has just as much right to make suggestions with regard to amending that draft Bill before submitting the Bill to the people of this colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No colony had accepted the Bill when the Premiers amended it.

HON. W. T. LOTON: This Parliament has not accepted the Bill yet. This Parliament has as much constitutional right to suggest amendments to the draft Bill, and then, as amended, submit it to the voters of the colony, as the Premiers had to amend the Bill and submit it to the people of the other colonies. I have

now arrived at the stage of the substantive motion on the amendment, and I suppose I need not inform the hon. member who interjected just now that the Parliaments of certain colonies have agreed to the Bill, and that the Parliament of Western Australia has not agreed to the Bill as amended by the Premiers.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Premiers' Bill was submitted to all the other Parliaments: they all agreed to it.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The Bill of the Premiers has been submitted to this Parliament, and this Parliament has refused to agree to it. We had that as a substantive motion, and it has been dismissed from this section of Parliament at all events. I do not desire to detain hon. members at great length, but I may say at once I am not in favour of the motion before the House, or the amendment. I am not in favour of refusing to submit the Bill to the people, and I am not in favour of submitting two Bills, but I am in favour of submitting the Bill with the suggested amendments of the Joint Select Committee. I go a little further and say that although I think Parliament is within its constitutional rights in throwing out the measure and refusing to send it to the people, yet I think the people have a very strong claim, and something almost more than a claim—[HON. A. P. MATHESON: Hear, hear]—they have a right to vote on this question as to whether federation shall be thrown out entirely.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: A constitutional right?

HON. W. T. LOTON: I will leave the legal fraternity to deal with the constitutional point. I trust I have stated clearly enough the position I intend to take on this matter. In order to get a motion for the Bill with the suggested amendments of the Joint Select Committee to be submitted to the people, we shall have to dispense, if we can, with the substantive motion now before us. That is, we shall have to strike out the motion that at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony. I intend to vote against this motion.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I hope you will change your mind.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do hope that members will consider very carefully and

seriously the question of preventing altogether the electors of this colony from expressing their views on this important subject.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You are not going to let them express their views; only yours.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I am going to make a few remarks on the draft Bill as amended by the Premiers and approved by the other colonies. The principles of the Bill which the people of the other colonies approved of are not interfered with in any way by the suggestions of the Joint Select Committee, all the Committee suggest being that certain portions of that Bill shall not apply to Western Australia for a certain time.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Intercolonial free-trade.

HON. W. T. LOTON: On this subject I am sure it is not necessary to point out that Western Australia is at the present time not in a position to join the federation of the colonies on exactly the same terms as the others.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Or any terms.

HON. W. T. LOTON: No individual representative of any of the colonies has gone so far as to say Western Australia is in a position to join federation under the terms of the Bill at the present time. There are numbers of instances in which the most prominent and leading men have said very distinctly, not only at committees but at every convention, that Western Australia cannot, in her present financial position, join federation unless she has some special concessions. Does the hon. member admit that?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Of course he does.

HON. W. T. LOTON: You will have intercolonial free-trade, and plenty of it. What special concession did the Convention make? They tried to grant concessions in order to meet the case of Western Australia, but the only concession they made was the sliding-scale with regard to the tariff extending over five years. I am surprised that out of the 10 representative men—or supposed representative men—of Western Australia, you had not a sufficient number at that Convention to point out the absurdity of the policy of accepting a concession—what was called a concession—of that kind. Any commercial man with the smallest knowledge

of ordinary trade, would have known that to be continually changing the tariff in all its items every 12 months would be one of the greatest absurdities any person could deal with, and as a matter of fact it is well known that the concession the Convention gave is practically useless so far as Western Australia is concerned.

[HON. R. G. BURGESS: Hear, hear.]

What do the Joint Select Committee ask for? I do not go into details with reference to this matter. We ask to have free control over our tariff for five years after the imposition of the uniform tariff. That at the outside would be six years from the present time. I do not see at all why there should be any objection to that on the part of the Australian colonies. They will lose nothing financially themselves, with this exception, that Western Australia will have to pay a duty on any products that happen to be imported from the other colonies during that period. They would lose nothing, but the people here would have to pay, if it is requisite on account of our finances to raise through the customs or some other means something like the revenue we are obtaining at the present time. We should be inflicting no hardship upon the other colonies by having this concession. I do not propose to refer to the other points, for they have been dealt with and are perfectly well known. The first is that instead of having Western Australia as one electorate for members of the Senate, we shall be enabled, if we choose, to subdivide the colony into two or more electorates, the position being exactly the same as that of Queensland. Why should the other Australian colonies object to that? It is not an absolute measure. It says if Parliament decided that it would be more advantageous to divide Western Australia into, say, two electorates for the election of members of the Senate, instead of the colony being one electorate, they should have the right to so divide it. Then, again, there is the question of a railway. All that is asked for in relation to that is that the Federal Parliament, without any reference to South Australia, shall have the power to authorise the construction of a railway to connect this colony with the other colonies. We do not ask them to build this railway straight away.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They would have to alter the Bill to do that.

HON. W. T. LOTON: We do not want the Federal Parliament to be in the unfortunate position of having to go to one State to get permission before they can build a railway connecting Western Australia with the federal capital. The other item in relation to our railways is that we shall not be interfered with by the Inter-State Commission during the first five years. Now with regard to the amount of money it has been estimated we should lose through the reduction in revenue from customs and excise under federation, with intercolonial free-trade. The sum has been put down at about £300,000, and I think that is near enough for any ordinary argument. In my opinion any one who is in favour of Western Australia joining federation under the Bill as amended by the Premiers should be able to point out either that we shall be able to do without this £300,000 a year, or else in what direction the money can be raised. It is pretty apparent that this colony will require all the revenue it can raise by ordinary means for some time to come. We have now reached a decent amount in regard to our loans and our indebtedness per head of population, yet there is still a cry and a demand in some cases for further borrowing and expenditure of money, and so long as that goes on, even to a limited extent, we must raise money to meet liabilities, and to carry on public works. I am not one of those who say that if we join federation under the suggestions recommended by the Joint Select Committee we shall be ruined, or that any of the industries of the colony are going to be wiped out. I think that if we have a reasonable time without undue interference with our tariff, we can rise above any such position, but we must have a reasonable time. If we get the concession which the Joint Select Committee have suggested, whereby we shall have control over our tariff during the existence of this bookkeeping system, I shall not be afraid, as far as I am concerned, to recommend the people of Western Australia to join federation as an original State. Possibly hon. members will ask me what benefits we are to get, as I have been asked many times.

I do not think we shall get any financial benefit to start with, and we must look for advantages on a broader and higher plane. In the first place we must look to the commencement of the formation of a nation; and our views must be national, and not altogether State views. But we cannot get away from the fact that the representatives of the people of the States must at this particular juncture—at all events, it is our duty to do so—look very carefully at the financial position, and see whether we are justified in joining federation under the Premiers' Bill. I say we are not justified in joining; and as to advantages, we must, as I say, look at the question from a national point of view. There is one view which has not yet been presented by any hon. member, namely that on federation being accomplished, all the different colonies or States will become one united Australia; and it will follow, as a natural consequence, that the portion of Australia most and best suited for the development and working of any particular industry will be so worked and developed, the products, of whatever kind they may be, either cereals or underneath the soil, being dispersed throughout the continent. And who is to benefit by the raising of production and cultivation to the highest pitch in the most suitable localities? Why, the mass of the people of Australia in years to come: and surely it is not for a few moneyed people, or a few property-holders in a country or State, to say they are not willing to contribute in order that the majority may be benefited.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There is no benefit for the masses in federation.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The hon. member is not taking the same view that I am.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We can see as well as you can.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I am afraid the hon. member's brain is not wide enough.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Perhaps not.

HON. W. T. LOTON: At any rate, I do not think so. Amongst the population of the colony at the present moment, wages are fairly high, but there are lots of disadvantages even on the goldfields where those high wages are paid. If Mr. Burgess was one of those working men—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I work as hard as any of them.

HON. W. T. LOTON: If the hon. member was a working man on the goldfields, with a wife whom he respected and loved, and half a dozen children to keep on £3 10s. or £4 a week at the outside, he would find an enormous difficulty in saving any money. These are the kind of people who, I say, will be benefited when Australia is one nation.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is only your idea.

HON. H. LUKIN: They are the very people who will suffer.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not desire to go into details, because to do so would occupy a long time; and if a majority of members accept the amendment and it becomes a substantive motion, another amendment will follow, and further opportunities of speaking will be afforded. I have already said more than I intended to say when I rose, but I would like to allude to one point brought forward by Mr. Crowder last night. He gave us a return of the acreage of land under wheat, and the production from 1895 to 1898-9, showing that in 1895 some 23,000 acres were under cultivation, and 180,000 bushels produced; while in 1898 75,000 acres were under cultivation, and 807,000 bushels produced, or nearly five times the quantity in four years.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is a statement.

HON. W. T. LOTON: It is a Government return; and if Mr. Burgess can carry his mind forward another four years or five years, covering the period during which the Joint Select Committee suggest Western Australia shall be allowed to go on without any interference with her tariff, he will find that at the same ratio, instead of 807,000 bushels, some 3,200,000 bushels will be produced.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not if you vote for federation to-night.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I give these figures merely to show how rapidly this colony is increasing the production of cereals. There has been considerable settlement and development of the land, with which we do not want to interfere; and there will be no interference if we join federation under the conditions suggested by the Select Committee. Unless the other Australian colonies are prepared to grant us those concessions, I,

for one, am most distinctly opposed to our federating at the present time.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: How are the other colonies going to grant the concessions?

HON. W. T. LOTON: It is not for me to point out the way in which that is to be done, but nothing is impossible if the will be there. Providing the Australian colonies have the desire they appear to have for Western Australia to join the federation, they will not hesitate, if they do not look for any special financial gain for themselves, to grant the concessions the Select Committee have recommended; and if these concessions are not granted, I shall not support our entering the Commonwealth.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): Nobody seems to have much to say in favour of federation, and I am not going to trespass on the House at any length at this moment, because I shall have a later opportunity of moving an amendment, if we get so far as to relegate Mr. Whitcombe's motion to the waste-paper basket, of the opposite of which that hon. member seems very confident. I merely wish to say I am not prepared to vote for Mr. Whitcombe's motion that no Bill shall be referred, nor am I prepared to support the motion of the Colonial Secretary that the two Bills be sent to the people.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Why vote at all?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I intend to vote at every stage of this interesting question. I am not prepared to deny to the electors a direct vote on federation, because I do not think it lies with Parliament to go to that length, and I shall certainly vote in favour of taking the sense of the people of Western Australia on the question. While I contend Parliament cannot go to the length—or should not go to the length is, perhaps, the better way of putting it—of withholding the issue altogether from the electors, I am not prepared, viewing my duty as I do to my constituents and the colony at large, to say that Parliament should divest itself altogether of authority in the matter; and, therefore, I am prepared to follow the example of Mr. Loton, and vote that the Bill, which has been approved by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses, and which has been

thoroughly investigated, and on which a multifarious amount of evidence has been taken, shall be sent to the people. But for that very reason, I shall be compelled to vote against the Colonial Secretary's amendment that the two Bills be submitted, and I take that course, not only on the grounds I have mentioned, but also because that amendment is really a reversal of a vote arrived at by this House some time back, to the effect that the Bill as amended at the Premiers' Conference should not be the Bill to be submitted to the vote of the electors. For my part, I treat the Premiers' Bill with very scant reverence. The six gentlemen—I can no longer speak of them as Premiers—who met early in the year to consider the Bill, met, as Mr. Crowder has pointed out, without any instructions from Parliament, without any mandate from the people, and without any authority behind them but their own six personal individualities. If we consider their labours in the light of what has happened since, I claim I am entitled to treat their deliberations with still scantier respect. Of the six gentlemen who then insisted on putting their views and opinions, not the opinions of their Parliaments or their countries, before Australia, four already have been deprived of office, and one is probably tottering to his fall. The only one left will be the Premier of our own colony, who has openly avowed his repentance for his participation in the decision of that body, and has declared that if the circumstances were to arise again, he would reverse what he did on that occasion; and therefore since the Premiers' Bill is invested with no authority, importance, or significance whatever by the action then taken, I repudiate the proceedings altogether. We have been told, however, that all weaknesses or difficulties in the title of the Premiers have been cured by the referendum taken in Australia since. Well, that point can be considered a little later on in this debate, or series of debates; but I urge my strong opinion that, such was the temper of the other colonies at that time, not only were any amendments proposed by the Premiers assured of acceptance, provided federation were assured, but I firmly believe that if the six Premiers had agreed on a clause declaring the Commonwealth of the future

should be a separate and independent State, this suggestion would have been as greedily devoured as were the other proposals made by the Premiers on that occasion. Therefore I do not hold myself bound in any way by the views of the Premiers, or even by the views of the other colonies, to vote for sending the Bill as amended by the Premiers to the people. On the contrary. I look on the Bill with the greatest distrust, and with the more distrust because the capital innovation made in the Bill by the Premiers in the extension of the principle of the referendum was, so far from having any authority or mandate behind it, a direct reversal of a decision arrived at in the Melbourne Convention, after weeks of debate, by 30 votes to 15, that the very amendment prepared and agreed to by the Premiers should not form a part of the Constitution of Australia. Under all the circumstances, while I am not prepared to vote for Mr. Whitcombe's motion, I must certainly vote against the amendment of the Colonial Secretary.

HON. A. G. JENKINS (North-East) : It is strange that throughout the whole of Australia this should be the only colony where gratuitous insults have been placed on the whole of the people by the Parliament supposed to represent them. Members of the House are practically saying that they have no faith whatever in the people who have come here, and who are living here in order to aid their own fortunes, and aid as well in the development and growth of the colony.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : They are reaping, but not sowing.

HON. A. G. JENKINS : We cannot all be agriculturists, because some of us must devote our time to other industries ; and surely the hon. member does not consider that, because some of us reap without sowing, we are not, therefore, just as good citizens as hon. members who have been longer in the colony. Mr. Loton, in a very able speech, expressed kindly feelings towards the people who live on the goldfields, and who support large families on small wages. He said that these people were deserving of consideration, yet at the same time he denied to these people, to whom we have given votes, and to whom we have given representation, the right to decide for them-

selves what they consider the best means of arriving at a certain end. Surely that is not reasonable consideration. We ought to have more faith in the good sense of the people of this country ; we ought to think—although some of the people have been referred to as disaffected—if this question is prevented from going to the people how much more will that disaffection be increased. If people have complained now, they will have more to complain about if the question is prevented from being decided by them. It has been said that the House should throw out the Commonwealth Bill because it was passed by such a narrow majority in another place. If hon. members will take the trouble to look at the representation of the members who voted against the Bill in another place, they will see that those members against federation represented, out of a population of 170,000 people, 3,398 electors, and, at the same time, the members of this House have been elected on an electoral roll of about 7,000 people, although at the present time this House may represent 10,000, yet hon. members were returned by 7,000 people, and members say that the people of this colony should not have the right of deciding and regulating their own affairs.

HON. W. T. LOTON : Does the hon. member propose that the people should enact a Bill ?

HON. A. G. JENKINS : The people who are resident in the colony know what is good for this colony just the same as members who sit in this House do. Every man has the right to be consulted on this important question.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : You would not give it to the women of the colony, who have quite as good brains as ours.

HON. A. G. JENKINS : The hon. member and a good many of his friends were against giving votes to the women of the colony, until they saw that there was a danger.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : When was I opposed to it ? You must not make charges like that.

HON. A. G. JENKINS : I said the hon. member's friends. I am sorry I was not here to support the prayer of the petition of the Federal League which was brought forward by Mr. Matheson. It is a matter of extreme regret to me that

this House should so far, I say unconstitutionally, damage its reputation so as to prevent a question such as this going to the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is only prevented for the time being.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: It is for the time being, but if the people are anxious that the colony should enter the federation at the present time why should they not be allowed to say so? The same objection probably will come four or five years hence. This colony is not going to stand still; the rest of Australia is not going to stand still; the other colonies will progress much faster, perhaps, than we shall, because they have larger populations and more money at their command.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about our gold?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Unfortunately most of the gold goes out of the colony, and we do not get that benefit from it which we should do. We shall undoubtedly, during the next two or three years, have to impose more direct taxation than is being collected at the present time. We have had instances given to us by hon. members of how the supply is overtaking the demand every day, in different articles. As our supply overtakes the demand the revenue from the duties will disappear, and we shall have to raise revenue in another way. What a different position we should be in if we were federated than standing as a separate colony.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We should be governing ourselves.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: We should be governing ourselves if we have representation in the Federal Parliament. It seems to me, throughout the whole of the debate, hon. members have been looking on our own kith and kin as neither more nor less than robbers, anxious to take everything from us, and give us nothing in return.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: You get plenty of consideration on the goldfields.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I am talking about our kith and kin in the other colonies. Every member who has spoken has abused the people of the other colonies, saying that they were endeavouring to get everything they can from us and give nothing in return. Are those members who have spoken not endeavour-

ing to get all they can from the other colonies and to give nothing in return?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We do not want to have anything to do with them.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The hon. members who have spoken represent a small minority of the inhabitants of the colony: they do not represent, if I may call it, the great public voice of the country.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The "great unwashed."

HON. A. G. JENKINS: We have very few of the "great unwashed" in this colony: they have not come here. The people who have come to this country desire to aid themselves, and to aid the fortunes of the colony. It seems to me that it ill becomes the House to cast such an insult on the people as not to allow them to decide their own future, not to allow them to decide what they think is good for them, and what they think is in the best interests of the colony, and in the best interests of Australia.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I feel somewhat diffident in again addressing the House, but I think it is my duty to do so, as this is one of the most important measures ever brought before Parliament; and I think if federation is adopted, it will act seriously to the detriment of this country. In looking at the proceedings up to the present time, I do not think any member in the House was returned to represent his province as a supporter of federation. When the delegates were appointed by this House and another place, I do not think any of the delegates ever thought for a moment that the conclusions arrived at by the Convention would be sent to the people before being approved by Parliament. I consider it is our first duty to approve of the Commonwealth Bill before sending it to the people. I do not see now why the people of the colony should be put to the expense of considering a measure when their representatives in Parliament consider that federation is undesirable in the interests of the country. What are we here for? It is our duty to prevent hasty legislation, and not to permit measures being carried out which we consider are not desirable in the interests of the country; not to advocate measures that none of us can conscientiously recommend as desirable. Yesterday we had a most able speech delivered in this

House on the question of federation. In every aspect in which federation has been presented to us, it was shown that it was undesirable. I feel disappointed when I think there is a disposition on the part of members to send a defective Bill like this to the people instead of dealing with it, like men, ourselves. We know perfectly well, considering the position of the colony and the size of our population, the distance we are away from the other colonies, and the distance we shall be away from the seat of the Federal Government, it is ridiculous to think that this colony will benefit by federation, when the Commonwealth will be governed from a place 2,000 miles away. We are as much isolated from the other colonies as New Zealand is, and if it were not for the idea of the other colonies requiring the whole of the Western Australian market for their benefit, the other colonies would be just as unwilling to take Western Australia into the federation as they are now to receive New Zealand. Why do they not want New Zealand to join the federation? It is possible that the other colonies think New Zealand has arrived at such a stage of production that that colony will be able to supply the wants of Western Australia without leaving our market to the other colonies. It is our market they want; they want full control of it, so that Western Australia shall be the receiving ground for the surplus produce of the other colonies. This is one of the reasons why the other colonies so strongly advocate federation. Federation between the other colonies is a very different thing. We know their interests are pretty well identical, and the duties which have existed hitherto have been such that they can place themselves on the same footing. But we stand on an entirely different ground. It has been shown by the statements made yesterday by Mr. Crowder, that all the Premiers at the Convention admitted that it would be a very great disadvantage for Western Australia to join the federation. Notwithstanding this, we find many of our representatives willing to set aside this opinion, and think that by a few amendments to the Commonwealth Bill it is desirable to join federation. In no circumstances is it desirable, and I hope the House will form that opinion. I hope

members will stand like men and say, "We firmly and conscientiously believe that federation is undesirable in the interests of the colony, and we will not advocate sending the Bill to the people, but will support the motion brought forward by Mr. Whitecombe." We know perfectly well what our representation in the Federal Parliament will be. That matter has been fully dealt with. We shall only have five representatives against 75. Can that possibly result in anything desirable in the interests of the colony? All the advantages and future benefits to be derived by federation are imaginary, more than anything else. It is quite unnecessary for me to go over the whole ground which has already been traversed by almost every speaker in the House; but there are some matters upon which I think I can very fairly claim the privilege of the House in listening to. We have the right to expect some consideration from the goldfields. Although we may admit that the goldfields have a larger population than in any other portion of the colony, yet when we take into consideration the enormous amount of money expended for the benefit and advantage of the goldfields, we ought not reasonably to expect anything like opposition from the people living on the goldfields to that which will seriously affect or mar the interests of other portions of the colony. It was not as if federation would benefit the labourers, or the industries on the goldfields—the mining industry or any other industry. We know perfectly well that these industries will not benefit by federation in any way. Living will not be made cheaper; wages must fall, because federation will check and mar all the most important industries in the colony; it will check land settlement and prevent people coming here and settling on the soil. The very idea of federation has caused a serious stoppage in that respect now. People are not coming here in large numbers to settle on the land like they did a few years ago, or even last year. This shows that the very thought of federation is not having a very desirable effect, and can it be said that any one with common sense would like to rush into an industry here in which very soon he would have to compete with the other colonies, when we know, for a great num-

ber of years, the industries of the other colonies have been able to supply more than the demand. We know that goods can be conveyed from the other colonies to this colony cheaper than we can convey produce from one part of this colony to another by rail. This is a very strong point, and I think that anyone who studies the interests of the colony should not lose sight of it. Touching upon the advantages we have all assisted to extend to the goldfields, I would like to bring under the notice of the House the amount which has been expended during the last four years in promoting their advancement in the numerous ways in which they have been assisted. The sum amounts to nearly four millions, the figures I have being £3,096,397, without any interest; and I think this does not include hospital services, postal and telegraph services, and education.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Nor rolling-stock.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: No, nor the rolling-stock for the railways; therefore it shows the Government and Parliament have in every possible way assisted the goldfields in promoting their development, and in giving them everything desirable in order to promote their welfare; consequently we should receive some consideration from them, and not advocacy of a measure likely to crush the industries of the colony. This is the way I would like to see it put to the members for the goldfields.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is no use putting anything to them.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I would like to see it put that way to the members for the goldfields and those places in which there is a larger population than in other parts of the colony. We know there is not a single part of the colony that can boast of the same amount of population as Kalgoorlie. People have been attracted to Kalgoorlie by the fact that more gold has been discovered there than in any of the other parts of the colony; but it does not show there are no other parts of the colony which may be as rich and encouraging even as Kalgoorlie. We know perfectly well there are numerous other industries in the colony which are undeveloped, and in the future some of the districts may become as thickly populated as Kalgoorlie is

at present. It is unfair and most unreasonable in the interests of the colony to deal with everything entirely on the basis of population, and I think everyone with common sense and reason should admit it ought not to be done. Every part of the colony deserves a fair amount of consideration, and though our industries are not fully developed and we have not the same amount of population in the country now as we expect in the future, yet we have good reason to expect advancement in almost every way. We have our timber, our minerals, our agricultural resources, and innumerable industries which, when we have the population here to encourage production, will cause the colony to advance rapidly, and make it as desirable a place to live in as any part of the world. But this will not be done if we enter into competition with the other colonies, where industries have been bolstered up from the first. As Mr. Crowder yesterday pointed out, there is not a single industry in the other colonies that has not been more supported than any industry in Western Australia. Look at the amount expended in the shape of bonuses, and also at the other support given. Even when they have had bad seasons the agriculturists have been provided with seed wheat by the Government. Has the same consideration been extended to our farmers here as has been given to the farmers in the other colonies? No; nothing at all like it. I think the fate of the late Premiers of the other colonies cannot be very encouraging to those who are such firm advocates of federation, for it seems to me they have been going out of office one after the other, and that there will not be left in power after federation is in full swing a single Premier who helped to draw up this Bill. It appears to me to be most extraordinary and unreasonable to think that we can obtain any advantage by being associated with a Government that will cost Australia over eleven millions, when at the same time we shall have to bear the cost of our present Government. How can we obtain any advantage by having to pay an enormous sum in addition to what we pay now? Where the benefits are to be derived from I cannot see. We can improve our own Government, and I firmly believe in the words of Pope—I

think Mr. Briggs will say I am right in attributing the quotation to that poet—

For forms of government let fools contest :
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.

It appears to me that the Federal Government will be a most complicated and expensive form of government, and that it will take a considerable length of time to develop it into what it ought to be. Instead of this being a declaration of independence in the colonies, I think it will be like preventing the colonies from having that assistance from the mother country which has hitherto been given. I do not think we desire that to be the case, and I do not see how we can benefit by it. I think we must ever look to the British Empire for assistance, for defence, and for that support in times of need which she always would be ready to extend to us; and to do so we must always be one of her tributaries. It is unnecessary for me to deal further with the subject. I am sure that all anyone in this House can say will have little influence with hon. members. I wish to say that I shall vote for the motion brought before the House by Mr. Whitcombe.

At 6:25 the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): I do not intend to address the House at any length by discussing the abstract question of federation or non-federation, because that has already been debated, I think, to the fullest extent that anybody could possibly require in this House. But I only intend to say a few words to explain the attitude which I took up in supporting the motion of the Colonial Secretary. The position is that I am anxious that in one way or another the Bill as amended by the Premiers should go before the people, and that the people should have an opportunity of voting on that Bill. Now, this House in its wisdom has seen fit to resolve that the Bill as amended by the Premiers shall not go to the people alone, and the only alternative that I have is to accept the message—that is practically what it amounts to—which has been sent up to us from another place, and to agree to and to cordially support the proposal

that both the Bill as amended by the Premiers and the Bill as amended by the Joint Select Committee of this Parliament should go to the people. The people will then be able to exercise their discretion, and all I have ever asked for is that the people should exercise their discretion. If they wish they can vote for the one Bill, or for the other Bill, or for no Bill at all: in any case, they will have had the opportunity given them of voting in one of the three directions; and as I said before, if I cannot attain what I believe is best for the people, I am prepared to take the second-best, and for that reason I intend to support the amendment of the Colonial Secretary.

HON. H. LUKIN (East): I should like to say a few more words on this important question; but, like Mr. Matheson, I intend to be brief. I am opposed to the dual issue, proposed by the Colonial Secretary, being placed before the people, because as one who is opposed to federation I regard that as an unfair method. It will mean a split in the votes, and on one side only; and we all know how, at an ordinary election, such voting is always fatal to the side which splits. I am very sorry to see that certain hon. members who are recognised leaders, and who inside the House, and some of them outside, have said they are opposed to the measure going to the people, have not the courage of their opinions, and are going to kill the motion by a side issue. That may be diplomatic, but it is not straight, and it is not honest. Mr. Crowder last night made a very strong and able speech against federation, dealing with the whole question from beginning to end in a lengthy and painstaking manner; and after proving down to the ground that federation would be against the best interests of the colony, he concluded by virtually saying he was going to vote for federation by voting for the amendment of the Colonial Secretary. I cannot understand a member taking up a position of that kind, and I do not know how he reconciles it with his conscience. He will not deceive the people, who will be quick to recognise that he is only trying to defeat the motion by a side issue; and I can assure hon. members, who are adopting a similar course, that their action will not add to the prestige of the House.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): I cannot let this important question pass without making some further remarks, although I suppose I have said quite enough already. I was called upon rather unexpectedly the other night to discuss the matter, and I think I fully dealt with the question of federation, so far as it affects Western Australia. I have been told this evening that I cannot look at this matter from a broad point of view because I am too narrow-minded; but, like the hon. member who expressed that opinion, I am here to do my duty to my constituents and to the country generally, and I am not afraid to give my voice and vote notwithstanding what may be said about me. I am not like some hon. members who speak strongly one way, both inside and outside the House, and then announce their intention of voting another; and those who are guilty of this sort of conduct must be forgetting their duties as members of the House, because we are here to stop hasty legislation, and ought to have the courage of our opinions. In our opposition to federation, we have a precedent in New South Wales, where the leader of the Government found it necessary to pack the Upper House before it was possible to pass the Federal Bill; but here, thank goodness, we are an elected House, with power to deal with this question as we like, and our numbers cannot be packed. This little colony may be despised by politicians elsewhere, but the fact remains that this House is elective, and we shall be quite within our constitutional rights if we throw out the Federal Bill. It may be said, of course, that if we reject the measure now, it may not come back from the Legislative Assembly in time to be dealt with this session; but I see no occasion for hurry, because, if the people want federation, and it is necessary that the measure should be returned to this House and be carried, the Commonwealth will admit this colony on the same conditions as are now offered. If the other colonies should not be willing, under the circumstances, to admit Western Australia as an original State, the federal spirit is not worth consideration. The hon. members who are going to vote for Mr. Whitcombe's motion are not afraid to act up to their opinions, and are quite prepared to take the onus of their action.

We have been abused as much as public men can well be abused, but that will not affect our attitude towards federation. It has often been said by the Premier of this colony that in order to find out the stuff a man is made of, the best plan is to get him into Parliament, and the debates on this question are a strong proof of the soundness of that opinion. Mr. Crowder's explanation of his attitude is scarcely worth notice, because after talking two hours, and using every argument possible against the Federal Bill, and abusing the people who advocate federation, he concluded by announcing his intention of voting for the double issue being placed before the people. The whole question has been thoroughly debated, and if we spoke for ever, it would be impossible to change the opinion of hon. members; but I must say that to place this question before the country in the way proposed, is not taking the proper constitutional course; because we ought to vote straight on the question, and, if necessary, let the resolution be sent back. It has been intimated by Mr. Loton that in the event of Mr. Whitcombe's motion being defeated, there will be another amendment; and I think the hon. member ought to have gone farther, and given us some information as to what the drift of that amendment is likely to be.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I think I indicated that as clearly as possible.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Another amendment will only mean another debate, and, therefore, it is no use taking up time now. I intend to support the motion by Mr. Whitcombe as the most sensible position we can take up in this matter. If we vote against the Bill going to the people now, federation can come up for consideration at some future time. We should take no half measures. We are told that the Premiers of the other colonies will not agree to our amendments. There have been telegrams sent by the Premier of this colony to the Premiers of the other colonies about this matter, and the Premiers of the other colonies say that they are not going to give in. What is leaking out now? What has been said in the Houses of Parliament during the last day or two? It is pretty well understood that the Premiers are going to hold another con-

ference, and give us pretty well what we ask.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : They cannot give you anything.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : Is the hon. member an authority on that ? The hon. member has the audacity to tell us that the Premiers of the other colonies have not the power. He knows what he says is incorrect. It is a misstatement which he is trying to make hon. members believe. We are not going to be led by such a statement as that ; we are not going to be led blindly into the depths of the gulf. I think the hon. member (Mr. Matheson) must have a little Irish blood in his veins. It is very hard for him to keep in his seat sometimes, even when hon. members agree with him, and I find that by sitting next to this hot Irish peppery member, he is beginning to excite me. What are the hon. member's statements worth ? The hon. member is trying to make us believe that the Premiers of the other colonies cannot agree to any alterations in this Bill. The six Premiers took upon themselves, without consulting the people, to alter the Bill. Now these Premiers are being turned out one by one, and I hope our Premier will be treated in the same way : it is what he deserves. Hon. members have quoted history to us, but we should consider what is taking place in the world to-day. It is far better than what has taken place hundreds of years ago. I hope hon. members will not change their minds like some hon. members have done over the Constitution Bill. Some hon. members changed their views three or four times ; and one hon. member, who quoted figures to us the other night on the Constitution Bill, I call a political dunce. He is an educated member, but he has changed his opinions and voted two or three ways. That hon. member is an out-and-out federationist, and is not worthy of consideration.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : Who is the gentleman ?

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Mr. Briggs.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : We have been called ignorant, bucolic country members, but I do not think we change our views like some other hon. members do. These members say they have made mistakes : do not let us make a mistake on this serious matter to-night. I have the interests of the colony at heart. I could quote

Shakespeare : I do not know whether I could quote the exact words.

HON. J. W. HACKETT : Try.

HON. G. R. BURGESS : I will ; I am not afraid to quote it to hon. members :

Be just, and fear not :

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's.

Let hon. members read what is written on the wall before they accuse other members ; let them take what is written in the Book of Daniel, "weighed in the balances and found wanting." We are here to do our duty, and we are not afraid to do it. I should not be afraid to go before the people on the goldfields to-morrow and give them my opinions on this matter. I am never afraid wherever I speak. I think that some of the remarks which have been made in this House are anything but creditable to members. We should not try to alienate the feelings of the people from us, but we should try and give them their just rights.

HON. W. T. LOTON : But you will not give them a chance to vote.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : We will not give them a chance to vote on a matter like this, when they were in an excited state. The hon. member (Mr. Loton) likes to take a different view from other hon. members very often. He told us to-night to think of the people on the goldfields who wished to get their wives and their families over here ; while at the present time they are keeping them in another place. Will the hon. member's arguments stand looking into ? Is it not to the benefit of the country that we should keep the money in the country ? We are giving the people on the goldfields a water scheme which is to cost millions of money : will that not induce miners to bring their families here ? But are members going to give away our revenue ? If they do so, how are we going to carry out these great works ? If we once join this federation, we cannot go back again ; and if our revenue is sacrificed, how are we going to carry out our public works ? I believe another amendment is going to be proposed, but the hon. member who hinted at it had not the courage to state what it was, right out. Some members wish to shield themselves behind a side issue. That hon.

member said that only propertied men should vote on this matter.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I did not say anything of the kind. The hon. member should not misrepresent.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I thought the hon. member said that property owners should vote; but the point is not worth disputing. We have been told that it is the chaff and flour that country members are anxious about, but I take a broader view than that, and Mr. Matheson heard me speak at the Producers' Conference on this matter. Can any member deny that nearly all our revenue will be swept away with intercolonial free-trade? All our goods will be imported from the other colonies; our spirits and wine will be imported.

HON. W. T. LOTON: There will be an excise duty on them.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But are we going to get that?

HON. W. T. LOTON: Yes; because it will be paid here.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How much?

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not know; perhaps 10s.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about the £5 a ton duty on sugar?

HON. W. T. LOTON: The people will have to pay that duty.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member says we shall get an excise duty on spirits, but there is not an excise duty on everything. The other colonies are in such a position that they can produce almost everything they desire. It has been pointed out by leading merchants here that they would sooner get their goods from England than from the other colonies; but, with intercolonial free-trade, they will have to get their goods from places so that they will be able to sell cheaply. Merchants will have to buy cheap goods and get quicker returns; they are not going to send to England, although they will not be able to get as good an article in the other colonies. Merchants will have to buy inferior articles from the other colonies, and then our revenue will be swept away. It is not importations of chaff and flour that we are afraid of. We take a broader view of things than that. In a large country like this, we want every penny we can get. And although we shall have

the extra revenue from the dividend duty, we shall want every penny so as to pay the interest on the money obtained to carry out our public works. I should like to ask hon. members who are supporting this, where they are going to get direct taxation from?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Off your land.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Oh, yes; that would not take them long. They would soon have the land. People in towns would have to pay direct taxation as well as country people. What is the position now? There was a rise in value during the boom time, but what is it at the present time? The other evening I met in the train a large landowner who was also a house owner in Perth, and we were talking about different things. He stated that his house had gone down in value, and that now it was difficult to get 15s. a week for a good cottage with five or six rooms. A member who has a large amount of house property here told me the same. We know there is an enormous amount of taxation. Every one is crying out about it, and it is almost impossible to pay it. If we have direct taxation, who will have to bear it? Are you going to exempt the masses Mr. Loton talks about? They will have to pay taxation on every house they possess. It is no use confining it to landowners. Every landowner will have to pay according to the value of his land, and not according to the acreage. We want the masses here, and I hope no hon. member is narrow-minded enough to try to keep them away. I repeat that we want population, and I ask, is federation going to give it to us? The hon. member gave us a speech in which he quoted statistics. He stated that settlement had increased fourfold, and that with federation it would increase four times more; but since federation has been mooted in this colony land settlement has decreased, the quantity of land taken up not being anything equal to what it was in previous years. This will show that the statements made were not in accordance with facts, and if federation is brought on by members, let it be done by proper constitutional procedure, and let them bear the brunt of it. Having made these few remarks I do not think it is of any use to speak further, because hon.

members want to get the question settled to-night. I shall vote for the motion of Mr. Whitcombe.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (in reply) : In replying to the debate on this motion I do not propose to take up more time than is necessary to draw together to a certain extent some of the arguments which have been used, and to show why I think members should take the course I ask them to adopt. We have had a very great deal that is old, and some that is new, including what Mr. Briggs would call laborious efforts, displayed to us through the medium of his somewhat laborious address. The hon. member undertook in the first instance to show that the Parliament of Western Australia had the constitutional power to provide for a referendum being taken on this question, but throughout the whole of his speech he failed to point out anything more than that in a Bill or on Act called the Australasian Enabling Act there was a certain power which, within a limited time, could be exercised by this Parliament or other Parliaments of Australasia. Although this might have been urged as a precedent, it was not, except by Mr. Briggs, and I do not think it is a sufficient precedent to authorise us to wander into the difficult path of making new precedents to suit particular cases. Mr. Briggs is also the only member who during this debate has endeavoured to touch upon the disadvantages of delay as one of the grounds why this Bill should be referred to the people, and why it is proposed federation should be entered upon immediately. Although he gave us the heads of the disadvantages, so far as I could hear he stated no reasons, and adduced no arguments, as to how those disadvantages, if any, would affect the colony. The only one he tried to treat with was the financial question. I should like to urge upon hon. members that the arguments of Mr. Briggs in his address on the financial question may be summed up thus: that if federation is refused in this colony we shall not be able to borrow with the same ease as in the past, the ground for that being that if the Federal Parliament and the Western Australian Parliament are in the market at the same time, the Western Australian Parliament, being the weaker power, will be necessarily neglected. But I do not think there is

anything in that argument. I fail to see that is any reason why the amendment should be pushed forward, and the Bill immediately referred to the people, or why the colony should immediately think of going in for federation. In the past we have been in the same position in regard to the Eastern colonies collectively as we shall be if we do not federate. If we are in a sound financial position we shall always be able to obtain as much money as we want to be expended on remunerative works. We shall have no difficulty in borrowing money from the London market as long as we have reasonable prospects of paying it, no matter who is against us. The mere fact of the Federal Parliament being against us will make no difference. There might be some difficulty raised, if the financial advisers of the Commonwealth were to exercise themselves against this colony when a loan was applied for; but I do not think that influence would seriously affect us, if we were in such a position as to justify us to go into the London market. I hope, however, we shall not be asked to do so for some years to come. One point touched upon by other hon. members was the question of defence. I look upon the advocacy of federation for the purposes of defence as applied to this colony as based upon sentiment, and the idea is too chimerical for it to be safe for us to entertain it. Mr. Jenkins, who dealt in a general way with this, in his enthusiasm on the subject of federation appears to have lost sight altogether of the motion we are discussing, and to be going entirely upon this sentiment, or this disaffection, which has been created between the electors of his province and the people on the coast. If he had considered the motion immediately before the House, he would have seen that it is to the effect that it is inadvisable at present that the Bill should be submitted to the people. It is based on the ground that this House has no constitutional right to submit the question of federation to the referendum. He is a member of one of the learned professions, but neither he nor any other member of the House who has been opposing the motion has thought fit to try to show us that in any one respect there is a constitutional right vested in the Parliament of Western Australia to enter into such an arrangement as that of

proceeding to a referendum upon a question, no matter of how great importance it may be. I think that whatever hon. members may say—and some have said it is expedient that this thing should be done—they have shown no way in which it can be done constitutionally, and until they can show that, I do not think they are justified in asking us to take the step which the mover of the amendment has asked us to take. I do not agree with the hon. member (Mr. Jenkins) in the remark that this is the only colony where the people have been insulted; because it is not a question of insult, and I think he is looking at the question from quite an improper point of view when he suggests that any action which may be taken by the Parliament of this colony is an insult to the people living in it; not necessarily the people who elected him or the representatives of this House, but the people who are asking that we should adopt a new and strange procedure. No sufficient argument or statement has been brought forward to this Council to show that the people who ask for this new and strange procedure to be adopted are entitled to ask for it. I contend, and I think with considerable amount of right, that it is only electors who are entitled to ask that we shall take any proceedings at all. They are the only people who are really entitled to approach Parliament with the same view as was expressed in the petition which was brought before us. At any rate they are the only people who are entitled to demand that we shall accede to it by creating this new procedure, and I think it has not been shown that there are more than two electors who signed the petition presented, and the only evidence we have of those two having signed it consists of side statements made by themselves. Then we have a threat held out to us by a representative of the goldfields province, Mr. Jenkins himself, that, if the Council support or carry the motion now before us, the disaffection at present existing between the coast and his province will be greatly increased. Is that intended, I wonder, as a threat? Does he expect that the Council are going to be coerced by a threat, if it is a threat, in that way? If it is intended as a threat, why did he not say so at once?

HON. A. G. JENKINS: If you have not sufficient intelligence to understand it, perhaps other hon. members have.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: In other cases in which a threat has been used, people have had the courage to say so.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: I do not think the hon. member is right in saying I used any threat. I made no threat. I simply asserted that I thought it was likely to cause disaffection on the goldfields. I do not think that was a threat to the House.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I am not aware I made a statement to the effect that the hon. member had uttered a threat. I asked whether the statement he made was to be taken as a threat, and said that, as far as I could judge, it might be taken as a threat, although not made with the courage one might expect from a member representing such a large province. We are told that people have a right, but we are not told where the right comes from. Mr. Hackett says he does not think it lies with Parliament to deny the people a vote upon the question; but hon. members do not say where the right comes from, nor do they show that we have any power to grant them that right of voting in the present circumstances of the colony, and with the Parliament and the Constitution standing as at present. Until it is shown to me—or at any rate until hon. members make some attempt to show me—that there is such a right, I do not see how I can depart from the position I have already taken up, which is that we have no constitutional power to pass the amended motion or an enabling Bill so that this matter may be sent to a referendum of the people. In the absence of that power we should be doing wrong to Parliament, as a whole, and to the country, by taking upon ourselves that authority which we do not possess. Before going to a division upon this matter I would like to say—though I do not wish to utter anything which may offend or hurt the feelings of any hon. member who has spoken on this question—that I have been disappointed by finding that hon. members who hold strong views on the subject of federation, and think that federation, as one hon. member says, will bring ruin to the colony, will still vote that the question should be submitted to the people. With those

hon. members apparently, it is not a question of whether there is or is not a right to send it to the people; but holding the view that federation would be ruinous to the colony of Western Australia, they still think it compatible with their duty as legislators to propose that the Bill be sent to the people with the off-chance that it may be carried, to the ruin of the colony in which those hon. members have chosen to take up their residence. I am surprised that it should be so, and I appeal to those hon. members to take a higher view of their political duties. Holding views of the kind I have mentioned they should put every other question out of sight except the one consideration—the good of the colony in which they are living. They should sink any advantage which they may hope to gain from taking the one course, or any disadvantage which they think may come upon them through taking the other; and they should follow their own reason and their own intelligence, and should come to the conclusion, if they can, that this is a dangerous measure to the colony: they should have the courage to throw aside all other considerations, and to vote for the motion which I have tabled in this matter, to keep the Bill from the people regardless of all consequences. If these are their views, I would implore hon. members to take that course. For myself, I have already said, holding the views I do, it is my duty to vote for the motion now before the House; and I think every hon. member should do the same who holds like views on the subject. We have been told at different times that, if the referendum be not granted by this Parliament, there will be all sorts of trouble—there will be revolution, separation, and one does not know what else. Some people go so far as to say the outcome may be the sweeping away or the remodelling of Parliament as at present constituted. Even if any of these evils should result, even if the loss of the Eastern goldfields of this colony should be the immediate consequence of a referendum on a Federal Bill being denied to the people, I would go so far as to say—let it be refused. I would ask every hon. member who holds the view that the granting of the referendum means ruin to the colony, or means the first step

towards possible ruin to the colony, even to go so far as to risk the loss of the wealthiest portion of the colony rather than to allow ruin to come to the rest of it. The rest of the colony went on very well—slowly, perhaps, and in a small way—before the goldfields were discovered; and there is no reason why the rest of the colony should not get on just as well in the future, even if those wealthy portions of the colony were removed from it. I will go so far as to risk the loss—not that I think that the risk is serious; but I shall take the risk in order to avert that ruin which, as we are given to understand by those members who have studied this Bill, is impending in the event of this Bill being adopted. I do not think personal considerations should influence any hon. member in the matter; and finally, I would ask those hon. members who have expressed their intention of voting for the amendment of the Colonial Secretary for submitting these two Bills to a referendum, to reconsider that decision, and when the division bell rings, to give their votes in accordance with their expressed opinions on the subject of federation, and their rightly expressed dread of the effects of the Bill should it be adopted. I would ask them to prevent this Bill from going now, at all events, to a popular vote, and to allow it to go to the country in the proper constitutional way on the dissolution or the expiration of the present Parliament. In a matter of this magnitude we should move constitutionally. We know that this Chamber will not be dissolved at the same time as the other House, for this Chamber does not then go for re-election; but after the dissolution in another place and the re-election of its members, if there be a decided opinion in that House that federation should be adopted by this colony, no doubt this Chamber will be directed to a certain extent, and influenced to a large extent, by that expression of opinion of the electorates, and doubtless the necessary steps will be taken to carry that opinion into effect.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That does not follow.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It does not follow, but we must do so. There is no case known, I think—and here I am open to correction—where a Lower House has come back from a general election with a

distinct mandate from the constituencies, and where such mandate has not been observed and followed, and where proper steps have not been taken by the non-elective Chamber to have that mandate carried into effect.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There are heaps of instances.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: There may be instances elsewhere, but I do not think we can find one here.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The colony has not lasted long enough.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We may not have lived long enough for that, but I do not think such a thing will happen in this colony. I think in this House as at present constituted, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two members of whom the last interjector may be one, we shall find that we shall follow the constitutional course I have indicated. I do not propose to take up any further time; I hope we shall be able to get to a favourable division to-night on this question, and to clear it once and for all from the Notice Paper. I shall conclude by asking not only those hon. members who have great interests assailed by the proposal of the Colonial Secretary, but also the hon. members who voted against the Premiers' Bill, as it is called, being submitted to the people, to consider the position and to be consistent with that vote by voting for the motion now before the House.

Amended motion (Mr. Whitcombe's amendment being now the substantive motion) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes... .. 7

Noes... .. 9

Majority against... .. 2

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. R. G. Burgess	Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. H. Lukin	Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. E. McClarty	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. J. E. Richardson	Hon. W. T. Loton
Hon. F. Whitcombe	Hon. A. T. Matheson
Hon. W. Spencer (Teller).	Hon. G. Randell
	Hon. F. M. Stone
	Hon. H. J. Saunders (Teller).

Amended motion thus negatived.

[The Colonial Secretary's amendment (to refer both Bills to the people) now became the question before the House.]

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): I have an amendment to move on the

Colonial Secretary's motion, namely that all the words after "that" be struck out, with a view of inserting the following words:

(1) This House considers it desirable that the Commonwealth Bill, with the amendments of the Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, should be submitted to the electors; and (2) that in the opinion of this House, before the submission of the Commonwealth Bill to the electors, the Government should confer with the Governments of the Eastern colonies with a view of securing the adoption of those amendments in the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.

I trust I shall not detain the House very long. That is a promise which hon. members are rather in the habit of giving, and rather in the habit of breaking. However, I shall endeavour to be honest, at all events on this occasion, and largely because the subject—and I say it with the greatest sincerity—has been almost exhausted by the very able debating which has taken place in this House. And foremost amongst the speeches in those debates I may single out that of my friend Mr. Crowder as decidedly the best speech he has yet made, one which covers the whole ground, which presents to us the entire question, at all events from his point of view, and which was a thoroughly convincing argument for everyone in this House, except, apparently for the hon. member himself. I think everybody felt he had made out an almost unanswerable case for voting in a way directly opposite to the way in which Mr. Crowder voted. As a partner with him, perhaps I may couple the Colonial Secretary, who also made a most admirable and convincing speech and nearly robbed me of the vote I intend to give against him on this motion, and almost persuaded me against my will that he was right. But when we came to a division, I was astounded to find that he, along with Mr. Crowder—[A MEMBER: They "ratted"]—voted against their own arguments, and, I assume, against their own convictions. Just to draw the attention of the House for a moment to the question as it stands at present, I may point out that we have already decided that one Bill, that is, the Bill as amended by the Premiers' Conference, and carried, I believe, by an impulsive agitation in the Eastern colonies—

HON. W. T. LOTON: A good word.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Carried by a vote which, I am strongly of opinion, would have shown a very different result if more time had been given for reflection; and if the question were again referred to the electors in those colonies, much more would be said against it, and it would command very much less support than it has received. We have agreed that the Bill as amended by the Premiers in conference should not be submitted to the people of Western Australia, a decision with which I heartily concur, and which needs no words of mine to further recommend it to the approval of the House and of the country. We have gone a step further, and agreed that federation, in some shape or another, shall be submitted to the vote of the electors, and the Colonial Secretary has now a motion before the House to the effect that the two Bills be referred, to which I have moved an amendment that only one Bill be submitted, and that not the Bill we have already rejected — because that follows as a matter of necessary reasoning—but the Bill which was amended by the Premiers and afterwards amended by the Joint Select Committee, and which alone remains now to be voted on. That is the position; and I am addressing myself to the question whether the two Bills shall be sent to the country, or only one. I may point out, and I will not delay the House by dwelling on it, that the Colonial Secretary's motion is most confusing. I know the proposal comes to us indorsed with the *imprimatur* of another place, but I am wholly at a loss to understand how a straight-out vote on federation, or how the voice of the electors can be obtained under the motion of the Colonial Secretary. I assume three questions will be put to the electors—First, "Are you in favour of federation?" Secondly, "If you are in favour of federation, are you in favour of the Premiers' Bill?" Thirdly, "Or are you in favour of the Select Committee's Bill?" But these questions do not exhaust the possibilities of the situation. There yet remain two or three other questions, of which the most important is whether the electors are in favour of federation, but prefer some measure other than either of the two Bills submitted. In fact, there will be such a confused mass of cross-voting, that I am absolutely certain it will not

be possible to get a clear and well-defined decision of the electors on the question, while it is perfectly possible we may obtain the verdict of the minority voiced through an apparent majority. I hope the Colonial Secretary will address himself to this point in his reply, and first of all tell us whether he means the question, when submitted to the people, to be carried by an absolute majority; and it is no secret, I think, that Mr. Crowder favours a two-thirds or three-fourths majority. The Colonial Secretary might also tell us whether the majority shall be on the first, the second, or the third question, or two of the questions, or all of them, or none of them; and further, whether he proposes to make provision in the voting paper for some other vote than the vote on the two Bills, because it is conceivable there may be a majority of the electors who desire neither Bill, and who yet desire federation with amendments of their own. If we are going in for amendments, we must allow the electors a voice in saying whether they disapprove of our amendments, why they disapprove, and what other amendments they would prefer. In fact, the question as submitted by the Colonial Secretary bristles with so many difficulties and so much confusion and complication, as, on that ground alone, to afford sufficient reason for hon. members expunging it altogether, and proceeding with the consideration of the proposal I have put before them. My opinion is that, under certain circumstances and conditions, guarded in certain ways by the Legislative Council, it is not only allowable and advisable for us to submit the question to the people, but it approaches nearer to a duty. The advantages of federation I shall deal with in a few minutes; but first I desire to draw the attention of the House to a good deal that has been said here, and more that has been said outside, with regard to the attitude and position of Parliament in this respect. It has been claimed that Parliament with regard to the so-called referendum, should be practically effaced, and that our duty is no more than to be a sort of conduit pipe or a channel to convey the question to the electors.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is this Parliament.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Yes; but this is a subsisting and continuing House.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: With no mandate.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I will not argue the constitutional question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I merely point out that is what we say.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I will not discuss the question, because it would lead me into a lengthy conversation with the hon. member. What I desire to point out is that we in this House, and also the members in another place, have had something entrusted to us, something placed in our hands which we cannot ignore. First of all there is our duty to the country; first of all our position as a Parliament; first of all our work as a body, composed of the representatives of the entire country. But what is still more to the point in this present matter is that the question of federation is far from being of the character represented by Mr. Matheson and by a large party outside the walls of this Chamber. This question has been specially singled out by legislation as one to be kept within the purview of Parliament. At no point has Parliament abandoned grasp of this question, but care has been taken all along to say that primarily it is a constitutional question with which Parliament should deal, and after dealing, refer it to the electors for final decision. But it is hardly necessary to go into that question. So jealous and so careful has Parliament been on this point, that even the appointment of the Convention delegates was not made a matter of popular election. The delegates were the representatives of the representatives of the people; and beyond that, Parliament inserted special words in the Enabling Act— which Act is now extinct, but the spirit of which still survives, unless I mistake the temper of the Legislative Council—declaring that the question of federation, before being referred to the people, should be constitutionally dealt with in both Houses. Of course, to a large extent, that is the attitude of the other colonies also, because even the Premiers, after deciding questions unconstitutionally and perhaps illegally, did not dare to send those questions to the people without, in the first instance, obtaining the sanction

of Parliament. Therefore I claim to be partially following the example of the Eastern colonies, but still more strongly following the declaration of this Parliament, made not once but on many occasions, that it is our duty to hold this question in our grasp until we are satisfied it is for the good of the country that it should be submitted to the people; and once we are satisfied on that point, we must take care that the verdict of the country is given under conditions which will redound to the benefit of Western Australia and to the credit of Parliament. I put this question as clearly and as strongly as I can before the Council, because I, for one, feel I would be wanting in my duty to my constituents if I abrogated the solemn trust they placed in my hands over five years ago, to do my best for the good of the country, according to the utmost of my poor judgment and ability. We are now told that Parliament must be set aside and a higher, superior body take our place; but that doctrine is absolutely unconstitutional. I do not say the fact that it is unconstitutional is a final argument against the referendum, because the word "constitutional" itself varies in these days; and especially under a written as opposed to an unwritten constitution, the word has not the same efficacy and force. The word may mean what is declared by Parliament to be constitutional, and we are now supplicated to pass a law declaring the referendum constitutional. I am now speaking of the immediate case before us and not dealing with the Commonwealth Bill; and I say it is within the competency of Parliament to pass the law asked for, but before we do pass it, we have a right of which we cannot divest ourselves, and it is our duty to see that the power under the Bill shall not be exercised in a way fraught with danger to the highest and permanent interests of the country. We are told that the referendum principle is really the survival of the fittest. Mr. Matheson—

HON. A. MATHESON: I never said that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I never said you did: I said we were told so.

HON. A. MATHESON: You said "Mr. Matheson."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: If Mr. Matheson would only curb his Celtic

enthusiasm and allow me to complete the sentence, he would discover in a moment I was not referring to him. Though Mr. Matheson says very many unwise things, and does things still more unwise, I was not aware he had said anything so absurd as that; but outside we are frequently told that the referendum principle is really a survival of the fittest. Mr. Matheson, if I may be allowed to proceed with the sentence, told us the other night that the sole reason the referendum had fallen into disuse was the difficulty of getting to the place of polling, and that in these days of the post office, the telegraph, the telephone, and other means of communication, that difficulty has been eradicated. There is no doubt the referendum, the plebiscite, the poll of the people, the vote of the mass, or by whatever name the system may be called, fell to the ground owing to its own intrinsic cumbersomeness. It was good enough for a municipality, but when it came to be applied to a people or to a nation, it was found impracticable.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: How about the Scandinavian nation?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We will discuss that question afterwards: it would take much more time than I have at my disposal now. The hon. member must know that the referendum in its present shape has nothing to do with the Scandinavian nation or municipalities.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was not a municipal but a national institution, in Scandinavia.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What period of time does the hon. member refer to?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: About the time of Edgar Atheling.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That was a time, Mr. President, which you were taught about at school and where you had your knowledge drilled into you—I will not say by the cane, because you were too good to deserve the cane—but still it is a long time ago, long before my time at any rate, hundreds of years ago, and I think the hon. member had better cite us some more recent times than that. But that is a point I wish to come to. It is not the survival of the fittest, but it is a revival of what in earlier days was the only possible way of getting a vote and expressing the popular will. It was a revival of that system, the only possible

one, but which at the same time was an imperfect system and was abandoned by all States as they came to a higher point of civilisation. The great objection to the referendum was not because of the physical impossibility of all those entitled to vote to record their vote; it was much higher than that. The referendum was abandoned because it was found that one of the two capital contributions of the Anglo-Saxon race was opposed to it, and those two capital contributions were the representative system and the double chamber system. [Several members left the Chamber.] I am afraid if there were a referendum under Edgar Atheling's system, the Eastern members would have to retire altogether. No doubt they will come back again to vote, and vote solidly against federation. We shall see them again: they are not lost, but gone before. The representative system contains, in the highest degree, those qualifications of responsibility on the man who gives his vote in a deliberative body such as Parliament; the fact that when a man votes, he is thoroughly acquainted with the subject after having heard it threshed out in every detail, and finally the knowledge that he can be called to account for the vote which he gives. It was the superior representative system that did more to abolish the referendum, did more to do away with the vote of the people, a vote given by the crowd under the swaying influence of the moment, under a passion, a fleeting passion, which perhaps may remain for days, perhaps weeks, but still fleeting, which enables a man to vote without being master of his subject, and which at the same time assures him that if he makes a mistake in his vote he will surely be called to account by those who sent him to his office. That is the referendum which is largely the basis of the Commonwealth Bill which is to be used as a familiar implement of the constitution in that Bill, and which we are now asked to accept in place of the constitutional work of Parliament in regard to the question. I am not opposed to it. The adoption of a constitution for the future is a fitting matter to be referred to the people. We should remember this, that it does not do away with Parliament. It is a course which should be applied to such as that of a constitution where the issues are so vast and grave, the consequences so

uncertain, the method so novel; it is one that requires to be examined with the utmost scrutiny by members of Parliament, and I for one contend that I was not elected to abandon our constitutional method and to adopt an unknown system. I received no mandate from my electors on this point. (Several members who had previously gone out, returned to the Chamber.)

THE PRESIDENT: Hon. members must not pass between the Chair and the speaker.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am glad to welcome those members back. I was afraid we had lost them. What I wish to urge on the House is this: the question of the surrender of the Constitution, and the adoption of a new one, is of the furthest-reaching importance. It has been said there are three things about which persons should hesitate, and upon which they should deliberate: a man as to the loss of his honour, a woman as to the loss of her chastity, and a nation as to the loss of its independence. It is a duty which cannot be set aside, to see how far this new measure goes in destroying our rights of self-government, and in substituting for them the will of another. I claim that I shall be at liberty to examine into the question, and to give my vote for or against; if it is agreed that the Bill shall go to the people, to do my best in moulding that Bill so as to be in the best interests of the community at large. With regard to federation, if this Bill is carried—I mean the Bill of the Premiers—can anyone suppose it will be a lasting settlement of the question in this colony? Members are fond of protesting, both in the House and out of it, that if federation is not carried, a lasting unrest will be the consequence. That may be so. If federation is carried on terms repugnant to the rest of the community, do hon. members suppose that the unrest will disappear and absolute acquiescence in the new state of things take place.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You will find you are mistaken as to your anticipations.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member's friends may find themselves mistaken also. Looking at the majority in this House who are supposed to speak the voice of the people and if they do not, hon. members can be called to

account at the next election when they have to render their account—does the hon. member (Mr. Matheson) suppose a majority of the people are prepared to sit down quietly under such terms as those of the Premiers' Bill. The hon. member knows they are not. I venture to say, if it comes about that the Bill is carried in its unaltered and unchanged state, the foremost to raise the flag of revolt, those who will lead the van of discontent will be the men who have returned the hon. gentleman to Parliament. Nobody can for a moment deny—studying the history of the goldfields during the last three years—that if they want leaders in rebelling against the constitution, they will find them on the eastern goldfields. If the Bill is carried, it seems to me that it will divide the colony into two hostile camps. Far better that Mr. Whitcombe's motion were carried, and federation postponed to a day very distant.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Why did you not vote for it?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Because I trust to the judgment of this House and the community to consent to send a Bill properly safeguarded to the people, and to obtain the vote of the people on it. Better by far stay as we are than have this colony broken up into a number of warring sections, each jealous of the other, each prepared to think the other trying to worst it; and a majority of the population along the coast believing that a hostile measure has been forced upon them by a vote unfriendly to themselves, and by the unfriendly coercion of the Eastern colonies. What I desire is that the colony shall go into the federation by practically a unanimous vote: a vote so divided as that which was taken in New South Wales or Queensland cannot lead to prosperity, but would sow the seed of lasting discord, and do more harm to us than all the federations under the most favourable circumstances could be supposed to confer. The disadvantages of federation have been so largely descanted upon by my friend Mr. Crowder and others, that it is unnecessary for me to take up the time in referring to them at greater length. But I will just point out in a few words that both financially and politically we shall be serious losers. As to the finances, everybody knows that

with a million square miles to develop, we need every pound of revenue we can collect: the task is almost beyond our resources, and any slight diminution may lead not only to suffering in the colony itself, but will go further. It would compel us to treat the undeveloped parts of the colony as territory practically outside our dominion, and leave it to take care of itself until more prosperous days shine. Yet we are asked to consent to do more, which, by the admission of all who are acquainted with it, involves a loss of £300,000 a year, a loss, in the circumstances, so serious that it practically amounts to stopping all improvements in the colony for years to come. Mr. Matheson has a reply ready: he says, reduce public works, have fewer public works. That is the thing of all others we cannot do; we dare not do. If we do it, far better to divide the North, or the East, from the rest of the colony; leave them to themselves, and confine ourselves to a more manageable territory.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You have done it already; you have reduced public works.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not to the extent the hon. member desires. The hon. member said a revenue of two millions was ample for the colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I maintain that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We know that two millions of money mean an absolute cessation of public works in Western Australia. Mr. Matheson has not been long enough in this country to know all about this country.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You work on that at present. When you knock off the departments, the Federal Parliament will take over.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No; that is another question altogether. I say that two millions would merely provide for the bare necessity of every-day political life. We are to lose £300,000 a year; and even then we do not know where we are.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Lose half a million.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We are to have a tariff, but no one knows what it will bring in, and we have practically no revenue whatever excepting the tariff, and such as we shall derive from certain licenses and taxes, such as the gold duty.

We have nothing else. Our excise and customs form practically our only liquid revenue, everything else almost being mortgaged to pay for services or expense of collection. That being so, it is utterly impossible to know what the tariff will be.

A MEMBER: We have an idea what it is going to be.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Mr. Matheson and Mr. Leake (who, I believe, hold responsible positions in the federal party) assure us it will be simply a revenue tariff, a very low tariff. In that case we shall be face to face with bankruptcy, and not only we, but none of the other colonies could live for a year. Everyone who has gone into this question has agreed that something like seven millions or eight millions must be raised by customs. If that be so, we shall have what we have at present, less £300,000, and any reduction of that will place us in sore straits. Not only do we not know what tariff will be enforced, but we do not know what the expense of the Commonwealth will be. I challenge contradiction on this point, that the expense of the Commonwealth is an unknown quantity. At the Conventions we had views expressed. I will give a small point. A little sum was set down for the judicature, including the High Court of Australia and other federal Courts; but the main part of the federal judicial work must be carried out by the local benches—that is to say, the benches of the different States. All questions dealing with customs, excise, quarantine, post and telegraphs, and a host of other subjects mentioned in Clause 51 will have to be treated in the State Courts, and yet no provision has been made for the work to be done in those Courts. It is expected that these judges, sheriffs, bailiffs, and every other judicial officer will do the work for nothing, making it a free contribution to the Commonwealth. We may do that—we are a simple people—but I know five colonies that will not agree to it, but will get their “pound of flesh,” and if possible two pounds, those being the four Eastern colonies and Tasmania. No provision whatever has been made for that, and I take it upon myself to say the cost of it will be more than all the other judicial expenses of the

colony. I could go on *ad infinitum*. The way to test this is to take a book so well known as Bryce's "Commonwealth of America," and see how things are provided for. I believe the expense of the Commonwealth Senate and House of Representatives will be double or treble the amount put down. To begin with, nothing is said of travelling mileage. They allow travelling mileage in America, and it was the custom of those who live on the western coast of America to take a long trip by sea. I do not think Western Australians would be so dishonest as that, but they are in this position, that if £400 a year is allowed to the members of the Commonwealth Parliament, men who live in Melbourne and have only to walk across the road will receive the same as those from Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia. Those from Western Australia at all events would probably have to spend their whole salary in getting backwards and forwards, setting aside the fact of the superior cost of living in towns where they are only lodgers instead of permanent residents. Under those circumstances it seems to me that we shall lose money, and we shall certainly have higher taxation, because a multitude of things now admitted free will be taxed. They must be taxed unless the Commonwealth is to sink into an abyss of bankruptcy at once. Not only shall we have all this, but an unknown expense to face, and less money to pay it with, whilst we shall have higher taxation all round. My firm belief is that when the Commonwealth tariff comes to be compared with the tariff we are now living under, it will be found to be from 25 to 50 per cent. higher than our present tariff. The protective party in the Eastern colonies have a vast majority. In Victoria so great is the majority that hardly anyone raises his voice against the protective policy, and in New South Wales, excepting Sydney, the protectionists are in a majority. The protectionists are in a very large majority in South Australia, and such is also the case in Tasmania and Queensland; but certainly there is a feeble remnant of free-traders. Under these circumstances the other colonies will create a tariff to foster their own industries and manufactures, and you can see what the effect would be upon a colony represented by five votes

out of 78. That being so, it seems to me that the financial argument is very strong against our entering into federation at all. Then we come to the political aspect, and the first objection is, as the hon. member has explained, that we shall lose to a large degree our political freedom. In other words, we shall have to give up that which we spent so many years to achieve, and which it was the work of my life in Western Australia to try to obtain, from the day I landed here to the day it was secured—responsible government. I would appeal to this House to say if we have done so badly under the nine years of self-government we have enjoyed, that we should throw aside the good we know of and run into the evil of which we know nothing, but presume a great deal. Let it be understood that the system under which we have advanced will have to be given up, and that we will have to accept in its place one of which we know little, except that our control over it will be reduced to a point so small as to almost be a vanishing one, for in a House comprising 75 or 80 members we shall have only five representatives. I agree with my hon. friend, Mr. Burges, in regard to the Senate, which is always thrown in our teeth, and which has been created, we were told, to protect the weaker States. As left by the Bill of 1891 the Senate was a strong one, but its powers were so weakened, so crippled at the Convention at Melbourne, that it became little more than—to apply words used in relation to another great Senate—the shadow of a great name. It went into the crucible of the Premiers' Conference, and came out so mutilated and reformed that it could hardly be recognised, with its powers shorn and authority so diminished that it hardly dared to call its soul its own. The changes made in the Bill at the Conference of Premiers were entirely in accord with the views of an extreme party, a small minority at the Convention, alterations being made in that which it was never dreamt anybody would dare to alter. The Convention passed its judgment upon the body to which I refer, not once or twice, but several times, and it has come out no longer a Senate, but an Upper House. The aim of the radicals of South Australia and Victoria was to have an Upper House of a weak pattern, of which the nominated Houses

in Australia are only a fitting example. That is the first difficulty, and the next is that this Government is to commit all its powers to the Federal Government. We are to be deprived of this valuable heritage for which we fought hard for many years, and of which we have made so much use since. These powers are to be entrusted to a Government 2,000 miles away, and everybody acquainted with the political arguments as to the representation of distant parts of a community must know that stress is continually laid upon the point that the representatives of those distant districts reside, one may say, in the metropolis, and are therefore as much representatives of the metropolis as of those distant parts. The meaning of that is that they are in touch with what is going on and can bring pressure to bear. The Government consult them, and are aware of their feelings, and in many cases bend to them. But all those advantages must be destroyed with five units from Western Australia going 2,000 miles away and finding themselves in a distant Assembly, without any special means of being in touch with the Government in that Assembly, and absolutely shorn of all support which they might derive from the backing of their own men. Those are serious considerations. And there is yet another point to which reference has not yet been made. Two thousand miles away, where that Government will sit, they will call upon us for the services of eleven men—five to have a real voice in the House of Representatives, and six to have a nominal, shadowy, but grandiose position in the Senate. Where are those eleven men to be obtained? Are we to send our eleven best, our eleven second-best, or our eleven third-best? We should want our first eleven best to carry on our own Government, and our second best to watch them in Opposition and see that they conform to the duties of Government and do not transgress; we should want them to raise their able and eloquent voices whenever the Government made a mistake. We should have to part with our first-best and probably most of our second-best, and what would be the position? I would not complain if these men were in a position to work for us, but they are absolutely robbed of all authority, and all power of speaking with

voices that would be listened to. We may as well be 5,000 miles away as 2,000. The telegraph certainly could cover the distance in a few minutes, but how can you make the feelings of a community pulsate among its members separated from it by a great distance, as the feelings of, say, the people of Victoria will pulsate among the Victorian members who are living in the place?

A MEMBER: There will be salaries.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The salary may be an inducement, and therefore we shall substitute salaried mediocrities, for the best men will have to do work here. We cannot secure many absolutely leisured men with money enough to keep up a certain position of comfort and independence. We cannot provide those men in abundance in this colony. We have men who work in the day-time at their ordinary avocations, and who give the afternoons or evenings to the business of the community. The only ones we can secure are the leisured men, of whom we have so few—leisured, educated, and high-minded men, also men who value £400 a year more than the good of the constituencies they represent, who will lend themselves to every ignoble art to secure the favour of a party. Under the circumstances, politically as well as financially we shall be taking a desperate step if we enter into federation. But while I admit that all these things tend against our admission, I part company with our hon. friends who believe that for this reason we should raise an impenetrable barrier between us and the other colonies. I conceive that under federation we shall lose much, but we shall gain also, though perhaps the losses will be greater than the gains. But against those losses other considerations have to be set, and they are of a much higher and nobler kind. They cannot be shut out when the great question of nationhood comes along for discussion, when the issue before us is whether we shall raise ourselves to a higher political plane than we occupy at the present time, and whether, as citizens and as States, we shall gather round us some of that dignity and some of that glory which pertain to the independent nations of the world.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: All sentimental ideas.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I admit it is sentiment, but sentiment probably rules the world. Sentiment gives rise to great and grand actions, even if it is the ruin of half the world also. For that reason I am prepared to accept the Bill of the Joint Select Committee. That Bill was considered by a committee appointed by this House acting in concert with a committee of the other House. Having sat for a month and taken a large amount of evidence, they came to the conclusion that federation might be entered into, properly guarded and with certain conditions imposed which were not in the Bill of the Premiers. With that opinion I concur, and I am here to-night to support the conclusions of the Select Committee by my voice and by my vote. The four points have been already touched upon which the Joint Select Committee urge as essential conditions for federation if we are to enter it safely; and I shall not go into them at length. I must, however, say just a word or two with regard to the division of the colony, which is one of those conditions, but which I am not disposed to think should be made a vital matter. The Bill provides that as soon as the Parliament of the Commonwealth meet, it shall be their business to divide the colonies, if the Parliament think fit, into several divisions. Victoria is in favour of that step; and I may lay it down as a general rule that whatever Victoria desires, the Commonwealth in time will grant. That was my experience at the four Conventions, and it still remains my conviction.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: "What Manchester does to-day, England will do to-morrow."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They apply the aphorism, "What Manchester does to-day England does to-morrow." The Victorians are the most energetic of all the colonists, the most accomplished in political manœuvring.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There is no doubt about that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They have had years of it, and my short experience has taught me that it requires very heavy odds for any other State successfully to oppose even a semi-united Victoria. Therefore the Victorians will secure that object; we shall have that change unanimously agreed to. But the other con-

ditions proposed by the Joint Committee are very important—those regarding the transcontinental railway, the sliding scale, and the Inter-State Commission. Some few words were thrown at the railway in the course of these debates. To my mind, union without a railway is an absurdity.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Those who spoke against the railway did not want the union.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Yes; I know that; at all events, I believe so. I think my honourable friend has hit it: those who say "no railway" do not want a union; but without that railway we should be simply bound in the federation by the pages of a paper constitution; we should feel that we had no connection, excepting by telegraph or by a long sea route, with our brethren. If that railway, which I desire always to call the union railway, were refused us, we should remain more distant and more widely separated from the other colonies than is America from Europe; for the distance between our capital and the capitals of the Eastern colonies would be greater than that between Paris and New York. But the most serious point is that the great inducement held out in the Bill for joining, namely defence and protection against invasion, would be an impossibility without this railway. Suppose some of these new torpedo boats, one of the new craft of which we have heard so much of late, were to visit these seas in time of war.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The "Holland."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Suppose the "Holland" commanded the coast between Adelaide and Albany: we should be utterly isolated. I do not believe that for years to come the colonies could make any serious attempt to defend themselves; but this I am quite sure, that they never could defend Western Australia in any circumstances, and especially if the one means of communication—the highway of the ocean—were blocked in the way I have described. It seems to me that for commercial reasons, for federal reasons of all kinds, and for military and many other reasons, it is necessary to bridge that 1,000 miles of desert, which is a far more serious obstacle to our entering the federation than aught else that can be mentioned.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: But you are not going for the bridging of it; only for the right to bridge it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member has touched on a point which I shall not refer to again; but I may say concerning it that I suppose these proposals of the Select Committee are suggestions to the Eastern Governments, and that the wording and phrasing have yet to be decided on. But I am quite with my friend that the word "authorise" is not altogether satisfactory, and does not at all express what is intended, or what we desire. Passing away from the railway, and coming to the sliding scale, I may say that is an absolute impossibility. Mr. Crowder read a speech of his at the Convention, at which he was the first to point out the mercantile difficulties which lurked under this proposal; and I may say that this proposal for the sliding scale was first brought to me by Mr. Deakin: it was the creation of Mr. Grant, one of the most estimable and amiable delegates to the Convention, a member representing Tasmania. And Mr. Deakin asked me what I thought of it, and I said: "It is impossible and unworkable." The sliding scale was proposed; our Premier unfortunately approved of it, and it was carried; and ever since, that sliding scale has been flaunted in our faces as a notable concession to the desires and interests of Western Australia. We do not want it; it certainly does not help our interests; and for this reason: first of all, as the hon. member (Hon. F. T. Crowder) has pointed out, a sliding scale puts every merchant in a difficulty during each succeeding year. We know what are the complications attending the amendment of a tariff; we know how, when changes are in the air, nobody knows what to do or where to turn until it is decided what changes in the tariff shall be made; yet in this case we shall have an amendment of the tariff every year for five years, and the absurdity of the proposal is that it is supposed to benefit the farmers and others who would feel the brunt most. They would be the people who would suffer most severely, and the people who would have to repudiate the tariff soonest. That is one objection to the sliding scale; but another is that this country could not stand it, whether we

considered the interests of the farmer, or the townsman, or the miner. We know we should have a tariff from the Eastern colonies taxing all our free imports, and putting a swingeing duty on every one of them, too; and then we are told that we are to be at liberty to put additional taxes on other articles; but the country would break down under the strain. The farmers in the eastern portions of this colony would not for a moment believe that such a system was for their advantage. They would be the first to say: "Bad as it is, let us reduce the tariff in some directions: let us get rid either of the State or of the federal tariff."

HON. F. T. CROWDER: But you cannot get rid of the federal tariff.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is the very point. We cannot get rid of federal duties; therefore we should have to go to the State and to ask the State to release us from the duties it imposed. And I warn the farmers that we should all have to join against them; that the whole community would rise against the producers and would say: "Let us have, at all events, one set of taxes removed, no matter whether you agriculturists fall to the ground or not"; and we should thus see the farmers ruined.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is what the federalists would like.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Well, I shall not go so far as to say that; but I do think they would view it with more equanimity than they would regard their own ruin. In these circumstances, the sliding scale is an impossibility, and what we have asked for is that we should have full control over our tariff. Eliminate this sliding-scale, and give us full control for five years; then we will be able to adjust our difficulties and our burdens, and we will get the essence of the admirable intention of Mr. Deakin, which was so banefully carried out in the clause which he proposed and carried. Now we come to the Inter-State Commission; and I shall not pause upon that, except to point out that the corollary of the last proposition is that we must have control over our own freight if we are to foster our own productions by differential railway rates, just as we do through our import duties.—[A MEMBER: Hear, hear.]—It would crush our coal, and I

believe it could be used to crush our timber—I am pretty well satisfied of that; but those are only some of the articles which might be affected: others could be mentioned to which the machinery of the Inter-State Commission could be applied in the same way; and the result would be a still further advantage in favour of those great States in the East which have already attained their manhood, and which in the circumstances of the Premiers' Bill would come down to fight with us as men would fight with a child. Those are the amendments I desire to see put before the people and to have their vote upon, and I desire further that no other steps will be taken in regard to this question when this motion is passed, until negotiations have been entered into with the Eastern colonies, until word has been obtained from them whether they, first of all, are willing to enter into these negotiations, and consequently what chance there is of these amendments being carried into effect. We are told, and it is fired at us over and over again, that there is no chance of the other colonies agreeing to the amendments. Well, let us give them the option, at all events, especially as that option is attended with the alternative of Western Australia staying altogether. I have not the smallest doubt, as Mr. Lukin said, that where there is a will they can find a way. I have the utmost respect for the ingenuity of the Eastern States, and I can assure hon. members that this is a very mere trifle, a feather-weight, compared with what they sometimes do. They will find means, if they desire to see us in the union, of embodying these amendments in the Bill before it becomes the law of Australia; and if they do not find the means, then all I can say is that we must accept the alternative, and remain outside. [Hon. R. G. BURGESS: Hear, hear.] I do not desire to detain the House any longer. My wish in proposing this amendment is to obtain as nearly as possible the unanimous vote of this Chamber. I do not wish, after this fraternal union is accomplished, to see it mocked by Western Australia being a seething mass of discontent.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: So it will be.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Well, I do not think so. I think we shall prac-

tically make the best of it. I believe we shall see what there is in federation; and there are great things in federation as far as this colony is concerned, for we shall have to depend upon someone to assist us in developing the colony. We are unable to cope with the task ourselves; it will take several generations for its fulfilment; and if the other colonies would come to our aid under the Commonwealth, then I should be one to step forward and bid them welcome.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: How will they come to our aid? Can you tell me?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member, I think, can answer that question for himself. As a matter of fact, each of the colonies is at this moment persuaded that the markets of the other colonies lie at its disposal: each supposes it will swallow the rest. There is as little of the federal feeling throughout Australia as can well be conceived. That is my individual opinion. They are all desiring to make money out of their neighbours, and what becomes of their neighbours they care not; but I hope that, with federation, a higher and broader feeling will be manifested. I hope that with federation we shall begin to recognise each other as brethren, and to be proud of the Commonwealth; and I believe that the rest of the Commonwealth must feel that it is a humiliation and a crime that any part of the Commonwealth capable of being cultivated, and of being brought within the bounds of being made profitable, should remain a desert and a wilderness.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: All sentiment!

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No. I am firmly persuaded that after some time, be it long or short, that feeling will dominate Australia; and if so, it would be a prize to us to make use of that feeling; otherwise I cannot perceive how we are thoroughly to settle and to dominate the remainder of this wide colony; and in my own mind I am sure that though those State boundaries and divisions remain as broad and as distinct at this present moment in all the other colonies as if their people had never voted for the Commonwealth Bill, still it is only a matter of time, and I hope not far distant time, when those feelings will give place to feelings of truer brotherhood, and a truer federal ideal. I am firmly per-

suaded of that, and I am assured, also, that if we have federation, it will enable us to rise above what we cannot but call the parochial horizon which surrounds most of us in each of our colonies. If we are to aspire to a higher and a grander life, it must be through the force of federation; and it is my hope that all this may come about if we enter the union. If we do federate, it is important we should do so as an original State, because we would get better terms and have a voice in determining the tariff.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: What sort of voice would we have?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We would have some voice, because the Senate would have something to say as to the tariff as a matter of intercolonial concern; and we should also, I believe, be able to influence to some extent, however small, the position of the capital. Let it not be forgotten that it is possible we may not secure five representatives in the Federal Lower House if we do not enter as an original State.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We will get what we want when we enter federation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Hackett is coming round.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I never doubted the desirability of entering as an original State.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I may have been mistaken as to your opinion.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I think it probable that if we enter federation in the next few years as an original State, it will be under the law of the constitution, instead of the law of the Parliament, which can be altered at will as the years go on. If the Bill should be adopted by the people, while I look forward with some misgiving, I believe it will also give us great gain, and will, at all events, enable us to reach our ideal of being a powerful and great and if you will, an aspiring, but, an any rate a contented and prosperous country. Under these convictions, I beg to submit the amendment. If the Bill be submitted to the people and adopted, and the Eastern colonies can see their way to accept the amendments, let us commit our cause to Him with whom the future must rest.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We have listened to-night to a most eloquent speech

from Mr. Hackett, whether or not we agree or differ with what has fallen from him, and my only regret is that the time is not at my disposal to follow all the points he has raised, and traverse systematically his line of argument. As the House is aware, I can hardly agree with a single thing he has said, eloquently as he has spoken. What strikes me more forcibly than anything else in what Mr. Hackett has said, is the very small extent to which he differs in practice from what has been commented on in the attitude of Mr. Crowder and the Colonial Secretary. The House will agree with me that from first to last Mr. Hackett had not a word to say in favour of the Federal Constitution, except, as Mr. Crowder suggested, on one or two occasions when he rose into the higher flights of sentimentalism. On every practical point Mr. Hackett has contended that the Commonwealth Bill is materially lacking, and fails to meet with his approval in any respect; but he has only followed what has been pointed out in another place as the logical conclusion of any person prepared to accept the evidence put before the Joint Committee. If any member of the Joint Committee were prepared to vote in accordance with the so-called evidence, there is no doubt he must have voted and spoken exactly as Mr. Hackett has spoken and voted to-night. It seems to me, therefore, that the House should not accept as a *bona fide* amendment, loyally put forward, the amendment submitted by Mr. Hackett, because there can be no doubt he is proposing a line of conduct which his own words show is a line of conduct to which he is opposed. I only want to deal with the most salient parts of his speech. First of all, I want to point out that in proposing to submit the Bill as amended by the Joint Committee, as the only Bill on which the electors of the colony may vote, the hon. member is, in my opinion, suggesting a course which any thinking and intelligent man must be aware is a mere farce. I want to deal with this matter from its very base. The position, as he has admitted, is that the balance of the colonies of Australia have accepted a constitution and a form of federal government which is to-day binding on every one of them.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not on us, though.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Most certainly not on us, but on every one of them. If this constitution is binding, it is binding in every little article written in it. We cannot pick and choose; we cannot say that because this colony objects to two or three clauses of the constitution, the Premiers of the other colonies or of the other States as they are to-day may meet and discuss the extent to which the constitution can be amended, and agree—and this is the point—with the colony of Western Australia that these amendments shall be adopted. Mr. Hackett, as a master of political and historical law, must know perfectly well that if the constitution is worth sixpence, the other States which have accepted it, must follow the laws provided by the constitution in their exactitude. What does the constitution say? The constitution which these other States have adopted, says that no alteration can be made without a referendum; and it is, therefore, an impossibility for any number of Premiers to meet together and agree to alter the constitution, without referring the amended constitution to the balance of the electors of Australia. I fail to see how anybody can get past that logical conclusion. It is all very well for hon. members to say, as they have said to-night, that the Premiers met in Melbourne and took on themselves, very much to the disgust of Mr. Hackett, to frame certain clauses for the Constitution Bill which did not meet with his approval, and that because the Premiers met then, they can meet to-day, ignoring the fact that the circumstances have completely changed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I never said anything about the Premiers' meeting.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I understood Mr. Hackett to say that he had every hope that those in authority in the other colonies—

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I spoke of the other colonies—the States.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I understood Mr. Hackett to say he hoped the authorities in the other colonies would be perfectly willing to meet us.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. member, but I certainly took him to speak of the people of authority in the other colonies.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No; I left it to them generally.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In fact, the hon. member anticipated the referendum.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: May I ask what the hon. member did anticipate, if it was neither the people in authority nor the referendum? Was it the people who were not in authority?

HON. W. T. LOTON: The people have not yet got the constitution: they have only agreed to accept it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Loton is correct in saying that the people have agreed to accept the constitution. The people have bound themselves by the constitution, and the only thing wanting now is the confirmation by the Imperial Parliament. Not one of those States can in honour depart from the constitution; and not one of those States can alter the constitution prior to its submission to the Imperial Parliament. The constitution has been adopted by the people of those colonies, and until the people agree, no person dare alter one word written in it. Therefore I say again, the suggestion that any amendment made by this colony can be accepted by the people, by any authority, or those not in authority, or any chance body of people in the other colonies, is absurd. That is the position into which the hon. member's amendment will push us. He would lead us to believe that by the adoption of his motion we will do away with the chance of discord between two divergent sections of the community, and at the same time have a fair hope of becoming an original State. I put it to this House, is it in the least degree possible, in these circumstances, that such a thing could be brought about? I say it is not, and I leave it to the intelligence of hon. members.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You say we have no intelligence.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not think I ever said so, sorely as I have been tempted. One really wonders what ever induced Mr. Hackett to go to the other colonies and waste the time of the various Conventions he attended in discussing this question, when he is prepared to come here and contend, from point to point, that federation is the one thing that the colony cannot go in for, which

is practically what the hon. member argued from point to point. Every particular part of the Bill was bad; the system of the referendum was bad; the Senate was no good—an effete and useless body, the hon. member did not use those words, but that is practically what he meant—the alterations in the constitution spoilt federation; the amendments made by the Premiers spoilt the constitution; the only thing the hon. member agreed to was the transcontinental railway. The hon. member says that this constitution was carried by an impulsive agitation in the other colonies. What does it matter to us whether the constitution was carried by an impulsive agitation or not?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We do not want to repeat that here.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We are not likely to do that: it is not likely that federation will be carried by an impulsive agitation here, because the people will have little opportunity of voting upon it. If it has been carried by an impulsive agitation, it is the constitution for federated Australia. Is it reasonable for us to suppose that the balance of Australia are going to alter their constitution to meet the views of 170,000 people?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We do not want them to.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. gentleman is perfectly candid; I honour him for it, and I would like to say this: in my opinion the only people who deserve any respect in this debate are the people who have systematically opposed federation at any price, and the people who have systematically voted for federation as proposed and accepted by the rest of Australia. For this reason, the balance of hon. members who have spoken on the subject, every one of them, have—I was going to use a word which has been ruled out of order in this House.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: "Stultified."

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Have advocated a constitution against which they are prepared to vote. The hon. gentleman has carefully explained that from the very commencement of the question of federation this Parliament has most carefully protected its own rights, and I most cordially agree with him. From the very moment federation was suggested, there has been a precon-

certed attempt to prevent the people exercising any voice in this matter whatever; but I absolutely fail to see why, because Parliament time after time has done what it should not have done, that should be brought forward as an argument why the same injustice should be continued. We are aware of the reasons which have actuated Parliament.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The reasons are these. Owing to the particular way in which our Constitution is framed, a vast minority of the voters of the colony return a vast majority of the members of Parliament, and in that way it is obvious that the people who control the business of the country will use every possible endeavour to prevent any alteration taking place in what the hon. gentleman has been pleased to call the rights of Parliament.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Surely, you are not running down Parliament?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I certainly do not, but I say the hon. gentleman's argument, because Parliament has done wrong in the past by carefully shutting out the people from exercising the rights they undoubtedly have on the question of federation, that is no reason why we should continue to do it. That is the particular advantage which we derive from the referendum.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: To set aside Parliament.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The referendum may set aside the wishes of a majority of Parliament which represent a minority; but only in that case, and that is a point the hon. gentleman has assisted me to bring out properly. That is the only case in which the referendum can set aside the wishes of Parliament: it can do so when Parliament is hopelessly at variance with the wishes of the country. Is it fitting that any Parliament should continue to exist when the feelings of the people, as was stated by Mr. Lukin, have been hopelessly disaffected from Parliament?

HON. H. LUKIN: I said a section of the community.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: A section of the community, a majority; I say a small section of the community which happens to be a majority.

HON. H. LUKIN: I will not admit that.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We had better leave the hon. gentleman in possession of the Chamber, and retire.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That would facilitate the business; it would be equivalent to the previous question, and the matter would be shelved. No doubt it would be highly satisfactory to the hon. gentleman. What do we find in other countries is the alternative when the people are unable to make their voices heard, what is the alternative to the referendum when the people who are in a majority fail to express themselves in Parliament? What do we find to-day in the Transvaal? The British Government have intervened because a majority in that country fail to be permitted to exercise their political rights.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You are quite astray there.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will detain the House for a moment by reading a description of the position in Western Australia to-day.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Written by yourself?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No; it is not written by myself, and I think no one can deny but that it represents the position in this colony at the present time:—

To do the West Australians justice, it may be conceded that they are animated by feelings of genuine if misdirected patriotism. Their misfortune is that they are wholly out of sympathy with the spirit of the age.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That is from the *Bulletin* of New South Wales.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will gratify the hon. member's curiosity in a few moments:

They claim to be permitted to govern their own country in their own way without regard to the principle of equal rights for every white man, on which it cannot be doubted the full evolution of Australia depends. They demand not only that the minority shall rule, but that the majority shall be denied almost every political right and advantage. And this majority, it has to be remembered, finds all but a fraction of the revenue, is developing the wealth of the country, and is obtaining every year a greater hold over its industries and soil. Rather than abandon this position the West Australians, it is said, are prepared to fight. The hon. member laughs.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am not going to fight.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The article continues:

We may deplore their wrongheadedness, but it is difficult to withhold some mead of admiration for that bull-dog obstinacy which is, after all, quite as much a British as a West Australian characteristic.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Give us the name of the paper you took that from. Is it not your own paper?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: When hon. members have admitted that this most accurately describes the position of people in Western Australia, I will inform the House it is an extract from a leading article in the *West Australian* of Tuesday, 19th September, and is descriptive of the position of the Transvaal. I will ask the House if they see any particular coupling of words in that leading article which would not most perfectly apply to Western Australia.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Why do you not read it all?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member said it came from the *Bulletin*. He did not recognise the classical touch of the *West Australian*.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You could have said it better than it is written.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. gentleman is too modest. Now as to the question of discontent, the hon. member has raised up a bogey. He says that, whatever happens, there is bound to be discontent between two important sections of the community. I differ from him entirely on that point. If the two Bills are submitted to the people, and the result of a fair vote upon the subject is that we are denied federation at the present moment, there is no reason to doubt that the decision of the majority of the people will be loyally accepted by those who believe that the best interests of the country are involved in federation.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Until something crops up.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I say that in no portion of this colony will the result, if the vote is fairly taken, be received with discontent afterwards.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: What do you call "fairly taken"?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will explain to the hon. member what I mean by "fairly taken."

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Do you expect to give the goldfields people the vote, the same as the people down here?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Most certainly.

A MEMBER: That is not fair.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is the particular characteristic alluded to in the article of the *West Australian*. What I would consider taking this vote fairly would be this, that the vote should be put in three ways. Let the people averse to federation vote "no"; let the people in favour of federation on the Bill of the Premiers, vote in favour of the Premiers' Bill; and let the people who are in favour of the Bill with the amendments of the Select Committee vote for the Bill as amended by the Select Committee. But I should say it would be unfair if you took two votes; that is to say, if you first took a vote on the question of federation or not federation, and then allowed the people who voted for no federation to vote a second time—which I believe was the suggestion—as to whether they would have federation under one Bill or the other. No one would be satisfied with that, and in fact it would be characterised as a political trick.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The whole idea is unworkable.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not consider it would be so in the way I suggest.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You would not know which had a majority.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You would. There are those opposed to federation, those in favour of federation on the one Bill, and those in favour of federation on the other Bill, and you would take the majority of those three.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There would be a muddle.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not see why there should be a muddle. It seems to me as clear as daylight. In dealing with the proposed amendments of the Select Committee, it is perfectly clear that they will give satisfaction to nobody; but, at the same time, as I have said before, if the voters are prepared to vote in favour of the Bill with the Select Committee's amendments, let them vote in that direction. As to the railway, it is the one point alluded to by the hon. member with which I can cordially agree.

The railway is an absolute essential of federation.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Coming round.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am not coming round. Federation without the railway would be a farce. But there is no reason whatever to doubt that this railway will be given to us.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There is.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member says there is; but let us go back for a short time to the period when the Premier visited England. What happened then? It is fresh within the memory of every member of this House that the acting Premier of South Australia actually approached the Acting Premier of this colony, that is to say, Mr. Holder approached Mr. Wittenoom, and asked him to meet and discuss the question of the intercolonial line.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: But they want Adelaide as the centre, and we do not.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have no objection to Adelaide as the centre.

A MEMBER: It would kill the whole thing.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member may object, but I can assure him the country is not with him. As I said, Mr. Holder approached Mr. Wittenoom and asked to have the matter discussed, and if my memory serves me rightly, Mr. Wittenoom curtly replied—this was what appeared in the paper—that he was not prepared to discuss it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Who was Mr. Wittenoom?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Acting Premier.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: He did not consult anyone. He made it out of his own head, just as you are making this speech.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not see how the hon. member's remark affects the question. We will assume that Mr. Wittenoom did it out of his own head. He declined most curtly.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Read out what Mr. Wittenoom said.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I cannot. I said I was quoting from memory.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You are quoting incorrectly. He said, at that time.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: He said, at that time.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Because the Premier was away.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The point of my argument is not that Mr. Witte-noom had declined, but that the other gentleman was willing, and everybody in this House is perfectly well aware that the majority in South Australia have always been willing in the same direction.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, no. You will have to go back to an earlier history than that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am talking of the attitude of South Australia in the present history.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It is all providing that Adelaide is the centre.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Only the other day, when the Select Committee were sitting, we were apprised that an honest attempt was going to be made to ascertain the feeling of South Australia. A gentleman on the Select Committee, a member of another place, gave notice of a motion to the following effect:

That in view of the existence of Clause 34 of Section 51 of the draft Commonwealth Bill, which debars the Commonwealth Parliament from constructing any railway through a State without the consent of that State, and in view of the vital importance to the colony of Western Australia that it should be placed in communication by railway with the capital of the Commonwealth, as well as the capitals of the other States, and in view of the fact that such a federal railway cannot, under the terms of the draft Bill, be constructed to the capital of Western Australia, or be connected with its system of railways without the consent of the Parliament of South Australia, it is resolved by this Joint Select Committee that the Government of South Australia be asked if they are willing to submit a Bill to their Parliament, empowering the Federal Government at any time constructing a railway through the territories of South Australia, with the object of connecting the railway systems of the Eastern Colonies with that of Western Australia, and thus secure to the inhabitants of this colony the necessary and inestimable right of railway communication with the federal capital which will be enjoyed by all the Eastern colonies.

I believe that motion commended itself to every member of the Joint Select Committee. I fail to remember a single hostile comment on it.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It did not go to a vote.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was given notice of, and the committee under-

stood that it was to be proceeded with, but, as Mr. Crowder rightly says, that motion was withdrawn. And why? As far as I can judge, the reason was that it became common property at that time that the Ministry of South Australia were prepared to do everything they could to facilitate the construction of such a railway. The Premier was represented to have received a most favourable communication from the Premier of South Australia, and the matter lapsed. What is the only conclusion to be drawn from that? That it was not the desire of the gentleman who gave notice of his intention to move that motion, to do so, after the favourable answer received. Why? Because it would render it absolutely unnecessary that one of these so-called amendments which are to block federation should be placed upon the list.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Have you got the favourable reply which Mr. Kingston sent?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Premier has it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That reply committed Mr. Kingston to nothing: he said he would not be a dog in the manger, or some nonsense of that kind.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was like the reply we always receive if we interview a Minister in this colony, for he assures us of the most favourable consideration of our requests.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: And puts them into a pigeon hole.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Possibly he puts them into a pigeon hole; but it is the duty of those who apply to him to see that the paper does not remain there; and so in this case I have no doubt, and many other members of the Select Committee share my opinion, that if this motion had been proceeded with it would have led to a satisfactory solution of this particular difficulty.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You do not know that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am not full of suspicion. If there be one thing that is perfectly apparent, and which comes to the surface in all these discussions, it is that half the hon. members in this and in the other House are chock full with suspicion of those in the other colonies.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That is the first time I knew you were chock full with suspicion.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am not; I have no reason to be suspicious.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You are suspicious of us.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have no suspicion whatever. Now in reference to the question of the Inter-State Commission, the objection to that Commission is one which can easily be explained, and in that same question is involved a statement which has frequently been made in this House during the course of this debate, more particularly by Mr. Dempster, and by the Colonial Secretary. Both those gentlemen have expressed their surprise from time to time at the want of consideration displayed by the goldfields residents, after the sacrifices that have been made by the rest of the colony for those goldfields; and the enormous amount of money thus spent—£4,000,000 as quoted by Mr. Dempster—is always brought up and hurled in the teeth of the unfortunate goldfields as being a sop on account of which they ought to remain mute and simply say "Thank you."

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: So they ought.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is the suggestion. This question of the Inter-State Railway Commission is inextricably bound up in that position. The truth is that of all this money spent upon the goldfields and upon the rest of the colony, the money spent upon the goldfields is the only part of the expenditure that is returning any revenue.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Oh, nonsense!

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I say that almost without exception it is the only expenditure in this colony that is returning any revenue, and this is more particularly shown in connection with the colony's railways. I like to be accurate, so I will just refer to what the actual position is. The two railways which reap the benefits of the goldfields' trade, and which I presume are usually quoted as having been built for the benefit of the goldfields, are the Eastern Railway and the Yilgarn Railway. Those two are the only railways in this colony which yield any profit. I am not going into figures,

because it is unnecessary. Hon. members will be prepared to accept that as a fact; and those railways yield a most substantial profit, which in the case of the Yilgarn Railway is 4·52 per cent., and in the case of the Eastern Railway 2·34 per cent.; and it must be borne in mind that in the case of the Eastern Railway the Newcastle line is included, which is worked at a dead loss.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: What about the water for the goldfields lines?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Greenhills line is also included with that railway, and I doubt if there be any revenue at all derived from that line, and certainly it is worked at a loss, and in addition to that there is a large section of the Eastern Railway, namely that from Spencer's Brook to York, and I think I am right in saying to Beverley, which is also worked at a loss; so that the losses on those three sections of the line have to be taken off, as they reduce the profit earned on the goldfields line proper.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Why? Because of the low prices charged on the other railway lines so as to carry goods to the goldfields at a reduced rate.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I was just waiting for that—to hear of the sacrifices that are made on those other lines to benefit the goldfields. My attention was called to that the other day. Let us see what those sacrifices amount to. The two things carried on these two lines are timber and coal.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Timber is taken to the fields at a loss.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: To what extent have the fields benefited by the low rates on timber?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There are potatoes.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have mislaid the note I had of the exact figures, but speaking from memory, colonial hardwood is carried on the "M" scale, that is, on the mineral scale, and between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie the freight amounts to 19s. per ton, or a little less; whereas Oregon, which is largely in demand on the fields, has to pay a rate of £4. The reason is not that the goldfields may be benefited, because the goldfields have to buy Oregon and use it, but that the people in those dis-

tricts which produce the jarrah may be able to send it up to the fields at a price which can compete with that of Oregon.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It is to keep the Eastern immigrants employed at the timber mills.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Hear, hear!

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Eastern immigrants!

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You will listen to nothing reasonable.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Coal is in exactly the same position. The Collie coal is not carried cheaply over those lines to benefit the goldfields: far from it. That coal is very properly carried cheaply in order that the industry in its infant stage may be encouraged, but that is not done to benefit the goldfields.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It does benefit them.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No; because the coal is not sold on the fields any cheaper than the Newcastle coal, but the differential freight enables our coal producers to send their product to the fields and to compete with the Newcastle coal, which they would not otherwise be able to do. There is another striking case in point. When we take the freight on over-ocean goods from Fremantle to Bunbury, which goods on that line are carried under a special tariff—either from Fremantle to Bunbury or in the opposite direction—of 37s. 6d. per ton, we find that all this colony's products over the same distance have only to pay from £2 5s. 11d. to £3 0s. 6d.; and that is the reason why such lines do not pay—not that they are being sacrificed for the good of the goldfields, but because they are being sacrificed to prevent private competition, in order to knock out the steamship lines, in order to carry goods over the Government line and to prevent private individuals who have steamboats from paying dividends. That is why these goods are carried cheaply, and that is where the advantage of the Inter-State Commission will be found. People who invest their capital here, people from the other colonies and from England—

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Like you.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Persons like myself, who invest their money in this colony, will have justice dealt out to them by people who are not watching to

see whether some particular friend's saw-mill, or some particular friend's coal mine is benefited, or watching to see that coastal steamers do not get freight; and it is easy to understand why opposition arises among a certain section of the community in this colony to the Inter-State Commission. Mr. Hackett completed his address by frankly admitting that the rest of the colonies were simply watching and waiting to see which could beat the other out. That statement comes from a gentleman who is advocating federation, and had I thought of it sooner, it would only have been necessary to call the attention of the House to that one sentence to expose the fallacy of everything he has said. There is one point to which I would like to allude. Mr. Hackett called attention to the very little reverence he felt for the Constitution of the federated States; and it will be interesting to refer to an article which appeared in the *West Australian* on the 5th May, 1899.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Mr. Hackett has nothing to do with articles in the *West Australian*.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am not saying he has.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Then, where is the reference?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I wish to point out that it has often been the lot of people to be treated with a want of reverence; and this is how the Hon. G. H. Reid was spoken of on that occasion in the *West Australian*: "Mr. Reid, a politician of some note at one time, but who belongs to a somewhat obsolete school." If that is an opinion which could be held of Mr. Reid at that date, it is perfectly safe for this House to ignore any want of reverence felt by Mr. Hackett for the Constitution of Australia; because Mr. Reid has survived the somewhat scathing comment in the *West Australian*, and the Constitution of Australia may be expected to survive the contempt which Mr. Hackett feels for it.

Question—that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	5
Noes	...	...	...	11

Majority against ... 6

AYES.
Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. A. P. Matheson
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. H. Briggs (Teller).

NOES.
Hon. R. Burges
Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. W. T. Loton
Hon. H. Lukin
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. F. M. Stone
Hon. F. Whitcombe
Hon. W. Spencer (Teller).

Question thus negatived, and the words of the Colonial Secretary's amendment struck out.

Further question—that the words of Mr. Hackett's amendment be inserted—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	6

Majority for ... 4

AYES.
Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. W. T. Loton
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. W. Spencer
Hon. F. M. Stone
Hon. F. Whitcombe
Hon. F. T. Crowder
(Teller).

NOES.
Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. H. Lukin
Hon. A. P. Matheson
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
(Teller).

Amendment thus passed, and the words added to "that" as the remaining first word of the original motion.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am entitled to claim the votes of Mr. Richardson and Mr. Whitcombe, who crossed over after the tellers had been appointed.

THE PRESIDENT: I am answerable for the divisions in this House, and I appointed the tellers after the members had crossed over.

HON. R. G. BURGES: I would like to say there has been a misunderstanding about this division altogether.

THE PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member kindly sit down. A division has been taken, and I cannot go outside it. The next amendment proposed by Mr. Hackett is as follows:

That in the opinion of this House, before the submission of the Commonwealth Bill to the electors, the Government should confer with the Governments of the Eastern colonies with a view to securing the adoption of these amendments in the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I beg to move that.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I second it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In dealing with this question I can only hope hon. members will consider which side they

intend to vote on and will carry out their intention, as it has been understood that certain members, three in particular, who desired to vote with me on the last occasion, through some misapprehension as to the motion before the House voted contrary to the principles they have advocated throughout the whole of this debate.

A MEMBER: They have not.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I desire to say most distinctly I voted against the direction in which I wished to vote, through a misapprehension. According to the position I have taken up all along, my place should have been on the other side. Had I heard what the motion was, I should not have been found voting on this side. All along, my contention has been that the two Bills should be sent to the people; and at the present moment, through a misunderstanding as to the way the vote was put, I find I have voted for one Bill to go to the people. I say let the two go or nothing at all.

HON. H. LUKIN: That comes of being mixed up; talking one way and voting another.

Amendment—to add further words—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	9

Majority against ... 2

AYES.
Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. W. T. Loton
Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. G. Randell
Hon. W. Spencer
Hon. F. M. Stone
Hon. H. J. Saunders
(Teller)

NOES.
Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. H. Lukin
Hon. A. P. Matheson
Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. F. Whitcombe
Hon. C. E. Dempster
(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived, and the further words not added.

POINT OF ORDER.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: To what motion was Mr. Hackett's last amendment an amendment? Mr. Hackett moved his last amendment after the substantive motion had been disposed of.

THE PRESIDENT: The original question was in regard to the petition of the West Australian Federal League. The division just taken shows the final conclusion arrived at.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I understood the original motion of the Colonial Secre-

tary had been put to the House and negatived.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Hackett had previously moved an amendment, which was put to the House and carried. Mr. Hackett then moved a second amendment to add further words, but there was no substantive motion then before the House.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; there was. The amendment previously moved by Mr. Hackett had then become the main question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: But can a member amend his own amendment?

THE PRESIDENT: The two amendments were handed in separately.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If this matter can be debated subject to the rules of the House, I should like to do so, for it is not clear to what substantive motion Mr. Hackett moved his last amendment. There is no Bill before the House to which a clause can be added: there was merely a motion on the Notice Paper. I submit that I am in order in debating the question.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member must commit his point to writing. I submit the question has not been put yet. I am exceedingly unwilling that any hon. member should think an advantage has been taken of a mistake or misconception as to the true nature of the question put; and I am told one or two hon. members voted under a misapprehension.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: More than one or two.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Three members at least.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: When the final question is put, that the motion as amended be agreed to, those hon. members will be at liberty to vote as they please.

THE PRESIDENT: The final question has yet to be put, that the resolution as amended be agreed to.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is exactly the point I desired to elicit.

THE PRESIDENT: If Mr. Matheson had asked that question at the beginning, it would have been answered.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: An apology is due from me for asking the question in wrong form.

HON. W. T. LOTON: On a division, the motion moved by Mr. Whitcombe was

struck out, whereupon the amendment of the Colonial Secretary became the substantive motion, to which Mr. Hackett proposed an amendment, and the vote resulted in the proposal of the Colonial Secretary being negatived. The latter amendment of Mr. Hackett's has been vetoed; and the question now is whether the Bill as amended by the Joint Select Committee shall be submitted to the people. Those who vote "no" will vote for throwing the Bill out altogether.

THE PRESIDENT: The position as laid down by Mr. Loton is correct, and the question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

FINAL QUESTION.

Resolution as amended—That this House considers it desirable that the Commonwealth Bill, with the amendments of the Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, be submitted to the electors—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Aves	...	...	...	5
Noes	...	...	...	11

Majority against ... 6

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. W. T. Loton	Hon. R. G. Burgess
Hon. G. Randell	Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. F. M. Stone	Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. H. J. Saunders	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
(Teller).	Hon. H. Lukin
	Hon. A. P. Matheson
	Hon. J. E. Richardson
	Hon. W. Spencer
	Hon. F. Whitcombe
	Hon. E. McLarty (Teller).

Question thus finally negatived.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at two minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.