

## POINT OF ORDER.

MR. MORAN: I rise again to a point of order, and ask for another ruling. Having seconded the motion for the second reading of this Bill, am I entitled to speak now on the original question of the second reading?

THE SPEAKER: No: not at this time.

MR. MORAN: Not on the original motion?

THE SPEAKER: No; not now. A division has just been taken on the question.

MR. MORAN: But I think the original question is now before us.

THE SPEAKER: Oh, no.

MR. MORAN: But, sir, I never spoke on the second reading of the Bill. I seconded the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: A member who seconds an amendment cannot speak on the original question again. Neither the person who proposes nor the person who seconds can again speak on the original question.

## QUESTION.

Question (that the Bill be now read a second time) put, and passed on the voices.

Bill read a second time; also, the consideration in Committee made an order for the next day.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.30 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 29th November, 1899.

Papers presented:—Subiaco Tramways Bill, second reading, in Committee Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, recommitment, reported—Petition of Federal League, motion to approve (words struck out), amendment moved (adjourned)—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1. Annual Report of Government Storekeeper, 1899. 2. Amendment of Schedules 11 and 22 to regulations and monthly return, under Goldfields Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## SUBIACO TRAMWAYS BILL.

## SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) in moving the second reading, said: This Bill has been introduced in consequence of an arrangement having been entered into between the Subiaco Municipal Council and the Tramway Company. I have satisfied myself that the Subiaco Council are entirely in accord with the Bill. This tramline will traverse Broome Road, which is the continuation of Hay Street, and Rokeby Road, which crosses and goes down by the railway line; the line then proceeding along Hammersley Road to the gates of Perth Park. This arrangement is desired by the Municipal Council in the interests of Subiaco, and by the Tramway Company in the interests of that company. I believe it will be a most desirable line, although it will affect prejudicially the omnibuses which are now running along that road; but the omnibuses will no doubt find some other sphere for their operations. I believe the Bill will secure the approval of the House, therefore I need say no more than move the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## IN COMMITTEE.

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

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT  
BILL.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Bill recommitted for amendment of certain clauses.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 5—Legislative Council to consist of 30 members:

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The first amendment he had to submit would meet with the assent of a large majority of members. It would be remembered that at a previous sitting the Committee struck out the word "thirty," which was in the Bill as received from another place, and inserted "twenty-four." He now moved that "twenty-four" be struck out and "thirty" reinserted. Arguments on the point had already been put fully before the Committee, which had agreed to exclude Guildford and Midland Junction from the East province, and to include these in the Metropolitan province. He had assented to that, in the expectation that "thirty" would at a later period be reinstated in lieu of the amendment for "twenty-four," thereby providing ten provinces instead of eight; because, otherwise, it would be clear that on all grounds Guildford and Midland Junction should be in the East province. The Metropolitan province was enormously unwieldy at present; therefore, if we were to have only eight provinces, the Metropolitan province could not afford to take in any more districts under its wing. He would urge this point also—that it was impossible the enormous disproportion in the number of electors in some of the provinces should continue. Mr. Briggs informed him that the Metropolitan province at present contained 3,400 electors, and this substantiated the argument that it was impossible to put Guildford and Midland Junction into that province. That might be considered with another province also ably represented in this House, but whose representatives were worthy of a larger constituency; and it might be advisable at a later date to give them an opportunity of seeking a larger constituency. At present, however, it seemed there was no intention to disturb the provinces. He believed the number of electors in that province amounted to 163, and he left members to imagine how many of those 163 were

residents in the province for which they voted. He was not making an attack now upon any province, but simply urging that we should take a more liberal view. Really the only way out of the difficulty was to sub-divide the two more populous provinces, namely, the Goldfields and the Metropolitan, and the more he looked into the question the more he was satisfied that hon. members who voted under a misconception last time would see that what he suggested was the only way out of the difficulty. He would have been willing to see the number of members in this House retained at 24; for a House consisting of that number would be a good business, workable House. But no proposal had been made to disfranchise two or three provinces or to distribute hon. members among other provinces. The proposal which commended itself elsewhere was to increase the number of provinces, and he put it to the Committee that unless we were to disfranchise the North altogether, that was the only way out of the difficulty. We might have taken three members from the North and have given them to other provinces, but this House did not seem to approve of that, and another place certainly did not. The one possible alternative was to increase the number of provinces. Even so, these two new provinces would be much larger than any of the other provinces with regard to the number of electors, except perhaps Fremantle. Therefore, on the grounds of clear reason and common sense, as well as justice, he ventured to hope the amendment he proposed would be carried unanimously.

HON. F. M. STONE: What arguments Mr. Hackett had advanced for our altering the decision of the Committee he could not see. The hon. member had talked about disfranchising the North, and perhaps did so to make the Committee vote in favour of the amendment proposed; but the hon. member would be the last one of the House to propose an amendment to disfranchise the Northern portion of the colony; so that argument could go for nothing. As to adducing any further arguments in favour of our going back upon the decision we had already arrived at, Mr. Hackett had said the Metropolitan province contained a large number of electors; but should we

not find the same circumstances in the not far distant future? How about the population increasing in the suburbs of the Metropolis? Were we to be continually adding to the number of members of this House in consequence of the increase in the number of electors? He did not think for one moment the House would entertain such a proposal. It was unfortunate that we were obliged to add Guildford to the Metropolitan province, but there was no way out of the difficulty. That was no reason why we should alter the decision fixing the number of members of the House at 24, and he hoped members who voted with him for the reduction from 30 to 24 would adhere to the decision.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** To put himself right with the Committee, if he had been wrong, he desired to say that the action he took was intended only to carry out the wishes of the Committee. No division took place upon this clause when the amendment was moved; and he had all along felt that the Metropolitan and goldfields provinces were altogether too populous in comparison with other provinces. At the same time he felt with Mr. Hackett that 24 members were enough for the House, but it seemed impossible for us to re-arrange the provinces, and in his opinion an increase in the number of members was the only alternative. He did not propose to vote on this question, which was the keynote of other amendments which the hon. member doubtless would move, if he carried this. If this were carried, he should feel at liberty to vote upon the others if he thought fit, but, as he had said, he did not think it his duty to vote upon this, having taken the part he did in providing, as he thought, to carry out the unanimous wish of the Committee.

**HON. C. E. DEMPSTER:** It seemed somewhat inconsistent, but, on calm reflection, he had made up his mind to support Mr. Hackett in the amendment which he had brought forward, because he saw plainly it was desirable, in order to give general satisfaction, that the number of members of the Council should be thirty. He had been under the impression that twenty-four members would be a more workable number than thirty, but afterwards certain difficulties

had been pointed out to him which showed that he had done wrong in voting as he did on a former occasion. The alterations which had to be made in the boundaries caused difficulties, and unless there were thirty members these difficulties could not be overcome.

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS:** As one of the members of the Metropolitan province he entered his protest against Guildford, South Perth and Subiaco being included in the Metropolitan province. At present the Metropolitan province was the largest in the colony, therefore he would vote with Mr. Hackett, to increase the number of members from twenty-four to thirty.

**HON. H. BRIGGS:** As one who voted for twenty-four members, it was right that he should explain why he had changed his mind, and intended to vote for the amendment. It was our duty to bring our best knowledge to the councils of the country; and, when he had voted on a former occasion, he had a very imperfect knowledge of the number of voters on the different rolls. At the present time, according to the rolls made up to October, the number of voters for the Eastern province was 1,587, and if that number were added to the Metropolitan province, which now contained 3,421 voters, the number of electors would be excessive. For that reason he would vote for the amendment.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** It was rather interesting to hear, after the various statements which had been made during the debate on the Constitution Bill, that the Council was supposed to represent the interests of the country, that hon. members should now talk about the number of electors. It was more interesting to hear a member representing the Eastern province expressing his willingness to be disfranchised when his chief complaint on a former occasion was that if Guildford and Midland Junction were retained in the Eastern province that province would be disfranchised. We did not know why hon. members had changed their minds, perhaps it would not be wise to ask.

**HON. A. G. JENKINS:** Some people were so obstinate that they would not see things in the right light.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE** said he intended to vote that the number of members of the Council should be twenty-four.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No reason had been shown to make him change his mind since he opposed the increase of members from twenty-four to thirty on a previous occasion. Twenty-four members was a reasonable representation for the whole of the colony, and six additional members would merely give three more representatives to the goldfields and three to other interests, so that the balance of power would be just the same as now, therefore he would oppose Mr. Hackett's amendment. He recognised that if Guildford and Midland Junction were added to the Metropolitan province it would be made a very large one indeed, but the Government might devise some means of altering the boundaries of provinces to avoid this.

Amendment (thirty members) put, and a division taken with the following results:—

Ayes	...	...	...	12
Noes	...	...	...	6

Majority for ... 6

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. K. Briggs	Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. R. G. Burges	Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. D. K. Congdon	Hon. D. McKay
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. J. E. Richardson
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. F. Whitcombe
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. F. M. Stone
Hon. W. T. Loton	(Teller).
Hon. A. P. Matheson	
Hon. E. McLarty	
Hon. C. A. Piesse	
Hon. W. Spencer	
Hon. J. H. Saunders	
(Teller).	

Amendment thus passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 6—Colony divided into electoral provinces:

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that all words after "into," in line 1 to the end of the clause, be struck out, in order that the clause be restored to the form originally printed in the Bill.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 8—Members to retire periodically; times for issue and return of writ:

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that the following words be added to Sub-clause 1:

In the case of the first members for the South province and the Metropolitan-Suburban province, the member who polls the lowest number of votes shall vacate his seat on the twenty-first day of May, 1902, and the member who polls the next lowest number of

votes shall vacate his seat on the twenty-first day of May, 1904, and the third member shall vacate his seat on the twenty-first day of May, 1906.

These words had been struck out by the Committee, and he wished them to be restored.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: With regard to the creation of the two new provinces, the present members might desire a clause to be inserted in the Bill allowing them to elect for which province they would sit, and he thought it would be only fair to permit a clause to that effect to be inserted. He did not know whether that would be constitutional, but he believed so. As at present proposed, members might, under this distribution, be sitting for a province in which they would have no interest.

Amendment put and passed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT moved that after the word "province," in line 2 of Sub-clause 4, there be inserted the words: "or in the case of the first member for a new province the seat of a retiring member." These words had been struck out, and it was desirable to restore them.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 27—Issue of writs in cases of vacancy:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the following, to stand as Sub-clause 5, be added:

Whenever a vacancy occurs by reason of any of the disqualifications hereinafter mentioned in Section 28, paragraph 5, and Section 35, paragraph 2, it shall be the duty of the Registrar in Bankruptcy forthwith to give notice thereof in writing to the President or the Speaker, as the case may be, if within the colony, and otherwise to the Governor; and on receipt of such notice the President or Speaker, as the case may be, if within the colony, or otherwise the Governor, shall forthwith issue a writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy.

This obviated the necessity for any member to rise in his place and move that a seat be declared vacant. The Registrar would give notice to the President, Speaker, or Governor, as the case might be, and a writ would be issued. The only difference between this and the amendment he moved the other night was that Clause 35 was altered by adding these words. He had to move afterwards an amendment of Clause 28 and an amendment of Clause 35; so that this

amendment of Clause 27 would be really consequential on those amendments. This brought our Constitution Act into line with that proposed in the Federal Bill.

HON. H. LUKIN: That was no recommendation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Members were not, he thought, opposed to all the clauses of the Federal Bill.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes.

HON. F. M. STONE: This proposal, with the other proposals to be made by the Colonial Secretary, would place the position thus: Where a person was an undischarged bankrupt, or a debtor whose estate bore a subsisting receiving order in bankruptcy, such person would be altogether disqualified from sitting or from being elected a member until he got his discharge from bankruptcy, or the receiving order was set aside. Then there was a further provision that if a person took the benefit, whether by assignment, composition, or otherwise, of any law relating to bankrupts or insolvent debtors, he became disqualified, and his seat would thereupon become vacant, so that it would not be necessary for this House to declare the seat vacant. Provision was made in Clause 27 now under consideration that in the event of a vacancy occurring through the disqualifications mentioned in Clause 28 and in Clause 35, the seat would thereupon become vacant. The Registrar of the Supreme Court would report to the President or Speaker, and thereupon a writ would be issued. Should the debtor meantime get his discharge from bankruptcy, or get the receiving order set aside, he could be re-elected as a member.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 28—Disqualification for membership of either House:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that Sub-clause 5 be struck out, and the following be inserted in lieu thereof: "Be an undischarged bankrupt, or a debtor against whose estate there is a subsisting receiving order in bankruptcy or"

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 35—Seats in Parliament vacated in certain cases:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the following be inserted, to stand as Sub-clause 2: "Takes the benefit whether by assignment, composition, or otherwise of any law relating to bankrupt or insolvent debtors."

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with further amendments, and the report adopted.

#### PETITION OF FEDERAL LEAGUE.

##### MOTION TO APPROVE (WORDS STRUCK OUT)—AMENDMENTS.

Debate resumed from 23rd November, 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 substituting these words: "at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony." Question: That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted:

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): I desire to give way to the Colonial Secretary, who I believe has an amendment to move which will come prior to anything I have to say.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell): I have to move an amendment on the amendment moved by Mr. Whitcombe, in the following terms:

(That) in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Commonwealth Bill as amended at the Conference of Premiers, and the Commonwealth Bill (as amended at the Conference of Premiers) with the amendments suggested by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, should be both referred to the vote of the electors, and that the necessary legislation be introduced as early as possible.

I feel, in addressing myself to the amendment, that the whole question will be raised; but I do not propose to give any lengthy remarks on the subject, as the question has been so fully discussed in the newspapers, in the Joint Select Committee, and in Parliament on different occasions. Mr. Burgess the other night gave a lengthy elucidation of the merits of the Bill, and his views on the subject. I also would like to refer to a speech which was delivered in another place by the leader of the Government, and which

I think was one of the ablest and best deliverances made on this important subject. It would be entirely wrong on my part to detain the House for any considerable length of time to go into the merits of the case, because every member has studied the vast amount of literature which has been issued on this subject, for and against. We have had men who have ably put their case in favour of the Bill going to the people, and our joining federation immediately as an original State; on the other hand, we have had quite as able men who have put the opposite case very clearly and carefully before the electors and members of both Houses; and if I were at this moment to express my opinion on the subject I should say the evidence taken by the select committee, and the deliverances made by persons who have a great stake in this country and whose interests in it are undoubted, go a long way to prove that it is desirable for us at present to remain outside the federation. Although I say that, I have to move an amendment which commits us to sending the Bill to the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You do not believe in it, though.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member is entitled to his own opinion, as other members are entitled to theirs, and I hope every member will receive fair play in dealing with the question, will listen to the arguments advanced, and see if those arguments will change their opinions, although I have not much hope in that direction. The minds of members are necessarily made up; hon. members have considered the question from their point of view, and we should give credit to those who differ from a majority in the House, and I believe a majority in the colony, who are opposed to our entering the federation unless we get the concessions which are demanded or asked for in the report of the select committee. I need only refer to the evidence given before the select committee—although to a large extent the evidence on both sides embraced opinions—to show that in the opinion of unbiassed and unprejudiced men the balance of the evidence is entirely against our joining the federation at once unless we get the concessions mentioned in the report of the select committee. There are four points raised

by the select committee which it is desired we should obtain concessions in regard to from the other colonies, and having obtained those concessions the select committee recommend that we should join the federation. These points are: the division of the colony into electorates, railway communication with the eastern colonies, a continuation of the customs duties for five years, and a modification of the powers of the Inter-State Commission insofar as that body affects our railway freights and our dealings with industries of this colony. There are other matters within the four corners of the Federal Bill to which some of us take serious objection, but some of us who were members of the select committee waived our objections inasmuch as we desired to present a moderate case to the other colonies; and one of the strong advocates of federation from the other colonies (Mr. Walker), who addressed himself to the people of the colony in different parts, and who is anxious that we should join the federation, has said that the requests made by the select committee are of the most moderate character; he even went so far as to say that he thought they should be conceded. I mention this because I think that some importance should be attached to Mr. Walker's expressions in the Press and otherwise when he was in this colony a short time ago.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: He abused us when he went back.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Walker said, and I remember this perfectly well, "Your demands are very moderate indeed, and I am almost surprised at the amount of moderation used in this matter."

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Then he went home and did otherwise.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps, like some hon. members, he has been misreported in the Press, and we should believe what he said here until we know otherwise. I object strongly to what occurs in the Bill in various directions. I have counted up, and I think there are no less than 33 places in which the phrase appears "until the Parliament otherwise provides." In some places this is quite right: I do not condemn the use of the words in every case, for I do not see how the matter could

have been arranged otherwise. But there are many instances in which these words occur, and they involve serious consideration, as there may be danger to the colony. We should carefully consider some of these phrases, and the select committee would have done so had it not been that we desired the report of the select committee to be as moderate as possible, because the select committee did not wish to influence the electors one way or the other on that score. I object strongly to the whittling away, if I may use an Americanism, of the appeals. Important cases may crop up in this colony or other colonies.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Appeals to the Privy Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. There is an evident desire to create in Australia a High Court of Appeal, and I do not know that it is not a laudable desire; but on reading over the clauses of the Bill I find to a very large extent, I think, it abolishes appeals to the Privy Council, the highest Court of the British Empire, a Court which I believe is respected by everyone who has the interests of the Empire at heart, and in which unlimited confidence is placed, from its long legal training and high position. I think, therefore, in that respect the framers of the Federal Bill have done injustice to these colonies. Then I believe the Queen's prerogative is to some extent affected and reduced to a minimum, and to my mind that is another blot in the Bill. And there is a provision whereby this may become more intensified, if the Parliament desire. Evidently there is an indication on the part of the framers of this Bill of their intention to—if I may use a vulgar phrase—cut the painter between Australia and the old country. As one who feels that the Australian colonies owe nearly all they possess to the generous action of the Home Government, to whom an immense amount of gratitude is due, I think this is to be deprecated. The lands of which we have been put into possession are lands which have been given to us by the Government of England. They have been won by their industry, their self-sacrifice and self-denials, and the British Government have generously handed over to these colonies the Government of this great estate of

Australia. However, that is by the way. I do not know that, when I began I intended to move in that direction. I will therefore now, in fulfilment of the promise which I made at the beginning of my speech, confine myself to matters which lie more especially before us. The hon. member has moved that it is not desirable at this juncture to remit the Bill to the people. When we look at that question we have to regard it from two sides. I think, as I said before, that there is a majority in the colony who will vote against our joining the federation, leaving out the goldfields, in respect of which I do not think there is very much that is unreasonable in the position they have taken up. What I mean to say is that, looking at things from their point of view, leaving out of consideration other interests which are involved in this country joining federation, and bearing in mind the intense desire which the goldfields seem to have to secure a slight decrease in the cost of living, we cannot altogether wonder at the position they have taken up.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Federation will not decrease the cost of living.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I quite agree with the hon. member that it will be infinitesimal. However, that is the feeling prevailing. There may be other feelings existing on the goldfields, and I believe there are, but it is not my duty at the present moment to express them or to refer to them. I can only say I think that the goldfields, considering the sacrifices made by this colony—and I am prepared to substantiate the statement to a very considerable extent if it is challenged—

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mention some.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not propose to do so now. No doubt the hon. member will challenge the statement, and he will have an opportunity of replying. But I think that, considering all the sacrifices this colony has made, and that the colony has given them railway communication—

HON. A. P. MATHESON: They have paid for that themselves.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The goldfields railways are paying the interest on all the other lines.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Unless the other people of the colony had

been willing, the goldfields could never have obtained railways, and I think that fact entitles us to the consideration of residents on the goldfields. I am not disposed to think that the whole of the people living on the goldfields are insensible to the efforts of the Government, the Legislature, and the people of the other parts of the colony. I believe that a large number of them are satisfied that we have done the best we possibly could under the circumstances. We have involved ourselves in an immense debt, and to a very large extent for the development of the gold mines of this colony, and for the welfare and progress of the mine-owners and the miners. I know the hon. member said the goldfields paid for it, but that can be disproved at any time. Division of the colony into electorates is the first amendment that has been proposed by the Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. From the very first I felt that to make Western Australia one electorate for the members who are to represent this colony in the Senate would probably throw the power into the hands either of the goldfields or of the Metropolitan and Fremantle districts. That opinion has been expressed by others besides myself, and I do not see how we are to get away from it. We have had a precedent in this case in the action of the members of the Convention with regard to Queensland. Apparently they very readily conceded to Queensland the division of Queensland into districts, with the object of getting her into federation. It has been said that our circumstances are entirely different from those of Queensland. I do not think I need say I consider they are very analogous to those of Queensland. We have a very large country, consisting of a million square miles of territory, I believe, and larger even than Queensland herself. Our interests are to some extent divided, and we have, I think, a disaffected population in some parts. Those are conditions which I believe prevail in Queensland, and when we find that in Queensland federation was carried by people who voted in one particular part of the colony in opposition to others in another part of the colony, I think we may take that to a considerable extent as a discount upon the vote taken in Queensland. And I think I may say

here that the majorities in Queensland and New South Wales were of so meagre a nature as to make us consider our position and pause. I think every one will admit that it will be better for this colony to be divided into electorates—say, three or six: I think six, but I forget just at the moment.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Six members.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That will give two for each of three divisions, and in my opinion it must be admitted by everybody who has thought over the question that this is most desirable in the interests of the colony. We want the colony to be represented in its varied interests, and if, as the result of voting as one electorate, the Western Australian members of the Senate are elected by one district, they can only represent one particular interest in the colony. I think there is room to fear that may possibly be the result of our voting as one electorate. I do not think I need say very much more upon that, for it seems to me so self-evident. I admit there is just a little set-off the other side, but inasmuch as we have the example of Queensland, I think that argument is destroyed to a considerable extent. It is this, that if the members are elected by districts they will not be representatives of the colony as a whole. But I think I have only to mention that argument to bring a refutation to the minds of hon. members. The members will be representatives of the colony, although they may represent different districts in it; and to avoid the danger that would arise by having them elected by one particular constituency or one particular part of the colony, we should insist upon having this amendment made. I pass to the second recommendation of the select committee, and that is in relation to railway communication with the Eastern colonies. I do not hold the strong opinions that some people entertain with regard to this, but at the same time I admit it is very essential in certain cases which may arise sooner or later in the history of this colony. I am sorry to have to go over the ground which has been gone over before by many hon. members and by others who have written and spoken on this question, but I do not see how the inland defence of this colony is to be undertaken except we have railway com-



munication with the Eastern colonies. I will not go into the question very minutely, but my own feeling about the matter is that while an intercolonial railway would to a certain extent administer to the prestige of this part of Australia, and would probably cause the mails to be landed at Fremantle and sent overland, saving some three days, I believe, between this and Melbourne, at the same time the journey is a long one. Before going on, I may mention that when people come here from different parts of the world to see our goldfields they will probably continue their journey to the other colonies by railway if they wish to do so, whereas if they had no opportunity of doing so, they would content themselves by visiting Fremantle or Albany. Fremantle will be the port of call in the future. I am, however, near my friend here, and I hope he will not take exception to my remarks, but, as Mr. Richardson said the other night, the inevitable must come. After the large expenditure which has taken place there, we must, if possible, make Fremantle the port of call for the mail steamers. I have no doubt about that fact, and even supposing the Orient and P. & O. steamers do not call at Fremantle, I feel sure we shall in some other way get a service. I think people on board those steamers which call at Fremantle will not travel overland for the sake of saving one or two days, but doubtless the railway would in other respects be a great benefit to the country.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There would be the passengers from Sydney to Western Australia as well as the passengers to England, and they would avoid a sea journey.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: On account of sickness, to some little extent possibly. But expressing my own feelings, I do not think I should care to leave a well appointed steamer for the sake of having an overland journey from Coolgardie to some town in the Eastern colonies. However, I think that for defence purposes and for some other reasons—possibly for stock purposes—it may be desirable to have this railway built. At any rate, I take it the Select Committee felt it to be a very important point, that we should insist upon having this railway guaranteed to us

beyond the possibility of any colony standing between us and the consummation of our wishes and desires in this respect. I consider that is only a prudent and right course for this House to take, because it will be easily seen, I think, that after we have joined the federation, we shall to a large extent have sacrificed our independence and our power to procure these things. Therefore, in the ordinary common prudence of business life we should secure them before we join. The next point is the continuance of the customs duties for five years, and I think this is one of the most essential questions the Committee have raised, and we should insist on not joining until we get this amendment. It has been proved that the sliding scale was adopted under a misapprehension, and scarcely anyone at the Conference understood what would be the ultimate result of it. I believe that the sliding scale in relation to the corn laws in England many years ago produced great evils, permitting men to speculate in corn and other things, and so influence the market in their own interests and oppress consumers. I remember many years ago speaking to a well known politician in this colony who was very well up in mercantile affairs, and in my innocence and youth I suggested this to him, but he pointed out to me distinctly the danger that would arise from having a sliding scale of duties upon our importations. I think that to give up our duties on products from the Eastern colonies means almost giving up our life. It means the stoppage of our development, the stoppage of the progress of our industries and advancement of agriculture, and many other difficulties which I need hardly mention. After the efforts which have been made, and the inducements held out to settlers by the Government and others to come here and take up land, it is our duty to do the utmost we possibly can to protect those settlers in their enterprises, and by our laws and our customs duties see that they receive a fair amount of protection in the industries we have asked them to take up, which they have come in considerable numbers to do. Then it interferes with our manufactures. As has already been stated very clearly and explicitly, it would have a most disastrous effect upon the incipient manufactures of this colony. I

believe that very many persons who visited the recent exhibition were surprised at the number of manufactures represented, the great value of some of them, and the tendency there is to increase. In increasing manufactures and the agricultural industry we are increasing our population, and increasing the ability which the colony has of bearing the duties imposed on us. To remit these duties would be disastrous to the colony, and would throw us back for years.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Shut us up altogether.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think that would be the result, but the effect would be very injurious indeed, and it would take us years to recover. As we desire that the colony should progress, that population should increase, and that the industries which have been established should be encouraged, I think we should insist on the third recommendation of the Joint Committee. The sliding scale I have already referred to, and everybody seems to have given that up, even those gentlemen supporting federation, I was going to say at any price, but I do not like that expression. I like to credit people with honourable motives, and there are some people who have ambitions which they may be desirous of showing in the Federal Parliament, and who may have good prospects of being elected to it; but I like to give the benefit of honourable motives to all who are seeking to obtain federation with the Eastern colonies. The last item is the Inter-State Commission, and the effect of the powers given to the Inter-State Commission on this colony would be something similar to the abolition of the customs duties. The Inter-State Commission will prevent the railway department giving concessions, and why should we lose the control of the rates on the railways. I find recently that in the United States of America, where the Inter-State Commission has been in existence for some considerable time, that there is dissatisfaction existing as to the actions of the Inter-State Commission, and there the Legislature are considering whether the whole matter should not be reconsidered and rearranged with a view to the interests and advantages of the State belonging to the union being pre-

served. I think we should look to America for an object lesson in this direction; we may be able to derive from that country the knowledge that the Inter-state Commission, which has been so lauded by many, has certain dangers which we ought to avoid. It would be unfortunate in this country to have a body of this kind who would interfere with our arrangements and prevent us giving bonuses or a preference to industries for the purpose of increasing the industries and the population of the country. These are the four points raised by the Select Committee, and the object has been not to overstate their case, not to create difficulties which may prevent the other colonies from accepting our proposals. The proposals have been made reasonable so that the Governments of the other colonies may see their way to accede to our wishes and desires. From what I have heard recently, there is some prospect that if we are faithful to the trust committed to us, and insist on the amendments, they will be conceded. I can hardly conceive, as has been stated by a gentleman from another colony, that the Commonwealth Bill will pass through the House of Commons in the state it is at present. I object in the strongest possible words to the terms used by that gentleman when he was here, and it seems to be exceedingly out of place for one politician from another colony to use such expressions to politicians here, and to the leader of the Government. I am glad that exception has been taken to this gentleman's remarks; I will mention the name of the gentleman, Mr. Symon, who I think was exceedingly ill-advised in making his remarks. I felt a considerable amount of resentment at the language he made use of.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It is in keeping with his remarks about Western Australia all through.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I need add no more to what I have already said. I unfortunately have to travel over ground which has been travelled over before. I have tried to present the question from my view, and to express my feelings and convictions on this matter. At one time I thought it was desirable that we should join the federation. I exceedingly regret that I voted for the

delegates to go to the Convention, but we are often wise after the event. I thought that the disabilities of standing out of federation would be greater than they appear now they will be, and after I have carefully and thoroughly examined into this question, I do not see that we shall injure ourselves by not joining the federation. I thought of the isolated position in which we were, and that the other colonies would try to injure us. These were some of the things which influenced me on the occasion when I voted for the delegates to go to the Convention, and at that time I thought it was desirable that we should join the federation as an original State. I think these feelings have been removed from my mind to a large extent. I have seen by the overtures which have been made to the Premiers of the other colonies that they have little consideration for this colony. The object of the other colonies seems to be to secure our market for themselves. At any rate that is the object of South Australia, and the opening of our market to South Australia would be a great boon at the present time. We have to look after ourselves and the interests of our people. Our object should be to build up a State here; we are a large colony, and we have all the elements of progress and prosperity within our borders; we have the ability and energy to build up a great colony and we have the will to do it; therefore I say, while I move this amendment—

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Are you not going to speak in favour of it?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think I have communicated to hon. members what my views on the question are. I must say that I very reluctantly have done so, because I feel that there is something to be said on the other side. Our being united in the future as a great nation would bring many advantages to us. We should not have the feeling that we belong to a small colony or a sparsely populated colony: we should belong to the great united island continent of Australia. There are a great many things I might refer to. I might speak of the position of New Zealand at the present time, but I will leave that to others. I think the position of New Zealand in regard to the other colonies is an important point just now. I believe a majority

of the voters of this colony are opposed to federation. It seems to me a large number of people, friends of ours, who will vote against federation probably, would resent not being allowed to vote on this question. Indeed, people have said to me, "Whilst probably we shall vote against federation, we shall resent the action of Parliament in refusing to send the Bill to us for our vote: we consider ourselves equally as well versed in the question, and equally as well able to give an opinion on the matter as the members of either House of Parliament; therefore, we consider it would be wrong on the part of Parliament not to send either or both Bills to the people for their decision." The question remains whether it is right for us, considering the whole interests of the colony, to remit the Bill for the consideration of the people. We are here as representatives of the people. The other House represents the population more especially, and we are representing the interests to a very large extent. The question with us is whether we can afford to neglect the feeling that will be raised not only on the goldfields but in other parts of the colony; a feeling which will be raised in the minds of men educated, intelligent, who love the country, and who desire to see it prosper. Should we refuse to send the Bill to these people? I have already expressed my opinions that it is the duty of the Legislature to send the Bill to the people, but I think it would have been better if the question of federation had not cropped up here for years to come. Still I feel that I must move this amendment. It is in the terms of the resolution which has come to us, and which has been adopted by a majority in the Legislative Assembly. I do not think I need say more on the question at the present time. I simply move the amendment.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Who is seconding?

THE PRESIDENT (after a pause): It is seconded by Mr. Matheson.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Your (Mr. Matheson's) people fought it in another place.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I ask what the position will be if this is carried? We have already dealt with the motion moved by Mr. Matheson, and we are now dealing with the amendment

moved by Mr. Whitcombe, which has become the substantive motion. Are we at liberty to go on amending, if this is carried?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; you can go on amending as long as you like.

At 6:18 the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. H. BRIGGS (West): I am deeply impressed with the grave importance and momentous issue placed before this Chamber, and I shall not add to the weight of it in my share of the argument by many words. I intend simply to speak to the motion made by Mr. Whitcombe, and I can appreciate more fully, and rely with more confidence—knowing the feeling against federation in this House—on the feeling of fair play and justice which always exists, and which ought to be an abiding element in the conduct of all our public affairs. I earnestly hope that any preconceived opinions will be lightly held, and everything duly weighed, and that members will vote after due consideration has been given to the arguments brought before us. We have the Colonial Secretary to-night moving an amendment to the proposition, but the hon. member did so in as anti-federal a speech as I have ever heard. This question will tax our patriotism, and tax our forbearance, and it ought to tax our abnegation of self and selfish aims, of which we have heard so much, to make one great united effort for the common good.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The country, not ourselves.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Before entering on the subject of the motion, I think it would be well to notice the charges which have been made against the delegates of this colony that they neglected their duty, and so necessitated the addition of these various amendments. I am going to make a plain recital, and I hope I shall be allowed to read from a document which states the various action, which took place with regard to the election of delegates and their conduct. Between December, 1895, and October, 1896, Enabling Acts were passed by the Parliaments of the five colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania—to enable these colonies to

take their part in the framing of an enactment for a federal constitution. In accordance with these Acts each of the colonies elected ten representatives to a convention charged with the duty of framing a federal constitution for Australasia. Four colonies elected their delegates by a referendum to the people, the Western Australian representatives were elected by the two Houses, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council voting together. The convention sat in Adelaide from 22nd March to 5th May, 1897, and framed a draft constitution which was then submitted for consideration to each House of Parliament in each of the five colonies. Our Legislative Assembly deputed the Premier to present their amendments, and the Legislative Council appointed the Hon. J. W. Hackett to present the Council's amendments. Just before setting out for the second Convention, four of the Western Australian delegates—the Hon. F. H. Piesse, M.L.A., the Hon. W. T. Loton (then M.L.A.), Mr. R. F. Sholl, M.L.A., and the Hon. J. Howard Taylor, M.L.C.—for good and sufficient reasons resigned their position, and four new delegates—the Hon. H. W. Venn, M.L.A., the Hon. F. T. Crowder, M.L.C., the Hon. A. H. Henning, M.L.C., and myself—were hastily elected by both Houses as before, and set out the same day. The Convention sat again from the 2nd to the 24th September, 1897; they sat in Melbourne in 1898 from 20th January to 17th March, and reconsidered the draft constitution together with the amendments suggested by the various legislatures. The Convention finally adopted a Federal Constitution on March 16, 1898. The Enabling Act gives clear directions as to the further conduct of the Bill. I have ventured to remind hon. members of these various stages as a proof that both Houses have had an opportunity of suggesting amendments, and that the delegates are not solely responsible for the omission of certain terms now suggested by the Joint Committee. The motion of Mr. Whitcombe assumes, with truth, that the principle of federation has been accepted by this House, as the journals of the House show, and seems to point to two distinct issues: 1. Is reference to the people the proper method of obtaining their opinion? 2. Is the present time

opportune to introduce federation? It is under those two forms that I shall address my remarks. But before attempting to do this, it will be well, as a proof that I am not beating the air, to examine some remarks that have been made on this subject in the House. Mr. Whitcombe, in introducing his motion, made a very inapt illustration, to my mind, when he placed the relation of representative to elector on all fours with that of parent to child.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: To guardian.

HON. H. BRIGGS: He said that as it was not desirable that a parent should give anything of a pernicious nature to his child; so a representative ought not to bring anything of a dangerous and injurious nature before the public. A moment's thought will show how faulty that analogy is, for the electors choose the representatives, and no child ever chooses its parents. Other considerations brought forward by Mr. Whitcombe, as to preferring a dissolution to a referendum to gain the opinion of the people, I will notice in their proper place when I answer the two questions. But at the same time he finished up his speech by predicting all kinds of calamity to agricultural industries directly, and indirectly to every hope of Western Australian progress.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Quite right too.

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

HON. H. BRIGGS: This monstrous notion of federation was heartily taken up by the three bucolic representatives of the East Province, as vigorously and earnestly, as I believe wrongly and erroneously. These hon. members saw only ruin, disaster, and destruction in the Draft Bill presented by the ablest and best men of all Australia.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Why did they offer £300,000 as a subsidy?

HON. H. BRIGGS: That shows their generosity.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: All of whom they have kicked out of office now.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Their laborious efforts have been accepted by great majorities in five colonies.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: And now the Ministries are turned out.

HON. H. BRIGGS: It was federation that kept them in, the people sinking

minor differences until federation was carried.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: Quite right too.

HON. H. BRIGGS: If you heard the members of the East Province you would think the Governor's speech at the producers' banquet, beginning with a quotation from Horace, *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis!* "Happy the man who, far from the busy haunts of life, after the manner of the ancient race of mortals cultivates his paternal land with his own oxen, with mind unruffled by cares about money," seemed to ill describe the frantic fears and horrors of impending poverty with which this Bill threatened the whole farming community. But those hon. gentlemen might remember that the 1,587 electors of the East Province comprise the artisans, tradesmen, and shopkeepers of such centres as South Perth, Guildford, Midland Junction, Northam, and York.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: And they elected Mr. Lukin.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The East Province comprises such persons as I have referred to, besides the farming interests. All these wish to have a voice in this matter of nationhood, and to cast a vote like the people in the other colonies.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Where is the authority?

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Dempster, in a very temperate and very thoughtful speech, such as he always addresses to this House, must have made somewhat of a slip when almost in the same breath he spoke of the advent of ruinous prices to farmers, and dear food to consumers. A good authority informed me outside that among the list of Mr. Dempster's Western Australian products was butter, and that butter must be excluded for some time from our producing elements.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You are misquoting him altogether; you are mixing it up. I said "butter." I could give you the very words.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. President—

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think you can object to an interruption of that kind. The hon. member is only correcting.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The hon. member did mention butter amongst the products of this colony. Mr. Burgess in his speech afterwards said it should not be mentioned, but he spoke in such a rapid

manner as to be indistinct. I asked farmers who know, whether it was really the case that butter ought to be excluded from the list, and I find it is so.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: You are not going to federate for butter, are you?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Our butter production every year is increasing considerably.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Lukin admitted that, in his opinion, if the question of federation were put to the electors there would be a majority in favour of it, and he gave as the ground of that opinion that there was a vast number of disaffected people amongst our population. If you add an additional grievance, a marked distrust of the people, it will increase the feeling of disaffection and disgust which they have towards "the powers that be."

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They can get all those powers from the local Parliament. It is no use denying it.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Such an increase of grievances will only make confusion worse confounded. There is a story told in an old book about wise old councillors who had drunk deep of the well of wisdom in the courts of King Solomon. They advised a young and headstrong king, Rehoboam, to use conciliation and to redress grievances, but he did not follow their advice, adopting, instead, that of the young and inexperienced. The result was separation, and that separation has been permanent. I mention this fact for as much as it is worth, as the question of separation has been floating in the air in one part of the colony on account of grievances. Mr. Burges covered much ground, and in his long range of vituperation found little virtue in anyone concerned with federation. The Premier, the delegates, and all who were in favour of federation fell beneath his lash. He spoke of the great progress that had been made in agriculture and viticulture; this brought to my mind the fact that, when I came to this colony in 1881, grapes could be bought in the town of Fremantle at 2d. per pound, which this year you could not buy under 6d. or 8d. Surely the viticulturists are prospering, but it is at the cost of the community, to whom cheap and wholesome fruit is a necessary of life.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Grapes were supplied on the goldfields at less than that.

HON. H. LUKIN: They were sold in my district at 1½d. a pound, and went begging at that.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Burges spoke with considerable pride and dignity—and no doubt it was laudable—as the choice of a few hundred electors.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: A thousand. I was perfectly justified in doing it.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I say that it was with laudable pride and dignity that he contemplated himself as the chosen of those electors, and what seemed strange to me immediately afterwards was to notice with what scorn and contempt he treated the opinions and desires of many thousands of the same class of men who petitioned in favour of an appeal to the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We had no proof of it.

HON. H. BRIGGS: There was one pleasant incident of the hon. member's speech, where he mentioned that he encountered a party of miners who were stuck in a bog on a road under the control of a roads board of which he was the chairman or a member, and that, contrary to his expectation, instead of being met with abuse, he was treated with courtesy.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: That was not a federation speech.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I believe if he had a larger and closer acquaintance with the goldfields people all this ill-feeling would give way to respect and esteem.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Hear, hear. They are not bad fellows, we know.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I am not abusing them.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Piesse founded most of his remarks on the idea that the Enabling Act was still in existence. I thought—but I am speaking subject to correction—that when New South Wales failed to gain a majority of 80,000 for the Bill, we, as West Australians, could no longer entertain the subject, and that the Enabling Act, so far as that went, was dead to us.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: If so, we are without it altogether.

HON. H. BRIGGS: If that is the case, we simply rest on the Premier's

statement and signature as a member of the Council of Premiers lately; but however that may be, Mr. Piesse's vote "no" was neutralised by the "aye" of Mr. Crowder, so that it left the South-East Province of 877 electors represented by one vote, that of Mr. S. J. Haynes, one-third of the voting power going to represent what the last-mentioned gentleman vouched for, namely three-fourths of the electors in favour. Such inequality as that demands an appeal to the electors on this great question.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is the other way about.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Richardson plaintively asserts that federation would wipe out the North, with its teeming flocks and herds; but it seems to me that some great force, either a seismic or a cyclonic force must be exercised, if the acceptance of federation is going to have that effect. Mr. Richardson also professes the utmost concern for the pearling industry. Now, though the oyster is generally supposed to be calm, cautious—

HON. F. M. STONE: And collected.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Though the oyster is supposed to be reserved, and wanting in warmth and sympathy, we have it on illustrious if insane authority that "an oyster may be crossed in love," and so we respect his feelings and respect his self-contained character. It may give some relief to Mr. Richardson to know that the pearl oyster lives in a house attached to a rock below the sea, far away from all the storms and catastrophes of life, and all the rage and fury which federation will bring in its track.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: I was not alluding to fish when I spoke.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Mr. Whitcombe's remarks about consulting the people by means of the referendum give prominence to that part of his speech, and demand an answer to the question: Is reference to the electors of Western Australia the proper method of dealing with federation? Mr. Whitcombe described the referendum as a method unknown to either the British constitution or our own. True, the referendum cannot be found provided for in any chapter or section, for the all-sufficient reason that the British constitution is unwritten.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Show an instance of the use of the referendum in the last 100 years.

HON. H. BRIGGS: But the British constitution is firmly established on the solid foundation of the good sense, honour, and justice of the race, and this has enabled it to withstand the stress and storm of ages. The British Upper House stands serene, calm, courageous, unmoved by factious clamour, but keenly sensitive and close in touch with the aspirations of the people; occasionally blamed but always respected, for it protects popular freedom, defends and enlarges popular rights, neither drives nor tyrannises over people, but ever yields to a fair, full, and free expression of the will of the nation. Thus, the British Upper House sets a fine example to other Upper Houses, which should walk in such footsteps, however far behind, present company not excepted. The referendum has made its way into the English statute book, in the Public Libraries Act and the Municipal Act.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is a different matter altogether.

HON. H. BRIGGS: But there is the principle of referring questions to the people, and our own statute book also acknowledges the principle in the Australasian Federal Enabling Act, Section 28, which reads, "The draft Constitution, as finally adopted by the Convention, if approved by Parliament, shall be submitted for the decision of the electors for the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia by their vote." And though that Act has lapsed, the principle lives; and by this method the Premier proposed to seek for an expression of the opinion of the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: When?

HON. H. BRIGGS: The Premier proposed to seek for an expression of the opinion of the people, to assist in the settlement of the question of payment of members of Parliament.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But the Premier has since denied that he did so.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Parliament has not accepted the principle yet.

HON. H. BRIGGS: At this stage it may be well to consider how far the present Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council of this colony represent the voice and opinions of the people.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: We are sent here by the people.

HON. H. BRIGGS: At the last general election the roll of electors for the Legislative Assembly numbered 23,318, but to-day the number is 44,238, or nearly double. In considering these numbers it must be borne in mind that we have plural voting, so that the actual number of individual voters must be considerably less. As the roll for the Legislative Council has more interest for ourselves, I will give the number of electors in each province. In the Metropolitan Province there are 3,421 voters, and in the Central Province 1,754.

HON. R. C. BURGESS: Are these the present numbers?

HON. H. BRIGGS: This list is made up to the end of last month, and contains all the latest additions. In the East Province there are 1,587 voters; in the North Province, 163; and in the North-East Province, 1,854.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There are not many more in the North-East Province than in the East Province.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The hon. member will take note that I am simply reading a list of figures, and no feeling on my part will alter a single unit.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I am only drawing your attention to a fact.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The hon. member seems to caution me to be careful what I am saying, whereas I am merely giving figures copied from the official list.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member states there are 1,587 voters in the East Province and 1,854 in the North-East Province, and I simply drew his attention to the fact that there was not much difference in the numbers. I am not in the least disputing the accuracy of the hon. member's figures.

HON. H. BRIGGS: In the South-East Province there are 876 voters, in the South-West Province 719, and in the West Province 2,425, or a total of 11,800 voters, which is a considerable increase on 7,100 which Mr. Matheson gave as the number of electors at the last election for this House. Mr. Whitcombe pointed to a dissolution of Parliament and an appeal to the electors as the proper method of settling the federal question; but such a dissolution would

not affect the members of this House and would afford no remedy.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But it would show public opinion on a constitutional basis.

HON. H. BRIGGS: It has also been asserted in this Chamber, as a ground for resisting the popular voice, that we represent property, as contrasted with members in the other House who represent people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Who said that?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We represent people as much as do members of the other House.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Who said the members of this Chamber do not represent people?

HON. H. BRIGGS: I do not so read our position, but the assertion has been made in the House this evening.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: By whom?

HON. H. BRIGGS: The Colonial Secretary said that the Legislative Assembly represent people, while the Legislative Council represent interests.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What does "interests" mean? Surely the hon. member ought to explain.

HON. H. BRIGGS: In my opinion the people are the wealth of the country.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about interests?

HON. H. BRIGGS: The people till the soil, work the mines, and ply the trade, and serve, support, sustain, and develop the country. All classes are interdependent; and when nationhood is in question—when all are members of one body, with common interests in the present and common hopes for the future—it becomes a matter of justice that every person in the colony should have a voice in the settlement. As a matter of uniformity our people should have the same duty put on them here as their brethren and friends had in the neighbouring colonies. We must remember that out of our population of 170,000 it may fairly be said that 100,000 have come from the other colonies.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Never mind; they are Western Australians now.

HON. H. BRIGGS: When visiting a school at Kalgoorlie, I found that in a class of about 86 children, there were only two who said they were Western Australians; and in Subiaco a similar proportion may be met. I mention this



to show that the vast proportion of the population are used to the rights exercised by the people in the other colonies; and it would be a great pity not to give new-comers a welcome, and try to make their conditions, politically at least, equal to those in the countries from which they came.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What has federation to do with political equality?

HON. H. BRIGGS: We want all our people, new-comers as well as those on the electoral roll, to have a voice in the great question of nationhood; and that is what federation has to do with political equality. Modesty, if nothing else, ought to prevent us from setting up our opinion in opposition to the opinion of six Legislative Assemblies and five Legislative Councils, representing four millions of our brethren.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We have nothing to do with their opinion.

HON. H. BRIGGS: We may not be bound by their opinion, but modesty ought to teach us not to lightly set up our opinion against the opinion of others.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What nonsense!

HON. H. BRIGGS: Infallibility is not for us.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: We are isolated from the other colonies.

HON. H. LUKIN: Circumstances alter cases.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The second question to be settled is whether the present time is opportune? Is Western Australia ripe for entering federation?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Certainly not.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I maintain that the disadvantages of delay will prove insuperable.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You have no "modesty" on that point.

HON. H. BRIGGS: Take the question of finance. This colony will soon be a borrower on the London market, and the Commonwealth will doubtless be on the same errand. How will Western Australia fare, compared with the Federal Government, supported by the united credits of the Commonwealth?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: This colony will be all right, if we stand out of federation.

HON. H. BRIGGS: "A poor man is hated even by his own neighbour, but the

rich hath many friends;" and will our isolation as a borrower be as splendid as has been said? Again, look at federation as it will affect the mail service, in regard to which there has recently been correspondence between the Premier of this colony and the Premiers and officials of the other colonies.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is another bogie.

HON. H. BRIGGS: From this correspondence, which has been published in the Press, there appears at least a possibility, and to some minds, a probability, that the United Commonwealth will refuse to subsidise a fleet of mail steamers to call at other than federal ports.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What has the Colonial Secretary told us to-night?

HON. H. BRIGGS: If the Commonwealth should take that stand, this colony will be completely passed by.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The other colonies have shown the cloven hoof in that matter.

HON. H. BRIGGS: After having expended vast sums of money in trying to make Fremantle the chief port of Australia, we would be more out of the direct road and more round the corner than ever; and I feel strongly that delay in joining federation will jeopardise our vital interests and prove inimical to our prosperity.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You do not seem to mind jeopardising the whole of the colony's finances.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I do not think there is much force in the argument, that such conduct on the part of the Commonwealth would prove the weakness of federal sentiment.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Ah! Sentiment!

HON. H. BRIGGS: We have heard in this House that federal feeling will fizzle out; but it is surely unreasonable to expect federal sentiment before federation is accomplished. Realise federation as a fact, and federal sentiment will follow; and it is not wise to urge, as an objection to reform, an evil which it is the very object of reform to overcome. Others would ask us to wait for federation until we were attacked by some foreign power; then, under the stress of fear, rush together and seek for protection and gain peace by federating. Such a principle, I think, would be dangerous and

utterly ignoble, like feeble birds flocking together for protection at the approach of the hawk. I come now to the greatest disadvantage before us: that is the obvious and acknowledged sacrifices we must make by the dislocation of the present sources of revenue. I acknowledge that, but the matter only needs arrangement. I feel sure the Treasurer could so arrange matters that no harm would come to the colony. We know that the Premier has brought in a dividend tax, and that will help in a great measure to get over the discrepancies. If these sacrifices are necessarily incidental to the federal form of government, their existence in other federations has not proved the undesirability of federal union. We do not hear of citizens of countries which are already federalised, such as Germany, Switzerland, the United States, and Canada, regretting the step taken. They total up the gains and the losses and find a balance of gain.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They did not come in together.

HON. H. BRIGGS: With regard to the argument of precedent, the United States in 1787, and Canada in 1867, did not think they were premature in the work of federation. This is what the Marquis of Dufferin, a Governor-General of Canada, wrote on federation:

This much I have no hesitation in saying, that in the case of Canada, her increased prosperity, self-respect and prestige, as well as the sentiment of nationality, have been immensely stimulated by federation. Nor throughout the six and a-half years during which I presided over the Government of the Dominion, did the union which had recently been brought about seem to work in any other way than to the advantage of every member of it.

I have just read the debate in the Legislative Council of British Columbia which took place in 1870, and I find there pretty much the same fears and alarms and evil prophecies as to federation that we hear around us in this Chamber.

HON. F. M. CROWDER: But they stood out.

HON. H. BRIGGS: In accepting a reference to the people with the hope of joining as an original State, we want no adventurous courage: the path has already been trodden. We want no exploring: other prosperous federations have shown us the way. On December 11th, 1895, the present Secretary of

State for the Colonies, Mr. Chamberlain, presided at a banquet given to Sir Gerard Smith, our present Governor, just before he left for Western Australia; and Mr. Chamberlain, with his wide grasp of colonial matters and intimate acquaintance with the work and prosperity of every part of a world-wide empire, was able to say this, with happy forethought, it seems to me:

I look forward to a time, which I think is not very distant, when our great colonies of Australasia will imitate the wise example of Canada and will agree to unite for the purposes which are common to all. I see with satisfaction the great step in that direction which has just been taken by the Legislature of New South Wales, and I feel confident that Western Australia will not be behind the sister colony.

This was no harebrained enthusiast, but a calm, cautious, and hopeful statesman, who thought four years ago that Western Australia was ripe for federation.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: You are only reading a portion of the speech.

HON. H. BRIGGS: I have an exact copy of the speech here, and I am reading the part in which Mr. Chamberlain says he thinks that Western Australia is ripe for federation. That was in 1895. It was a semi-official speech, spoken by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was giving advice to colonial officials present at the send-off of the Governor of this colony. Now every other colony on the continent of Australia and Tasmania have agreed to join the federation, and even Queensland, which was not represented at the Convention, has agreed to join, yet we are counselled to wait two, three, or five years, and during that time we shall have to trudge along behind the car of triumphant Australia. Postponement of union means increasing our difficulties, for the disturbance of vested interests will ever increase. The increasing years will add to our difficulties, and every step which we neglect to take in regard to union will be a step further off. Procrastination only widens the gulf of separation. If we do not at this juncture put ourselves in the way of joining as an original State, we shall have to sue as suppliants, while now we may enter as members of the household. In the nature of things, it will be to our detriment if we have not now the prescience to desire union and

the courage to achieve it. An ex-Premier of Great Britain, Lord Rosebery, enforced this thought by quoting these lines, with which I will close :—

Miss not the occasion, by the forelock take

That subtle power of never-ceasing time,  
Lest a mere moment's putting off should make  
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.

I have great pleasure in opposing the amendment moved by Mr. Whitcombe.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (South-East): In debating the question now before the House, I take it we are practically discussing federation as it applies to Western Australia. Arising out of this discussion there are several questions which we are called upon to answer; firstly, as to whether the Bill as amended by the Premiers in Melbourne, without the authority of their Parliaments, shall be sent to the people; secondly, as to whether the same Bill, with the amendments attached and as agreed to by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, shall likewise go to the people; thirdly, whether both or neither of these Bills shall be sent to the people. In discussing federation and the Commonwealth Bill, there are many points upon which I think we agree. I take it we are all agreed on the principle of federation. I think all look forward to the day when the whole of the Australian colonies will be united under one federation, and I go further and I think all look forward to the day when the whole of the English-speaking nations of the world will be united under one Imperial Federation.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is as it ought to be.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: All are agreed that this is the most important question ever placed before the Legislature of any of the Australian colonies; by far and away it is the most important question that has ever claimed the attention of this House. If federation is the outcome of the discussion to-night, and the Bill goes to the people, then it is the last important question which will come before the House, unless it may be looked upon as important to sit in this Chamber and discuss the ways and means of helping a population which may be ruined by the acceptance of the Commonwealth Bill. In speaking to the motion, I must admit I feel somewhat at

a loss where to start. We are surrounded on all sides by arguments which are really unanswerable against the adoption of federation. I am at a loss to discover one point in its favour. Before discussing the matter from its most important bearings, I would like to say a word or two as to the position I have taken up on this question. It is now close on six years since I was elected to the Legislative Council, and on the first occasion when the question of federation came up I opposed it, and I have opposed it on every occasion since. I have opposed it since the Bill has gone to the people of the other colonies, and I have placed fully before the electors in my constituency my reasons for so doing; and I flatter myself that I was one of the first members who did so, for, after all, in the light of the present day, I am still opposed to federation. After the Government Actuary has gone into the financial aspect of the question I find that within a small amount, the figures which I put before my constituents have not in one iota been altered. Although opposing federation, when the question of sending delegates to the Convention came before the House I voted for delegates to be sent, believing as I did in the principle of federation, also that a time might come when Western Australia would become ripe for union, therefore it was right that we should send delegates to help to frame a Bill, so that when the time did arrive for Western Australia to join, we should join without disadvantage. Had I foreseen what I see now, I would have voted against delegates going to the Convention: anyhow, the outcome was that delegates were sent to Adelaide. Afterwards when the resignations of several members were sent in, as pointed out by Mr. Briggs, it became necessary to appoint other delegates in their places. I was one of those delegates to be appointed, one of those unfortunate people who are to-day accused of having gone back on the interests of this country; in fact, in not having done our duty by Western Australia. It is not my intention to-night to dwell on that point: it does not affect me here or there. Some people only look at the matter in the light of the present day; and looking at it in that light, perhaps there is some justification for saying the delegates did

not do their duty to Western Australia. I had not the advantage of the members who preceded me to Adelaide in the matter of discussing federation before I arrived at Melbourne, but at the same time I was astonished to find the unanimity of opinion amongst the delegates as to the position Western Australia stood in. The opinion then expressed was that it was utterly impossible to conceive a position by which Western Australia could enter the union. This opinion was held throughout the whole of the session in Sydney; and at the time it was decided to adjourn the Convention to Melbourne, I believe it was an understood thing that the Finance Committee should, during the recess, give their attention to drawing up some agreement whereby Western Australia could be allowed to enter. When we went back to Melbourne I found the same feeling still in existence. The opinion of the delegates had not been altered as to the utter impossibility of Western Australia federating on the same terms as the other Australian colonies, and the Finance Committee were prepared to bring forward proposals. One of these proposals was that the other Australian colonies should pay to Western Australia the amount of the loss that she would suffer through joining the union, which was put down at from £250,000 to £300,000 a year. When this question was mooted, Sir John Forrest, with great indignation, arose and refused to have anything to do with the motion, stating that this colony did not desire charity, and that if we desired to enter the union we were prepared to tax ourselves. I make no apology whatever to-night in going fully into the matter, because I recognise that it is the duty of every member of the House, speaking through this House to the people, to thoroughly discuss the subject from top to bottom. I wish to read certain extracts to show what was the position at the time Sir John Forrest made a certain proposal. The position practically speaking was this. It was admitted on all sides that Western Australia could not by any means whatever, unless something special was done, enter the union. I will first of all read a couple of extracts from leading actuaries in the colonies. Mr. Teece, who I think all members know is respected, is looked upon as one of the

leading actuaries in the Australian colonies. He said :

To procure a revenue which would provide for the admission of Western Australia to the federation, a sum of £11,000,000 would have to be raised from customs and excise; and the special provision made for Western Australia would only effect this result temporarily. No such revenue could, of course, be raised, and it is quite obvious that Western Australia must be left out of consideration. She is not yet ripe for federation, and she would be extremely unwise to accept the Bill. Mr. Coghlan, the Actuary of New South Wales, in speaking of the matter, said :

If the Bill is allowed to stand as it is, both Tasmania and Western Australia would be involved in financial disaster. And in this connection the words of Mr. R. M. Johnston, the Tasmanian Statistician, may receive attention. On the subject of the operation of the Convention financial scheme he writes as follows :—"Tasmania, whose direct taxation is already overstrained and oppressive, would require to double nearly her existing land and income tax—an impossibility—to enable her Treasurer to discharge her remaining State obligations and functions. While to Western Australia the result would be such that even her present great resources would fail to save her from utter financial collapse."

HON. A. P. MATHESON : That was on a *per capita* distribution.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : It was not on one single point at all.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Yes.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : Those are the opinions of two of the leading actuaries in Australia.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : On an entirely different financial proposal.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : At the Convention in Melbourne, Sir George Turner said :

Western Australia I have always admitted to be in an abnormal position, and it must be dealt with separately from the other colonies. I never take Western Australia into consideration in dealing with any question with regard to finance, because I admit that it is in such a position that it must have separate treatment.

He says further on :

At present they receive £380,000 or £390,000 from these intercolonial duties. Although the people there may save some small portion of that on account of the duties being taken off, I think the probabilities are that the people will have to pay for most of the goods that they import about the same as they do now. I do not see how the people will save any large amount. No doubt some lines may be and will be reduced, but I fancy the people of Western Australia will find, after the duties are taken off, that they will have to pay nearly the

same for their goods as they do now. Even if they do save something, it will be very hard for the Government of the colony to persuade the people that they have made such great savings, that they have the money in another pocket, and that they should put their hands into that pocket and take out some of that money in order to hand it over to the Treasurer. They will then want to know—"What benefits have we gained by federation?" The vast majority will be inclined to say that they have derived no benefit, while they have incurred very serious losses. Mr. Reid tells us that if we have a Federal Treasurer who is a genius, he may be able to so frame this uniform tariff that none of the colonies will suffer any losses.

**HON. C. E. DEMPSTER:** He would have to be a genius.

**HON. F. T. CROWDER:** He would so. Sir George Turner also said:

I am quite of opinion, so far as Western Australia is concerned, that if we are to induce her to come into the federation we must do something to assist the representative men in that colony to bring her in with us. We have been told by Sir John Forrest very earnestly, and I have no doubt honestly, that he and his honourable friends will have a very hard task before them to persuade the people of his colony to join us at all. And when we look at the great distance which divides Western Australia from the rest of the colonies, and remember that there are hundreds and thousands of people there who are hoping to develop their own natural industries and their own manufacturing industries, and that through intercolonial free-trade they will be seriously injured in that respect, I can quite understand the difficulties that will arise, and that Sir John Forrest and his colleagues will have a very hard task indeed to induce their colony to join us.

Then again Mr. Walker, who was quoted by some hon. gentleman, said:

I presume we all agree that, even if we have to pay for it, we must have Western Australia in the federation.

They are going to have us if they possibly can.

**HON. R. G. BURGESS:** There is no doubt about that.

**HON. C. E. DEMPSTER:** They want us.

**HON. F. T. CROWDER:** Mr. Walker says:

Probably £200,000 would more nearly represent the loss which Western Australia will suffer if intercolonial free-trade is brought about. As a representative of New South Wales, I do not think that colony would grudge having to pay one-third of that amount—that is, a little over £60,000 a year—for the great advantage of absolute intercolonial free-trade. . . . I think that the advantage of free-trade with that colony would not be

dearly purchased by the expenditure of £150,000 a year for five years.

Sir Philip Fysh, who at present is representing Tasmania as Agent-General in England—I do not know whether he was in the Ministry then, but he has for many years been at the head of the Ministry—in speaking on this matter, said:

It is admitted that Western Australia occupies a very exceptional position. The bare fact of her collecting over 35 per cent. of her present customs duties on intercolonial products, and the fact that she cannot afford to lose this revenue of £380,000 immediately, point to the necessity for something being done.

Further on he said:

Victoria, at any rate, has been living on her bonus system, and her producers have become solidified by acquiring capital and attaining a good position. In Western Australia, however, where production is in a younger stage, the farmers have not yet attained a position which will enable them to compete with the producers in the other colonies, and during the next five years it may be presumed that they will endeavour to secure that position for themselves. . . . I do not desire to speak for the Western Australian representatives. They are capable of speaking for themselves. We must admit, as reasonable men, however, that they are in an extraordinary position, and therefore some extraordinary means must be devised to meet their case.

Mr. Solomon, who was leader of the Opposition in South Australia, spoke in reference to this matter, and I may here say that Mr. Solomon was one of the few representatives from South Australia who had anything like a fair idea as to the requirements of this country.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT:** He has been here.

**HON. F. T. CROWDER:** Yes. Mr. Solomon said:

But in regard to Western Australia we have a case which is not a question of the loss of a twentieth or a fortieth of the customs revenue, or of a loss of £100,000 out of a revenue of £2,000,000, but a loss of nearly a third of the total of the customs revenue of the colony.

But everyone recognises, and has recognised from the inception of this Convention, that in dealing with these commercial questions and with the finances of the colonies, it is absolutely necessary to make a special exception in regard to Western Australia. The question as to how this exception was to be met, as to the practical lines upon which it would be better to devise a scheme to suit Western Australia, was left to the Finance Committee. They have endeavoured, from the start, to thresh the question out. It was left to them to suggest some means by which the

difficulty could be surmounted; and even though the Finance Committee are blamed for not showing any brilliant flashes of financial genius in discovering some new patent way, by a fairy wand or otherwise, of disposing of the difficulty that faces us, the thing was looked at from its practical aspect, and each Treasurer on the committee, and every member on the committee, tried to imagine himself in the position that Sir John Forrest and his colleagues are placed in, and ask himself how, if so situated, he could possibly go to his colony with a proposal that meant a loss of a third of its revenue, and advise it to come into the federation on those conditions. The members of the Finance Committee recognised that, under these circumstances, it was necessary to give the people of Western Australia special treatment in order to induce them to join the union. Every honourable member recognises that if there is one colony of the group which the older colonies specially desire to see in the federation—perhaps because of their selfish wish to extend the markets of their own producers—it is Western Australia. Western Australia, with its growing population and its immense demand for colonial produce, is the market we all desire to open up for our general trade, and it is for the Convention to determine whether we shall treat Western Australia, not with liberality, because that is a word which need not be used in this connection, but with a degree of fairness, and a recognition of the fact that she must be assisted in bearing the loss which federation will entail upon her, or whether we shall make up our minds to leave her out of the union. The conclusion of the Finance Committee was that it was necessary to give special terms to Western Australia; that in asking this desirable partner to join us we should say that, as she was sacrificing more than the rest of us, we should give her special terms in the adjustment of the finances.

I may inform hon. members that these quotations are only a few that have been picked out carelessly among dozens and dozens just as strong as those I have read, and I say without hesitation that we had arrived at a time when the delegates at the Convention had come to the conclusion that something special must be done to suit the case of Western Australia. Now I go back to the point where I left off in regard to the proposal made by Sir John Forrest, when he introduced what is known as Clause 95, or otherwise as the sliding-scale clause.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Premier did not introduce it, though he assented to it.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The Premier supported it, and I regret very much Sir John Forrest did not see fit on that occasion, or on any other occasion, to

consult with his co-delegates at the Convention. I should not, perhaps, blame him altogether, because the blame may have lain as much with the delegates.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: No.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: If some of the delegates had spoken on the matter, I have no doubt they would have been consulted, in the same way as other delegates were consulted by their Premiers. But as it was, on that and all other occasions we went into the Convention totally unaware of the position to be taken up by our leader, to whom we owed allegiance as Premier of this colony. Previously to this questions had arisen of importance to the colony, and on those occasions, on account of the loyalty I considered I owed to him, I supported the Premier. On this occasion, however, so strong were my feelings that my duty to Western Australia overcame my loyalty to the Premier, and I absolutely refused to support the motion. I think I mentioned the matter at the time to Mr. Hackett; but, in any case, no notice was taken of my protest, and when the matter came on for discussion, I had to rise, much to my regret, and speak in opposition. To put the matter in a nutshell, I will read exactly what I said, as follows:—

I regret that I cannot support the motion of the hon. member (Mr. Deakin) or the amendment moved by the right hon. Sir John Forrest, because, under those proposals, I cannot conceive that any man in Western Australia would be mad enough to vote for federation. What is the position which those proposals would place Western Australia in? On the one hand the people would be taxed by the Federal Parliament, and they would also have to be taxed again under this clause. It is all very well for members of the Convention, including delegates from Western Australia, to argue that Western Australia may not require to be taxed, but I may point out that once she joins the federation and intercolonial free-trade takes place, the income which she derives at the present moment, or the greatest part of it, the part derived from wine, beer, and spirits, will diminish; because under intercolonial free-trade Victoria and New South Wales will swamp her markets immediately with wine, spirits, and beer sent from those colonies, and the excise duties on that wine, spirits and beer will be collected in the colony where those articles are manufactured.

Mr. Solomon: Western Australia will receive credit for her consumption.

Mr. Crowder: Again, under the sliding scale, is it possible to conceive for a moment that any Western Australian merchant will vote for a

clause which simply means that every merchant must empty his warehouse on the 31st of December, or else make a loss of 20 per cent. on all the goods he bought during that year?

Mr. Solomon: "20 per cent of the duty."

Mr. Crowder: Twenty per cent. of the duty is the difference between a dead loss and a gain. It is all very well to argue that merchants can keep their stocks down and arrange their shipments so that they will arrive in the beginning of January, but if that were done it would mean starvation, as the consumers would be blocked, and could not get the articles they required. I do not wish to detain the committee, except to say that I am a believer in federation, and I feel deeply that the representatives of the different colonies have a difficult task before them in trying to induce their people to make some concession to Western Australia. I feel that, and I would say that if they can see that any of these different proposals which have been made will jeopardise federation in their colonies, then let them strike out all these proposals, and leave it to Western Australia to come into the federation when she thinks fit. I am a believer in federation, but I am no believer in federation with starvation. What I desire is that Western Australia should be treated justly. But if treating her justly will jeopardise federation in any of the other colonies, then I say strike out the proposals and federate: we shall come in sooner or later.

Of course, my remarks there had no effect; just as much effect, probably, as would the voices of five members sent to represent this colony in the Commonwealth Parliament. The question was put and carried, and every member, so far as I know, at the Convention understood it to amount to a concession that would give Western Australia at least seven years in which to build up our agricultural and mercantile industries. It was thought that at the end of seven years this colony would be in such a position as not to suffer in any way from competition caused by intercolonial free-trade. It was further understood that so far as the finances of the colony were concerned, the Government would, at the end of the seven years, find themselves in no worse position than they are at the present day. But that the idea held by the Convention will be realised I do not think anyone for a moment will maintain. In the first place, our duties will have to be re-enacted, a point that was never for a moment dreamed of at the Convention. It was considered by the Convention that so far as Western Australia is concerned, she would, on the proclamation of the Commonwealth, con-

tinue collecting under the tariff then in force. But instead we now find it will be necessary to re-enact the tariff. It is not my intention to-night to deal with the question of whether the Government here will be powerful enough to re-enact the tariff or not. The position I take is that the seven years will be cut down by at least 18 months; because inside six months the rest of Australia will federate, and intercolonial free-trade will commence. That practically gives this colony about five and a half years in which to reap the benefit of her own taxation, and build up the revenue and manufactures. It is admitted on all sides that the sliding scale will have a most injurious effect on Western Australia. We shall have, I take it, about 18 months in which to collect the present duties, and then the sliding scale of 20 per cent. will commence and go on, until at the end of five years the Government of the colony, owing to the loss on account of intercolonial free-trade and the displacement of trade, will find themselves, according to the figures as worked out by Mr. Owen, the Government Actuary, £300,000 to the bad. But having gone carefully through the calculations myself, I make the loss nearly half a million.

HON. A. P. MATHERSON: Good gracious! you do not dispute the Government Actuary?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Yes; I take that liberty, and I venture to say that if Western Australia is foolish enough to try the experiment of federation, my figure will be found nearer the mark. It can be quite understood that with the heavy, almost prohibitive tariff the Commonwealth will level against imports from abroad, the best part of the goods now being imported by Western Australia from foreign countries will come from Victoria and the other colonies duty-free. It is urged by those who desire federation at any price that the uniform duty will not be a heavy one; but I maintain it will, and I can show good ground for my assertion. It is acknowledged on all sides that the tariff of Victoria is exceedingly heavy, in most instances three or four times that of Western Australia. At the same time, Victoria has a large free list, and if that colony is to enter the union and not suffer heavy financial loss, the tariff imposed by her at the present day will have to be pretty well the tariff of the

Commonwealth Parliament. To show that I am not alone in my contention, I should like to read an extract from the *Age* newspaper, Melbourne, of 1st November, 1899. Speaking of the present Victorian tariff, the *Age* said :

The present Victorian tariff has attained high-water mark in the precision with which it fits the special circumstances of this colony ; but it is most readily conceded by the warmest admirers of the Victorian tariff that, owing to its very extensive free list, it is too low as a revenue-producer to meet the probable financial exigences of a Federal Treasurer. Still, most of the Sydney delegates expressed the opinion that the Victorian tariff must be largely taken as the model on which the Federal tariff will be drafted.

The Melbourne Chamber of Manufactures held a conference on this question, and their report, which appeared in the *West Australian* on the 9th November this year, stated :

At the conference of the Intercolonial Chamber of Manufactures held in Melbourne, one of the first matters considered was, which Australian tariff should be taken as the basis of the proposed federal tariff. The conference declared for the Victorian tariff, and began the work of building the federal schedules on that foundation.

It will be seen that in Victoria they are already preparing for the adoption of the tariff of that colony as the uniform tariff. The report of the Chamber of Manufactures goes on :

The delegates decided that the federal tariff should be a high one, the view being taken and acted upon that if the Commonwealth is to be expected successfully to compete with the manufacturing countries of the world, where cheap labour is employed, the measure of protection afforded to the industries, existing and prospective, should be substantial.

There is no getting away from the fact that the tariff imposed by the Federal Parliament will be a heavy one, and must cause a great displacement of trade, from which Western Australia will seriously suffer. I shall not dwell much further on the question of the sliding scale, for the simple reason that, so far as I am concerned, I am not willing to federate, even if the concession asked for in this respect be granted to us. What concerns us most is the position in which the Government of this colony will be placed at the end of the five years. They will not have sufficient revenue to carry on the development of the country, and it is hopeless to expect they will be able to

borrow the money for that purpose, because investors always look at the position of a colony and its ability to repay not only interest, but sinking fund. I am confident the British investor will not lend money to Western Australia, when he finds that the customs revenue has sunk £300,000. It must be apparent to any man not biased in favour of federation that we shall not be able to build up our industries ; because with the five years' questionable protection which will be afforded, it will be utterly impossible to compete with the industries of other colonies, especially those of Victoria, which have been established for half a century under heavy protective duties and heavy bonuses. To say that this colony would have a chance under these conditions would be just as reasonable as to expect a man lately established and without capital, to compete with another man possessed of large capital and established many years. For myself, I take up the position that five and a-half years of questionable protection would render the Government unable to develop the country, which would have to be developed in some other way, if we must not sink into oblivion. Our industries would be little better than they are to-day, so far as self-preservation is concerned ; and the question we have to decide is whether, under the circumstances, we can afford to let our industries "go to the wall." I would ask hon. members whether they are prepared to allow the agricultural industry of Western Australia to be wiped out.

HON. A. G. JENKINS : No.

HON. F. T. CROWDER : In all other portions of the world it is conceded that the agricultural industry is the backbone of a country. A few people in Western Australia think otherwise, but I think it is conceded everywhere that gold may come and help to build up this backbone, and help to make fortunes and to increase the prosperity of a place, but when the gold has gone it is the produce from the ground that the country has to look to for its continual well-doing. I would like to point out to the House the position taken up by the Government of this country in regard to the gold industry. We know that soon after the advent of responsible government gold was discovered, and the Government then seeing the great market



in this colony, and that owing to the non-production of the requirements of the people on the goldfields everything was going out of the country and nothing coming in, that the wealth was passing away, the Government used every endeavour to secure settlers and to place them on the soil. With the aid of Parliament the Government passed the most liberal land laws, and they went further and gave land away, and still further they established an Agricultural Bank to help the people after they had settled on the land. The Government allowed it to be understood and known throughout the length and breadth of Australia that they were protecting and fostering the agricultural industry, and intended to do so until the country could export produce. When we have through our markets, and the liberal land laws, and the protective policy of the Government, induced thousands of people to settle on the soil and throw in their lot with us, for no other reason than that, we should be very careful in accepting the Commonwealth Bill which will simply break faith with these people. I intend to quote a few figures to show hon. members what the position of the colony was five years ago in regard to the quantity of land taken up, and what was the production. The figures will show what the protective policy of the Government has done in developing Western Australia. During the last five years 1,200,388 acres of land were taken up for farming purposes. In 1894 there were 21,433 acres under wheat, and the total number of bushels of wheat grown for that year was 170,351. In 1895 there were 23,241 acres under cultivation, and the return was 188,077 bushels; in 1896 there were 31,000 acres under cultivation, and the return was 243,928 bushels; in 1897 there were 38,705 acres under cultivation and the return was 480,595 bushels; in 1898 there were 75,031 acres under wheat, giving a return of 870,909 bushels; so that in five years, owing to the action of the Government and the markets which we have here, the land under cultivation doubled.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: More than trebled.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Yes, more than trebled. Is this an industry, which so far as we are concerned to-day is in

its infancy, that any business man or any man sent here to deal with the interests of the colony can afford to throw to the wall? I certainly say "no." We induced people to come here: when I say we, the Parliament upheld the protective policy of the Government, and we induced the people to come here and settle on the land. If federation is accepted, then I say the people who have recently settled on the land will have to give up farming. I will deal further with that matter later on. Those who have been settled on the land for many years and have established the farming industry may be able to hang on.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And starve.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I should not like to face the difficulties. If we go back on our promise to the people we have induced to come here, we are deliberately breaking faith with them. I know Mr. Matheson will perhaps, by and by, tell the House that my opinions in regard to farming are addle-headed ones, and that there is no truth in them; and being such an old farmer himself, Mr. Matheson will know better than I do. I maintain the agricultural industry will have no chance whatever of competing with the farming industry in the other colonies.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Unless spoon-fed; that is your contention.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The agricultural industry in the other colonies has been spoon-fed for 30 years.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And the industry would die there if it were not spoon-fed now.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They would swallow the spoon if it was given to them.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: If it was silver.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They would even take brass. I say it will be impossible for our farmers to compete with the old settlers in Victoria and South Australia. In those colonies the farming community have been settled for years. They were settled on the land when the prices were high and under a heavy protective duty of 8s. a bushel on wheat, until at the present time, with their land cleared, their machinery bought and everything else provided they are in a position to take a less price and a less profit, and to compete favourably with Western Australia. The farmers in the other colonies have had, besides the

protective duty of 8s. a bushel, bonuses in kind. Over £100,000 has been spent in Victoria, and money has been spent in South Australia in the establishment of colleges to teach the sons of farmers how to farm at a profit. It has been argued that if the farming industry in this colony cannot produce, and cannot live with the protection that is afforded by the freight between this and the other colonies, then the farmers here should give up farming. People who make this assertion know nothing about the matter, and they do not take the trouble to inquire into it. The freight from Victoria to this colony is nothing at all.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was 5s. a ton last year.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It costs more to bring wheat from Katanning and other places in the colony than it does to bring wheat from the other colonies to Fremantle, so that the freight as a protection is nonsense. Passing from the agricultural industry of the colony, let us look at the viticultural. This colony is specially adapted for the growth of the vine, and I may say that during the last five years the area in this colony planted with vines, under the protective policy of the Government, has doubled, and there are now 7,000 acres of land planted with vines in this country. We all know, especially those who have tried it, that it is a pretty precarious game to plant vineyards. In the first instance it is most costly, and in the second place it takes five years before any return can be hoped for. In these circumstances what chance has any grower of vines in this colony in competition with Victoria. We must remember that the Victorian vineyards have been planted for years; they have been brought to perfection under heavy protective duties and bonuses. At the present time, owing to the want of fresh markets, Victoria and New South Wales are simply deluged with wine. At present you can buy wine in Victoria and New South Wales at from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per gallon. Would anyone, considering all this, plant another acre of ground with vines in this country? Would anyone who is in the industry attempt to plant another acre with the hope of getting 1s. 6d. per gallon for wine? I do not think so. I now pass from the agricultural and viticultural industries of the colony to discuss the

question of whether Western Australia is prepared to sacrifice its manufacturing industries, because, to my mind, under federation these industries will be sacrificed—there will be no chance of their living. Federation, to all intents and purposes, means the creation of large monopolies and the wiping out of small industries. The worst thing for Western Australia is that these large monopolies, when established, will not be created here but in the other colonies. A man will not start an industry where there are only 170,000 people to supply, when that man can go to Victoria or New South Wales and have a market of four millions of people, including the 170,000 people in Western Australia. We all know that the Victorian industries have been established under a heavy protective duty, which to all intents and purposes was prohibitive so far as the other colonies were concerned. To give some idea of what those duties were, so that when I travel further on I can show the stupidity of thinking that Western Australia could hope to compete with industries built up on those lines, I will quote a few of the leading articles, and will go on with my argument afterwards. On apparel the duty in Western Australia is 15 per cent., and in Victoria 35 per cent.; on boots, Western Australia 15 per cent., Victoria 20 per cent.; furniture, Western Australia 20 per cent., Victoria 30 per cent.; nails, Western Australia free, Victoria 60 per cent.; machinery, Western Australia 5 per cent., Victoria 25 per cent.; leather for belting, Western Australia free, Victoria 35 per cent.; harness and saddlery, Western Australia 15 per cent., Victoria 30 per cent.; sugar, Western Australia free, Victoria £6 per ton; tea, Western Australia free, Victoria 3d. per pound; flour, Western Australia 30s. per ton, Victoria 112s. per ton; wheat, Western Australia 6d. per bushel, Victoria 1s. 9d. per bushel; still wine, Western Australia 6s. 6d. per gallon, Victoria 8s. per gallon. Not only have these manufacturing industries been helped by this protection, but they have had bonuses to aid them, which have practically assisted them to pay for their plant and machinery. So far as the bonuses are concerned, I may state that the Victorian Government have paid in bonuses for the help of those manufac-

tures £750,000; and to show you how cunning they are, I may mention they placed in this Commonwealth Bill a clause to the effect that any bonus passed before 1889 was to stand good.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: And how many are there still current? They have nearly all expired.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There are bonuses to the extent of £150,000 still unexpired. Western Australia under this Bill is not allowed to grant any bonus, and yet Victoria is to be permitted to compete with her, and there are big bonuses for that colony's industries. Whichever way we look at it, it is absurd for industries that have been built up for 30 or 40 years with heavy protective duties and close upon one million in bonuses, to be brought into competition with the industries here. Mr. Matheson will say that the industries here are small and next to nothing, but I will tell you that the largest manufactures in the world have sprung out of just as small beginnings as the manufactures in this colony. The largest manufactures in the world must have had a beginning the same as our industries.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: England and America.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I say that our industries, small as they are, employ at the present time 10,000 people, and we who want population to develop our country cannot afford to treat with a sneer of contempt even 10,000 people. Any man who views the matter in a common-sense light must admit that it is far better, in the interests of everyone concerned in Western Australia, to feed those people with their wives, friends, and relations in this colony, than to send our money out and to keep in luxury persons in Victoria. I say, keep the people in the country. Then you will be told later on that the duties imposed by the Commonwealth Parliament will be so prohibitive that we will find the English manufacturers coming to Western Australia and opening manufactures here. That assertion is perfectly absurd. When the Joint Select Committee held their meetings and examined different witnesses, the evidence tended to show that so far as the industries now in vogue in Western Australia were concerned, these off-shoots from

large houses in the other colonies, the effect of federation would be that these off-shoots now established in Western Australia would close their doors, and the firms would supply from the other colonies. That is absolutely what would take place. It is absurd to think for a moment that any man, if he finds he is losing his trade through heavy protective duties imposed by the Commonwealth Parliament, will come to Western Australia to supply. He will do nothing of the sort. He will go to the centre of trade, where there are four millions or five millions of people to supply, knowing full well that he can supply just as well from there as here. Passing away from the industries of the colony, I come to another point of serious moment to people of this country. It is that not only should we cripple some industries and ruin others altogether, but we should be losing what to us is of great moment, that is the government of ourselves by ourselves, as we think fit. There are a good many people in this colony who have not realised the inestimable benefit of self-government for the simple reason that they have not known what it is to be without that. I was reared under responsible government. Since coming to Western Australia, where I have spent the best part of my life, I have through business connections been brought into touch with the requirements of this colony, and having lived 20 years amongst the people in the other colonies, and kept myself acquainted with their requirements, I consider I am quite capable of speaking as to how federation will affect this colony. When I look back to 21 years ago I can remember the regret I felt at having to put up with being controlled by a Government that was thousands of miles from this country. Knowing the benefit of self-government, I have always, when possible, urged upon the people the adoption of responsible government. It is now, I think, between nine and ten years since this country adopted responsible government, and now we are trying to do away with all the benefits for which we fought so hard. I doubt whether, if the idea of Australian federation had entered into the minds of the people of the other colonies ten years ago, when responsible government was granted to Western Australia, they would

have thought of asking us to come into the federation, because only a few years before that their love was so great for people from the shores of Western Australia that they did not permit them to land unless they brought certificates of birth and pedigree; yet to-day they are trying to bring us into the union. In discussing an important matter like this it is well to look back on the past, so that we can estimate the benefit of living as we do to-day. If we look back to the date of granting responsible government to this colony in 1889, we find that the population in that year was 43,698, whereas on the 31st December, 1898, it was 168,129. The total revenue of the colony in 1889 was £442,725, and in December, 1898, £2,604,943; taxation per head, 1889, £4 7s. 10½d., and in December, 1898, £5 19s. 8½d. (including customs), and during that time we spent seven or eight millions. In 1889 the miles of railway that had been built numbered 188, and on 30th June, 1899, there were 1,355 miles of railway. The revenue from the railways in 1889 was £42,834, and for the year ending 30th June, 1899, £1,007,165; land under crop (cereals) in 1889, 43,786 acres, and on 31st March, 1899, 81,100 acres; land under orchard and vineyard in 1889, 3,127 acres, and on 31st March, 1899, 6,638 acres; miles of telegraph built in 1889, 2,961, and in December, 1898, 5,886; miles of telephone wire erected in 1889, 80, and in December, 1898, 2,099 miles; tonnage of shipping inwards in 1889, 497,232 tons, and in December, 1898, 1,199,894 tons. When we consider the difference between 10 years ago and to-day, and look at such progress as this, the advancement seems something remarkable. It reads to anyone something like a fairy tale, and I maintain that if the past of this colony has been magnificent, surely we who are acquainted with the country know that its future prospects far outshine that. We have only to look round for one moment. Look at our goldfields, for instance. Almost every day there is an account of some fresh field being discovered, and I take it that at present the colony does not know the extent of its goldfields. Then look at our magnificent coalfields. There are two good coalfields, and more will be discovered. Then look at our tin. Not only is there a great

amount of tin at Bunbury, but we have a magnificent field in the North, and who knows what other tinfields will be discovered? Then our agricultural prospects are as bright as they can possibly be. There are no people at the present moment employed in agriculture in this colony who are living the lives of slaves, as are people in the other colonies who are carrying on the same industry. Our squatting industry is thriving, and when we take into consideration all these things that are fairly in front of us, and that we can grasp as to how they will affect us, surely one may predict that in 20 years under good government this colony will be at least equal to, if not ahead of, any other part of Australia. Holding this belief, shall we, I ask, sacrifice this country to oblivion? Shall we give up all we now hold, and all that the future holds in store for us, for something, we know not what, and without knowing what the effect may be? Shall we hand over the control of this colony to a Government 2,000 miles away? That is practically what is proposed, because very few matters will be left for the State Government, which will simply sink into the position of a huge municipal council. Do hon. members for a moment think it desirable to hand over a bright future such as I have predicted, to a Government whose sympathies are not with us, and to reach whom will take at least six days? It is urged that we shall be represented in the Federal Government: but for all practical purposes the five representatives we send will be as a drop of water in the sea. In fact, it will be as one fish to the remarkable pelican which Mr. Stone told us about the other night, when speaking on the Fisheries Bill. I am quite prepared to admit that for the other colonies federation may be desirable. If whatever I possess in the world were in any of the Australian colonies which have thrown their lot in with federation, I might under the circumstances be tempted to vote for union; but we must remember that those colonies are one body of people, divided by so many imaginary lines which cause no end of friction and bad feeling. Hon. members who have travelled in the Eastern colonies must know what it is to be awakened in a railway train just at break of day, when there is a frost on the

ground, and told to deliver up their keys in order that the luggage may be examined; and if that is irritating to occasional travellers, how much more irritating must it be to people who have to put up with the inconvenience every day, and who cannot pass goods from one colony to another without the intervention of a customs officer, or liability to a heavy fine or imprisonment? Those people are in close contact, their feelings are alike, and they know each other's wants, and only one day is required to travel from one capital to another. Another great point is that those colonies are practically developed, seeing that during the last 40 or 50 years they have been borrowing money in the English market, for the purpose of developing their railways, telephones, telegraphs, post-offices, and other public works, which are so advanced that very little is required in the future. What is more, federation will be of very great assistance to those colonies. At the present moment the industries, particularly in Victoria and South Australia, are actually languishing for fresh markets; and if these markets are not obtained I really do not know what producers there are going to do. How different in all respects is Western Australia. We are as far away from the other colonies as New Zealand is, because we have a three days' journey by sea, and a desert between us. Our country is practically undeveloped, and we shall require the whole of the revenue any Government can possibly draw together during the next 20 years, to place our productions and industries on an equality with those of the other colonies. Then federation, which to the other colonies means advancement, practically means, whichever way we look at it, ruination to Western Australia. What position would Western Australia occupy under the Commonwealth, when all right to impose duties is taken away from us? As I stated before, we shall be in such a position that the Government will have to face a loss of £300,000; and that means we cannot possibly go on with the development of the country. It is absolutely necessary in the interests of everybody concerned, if we hope to make a nation, that this country should be developed; because it is only by develop-

ment that we can hope to attract a large population and thrive. But how is it possible to dream of development, with customs revenue gone? Is it conceivable for a moment that the Government can have the confidence of the money market and be able to borrow money, with a revenue depleted by £300,000? Is it possible that we shall be able to raise the £4,500,000 now authorised, and which must be had at any price, to complete the works now in course of erection? I do not see how we are going to do it. The works must be completed, and if the money cannot be borrowed, the Government will have to impose direct taxation. We know what direct taxation means in the other colonies—it means land tax and income tax; and would any sensible man contend that the people of Western Australia can bear a land tax, which practically means a tax on people to whom land has been given?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: No; not quite.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: A land tax would be felt by those who, besides having been given the land, have had an Agricultural Bank established for their assistance; and although the tax might not fall so heavily on those people, it would fall particularly on the town population, for it is in the towns that such a tax is mostly collected. Can the people of Perth or Fremantle bear a land tax on the top of the rates now paid to the corporations? I do not think they can.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They cannot, either in Perth or Fremantle.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I do not consider there is wealth enough in the country to justify an income tax.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You just said the whole country is flourishing.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The country may be flourishing without having a fortune; and if Mr. Matheson will join the side of all sensible men, and vote against federation for Western Australia, I will guarantee that in ten years' time we shall be able to collect a large revenue from an income tax. At the present time, however, it is utterly impossible to expect the Government to be able to raise money from that source.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Then we are prosperous on losses, I suppose.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: South Australia, where every unfortunate man who

draws £125 a year has to pay an income tax of £5, can only raise £125,000 a year by this means, and £25,000 of that is absorbed by the cost of collection. Supposing for a moment that the Government did put on a land tax, I am afraid it would not end there, because under the Bill the Commonwealth Parliament have power to levy taxes, which take precedence of State imposts. There is an idea that the Commonwealth Parliament's first idea will be to levy a land tax, as is shown by quotations which I will read from statements by two leading actuaries in Australia. These actuaries are right in saying that the amount of money set down as necessary to carry on the Government of the Commonwealth is not sufficient; and their remarks were published, not while the Bill was being discussed, but practically after the Bill had gone to the people. Mr. Coghlan in 1898, after the last Convention, wrote :

The Federal Parliament needs, on the basis of five colonies, £7,800,000 to maintain its position, and hand back to the States their fair proportion of the federal surplus; the federal revenue from customs and excise cannot be safely taken at over £7,000,000, leaving £800,000 to be obtained by direct taxation. That any additional direct taxation can be imposed, it would be absurd to suppose. In Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia income taxes run from 4d. to 1s. 4d. in the £. Land taxes exist in all the colonies save Western Australia, and their extension for federal purposes would be impossible. With a revenue of £7,000,000, the portion coming to no colony except New South Wales would suffice for its needs, and the other States would inevitably come to financial ruin unless the Federal Government face the situation and levy land, income, or property taxes for federal purposes, in addition to such taxes as already exist. It may be said that at least Western Australia is safeguarded by the right to impose duties on intercolonial produce for five years. With the help of these duties this colony might make ends meet for one year; afterwards its position would be no better than that of the other three provinces. I much regret that I cannot take a more hopeful view of the financial prospect of the Australian union.

Mr. Richard Teece, in an article in January, 1898, dealing with the six colonies, wrote :

To procure a revenue which would provide for the admission of Western Australia to the federation, a sum of £11,000,000 would have to be raised from customs and excise; and the special provision made for Western Australia would only effect this result temporarily. No such revenue could, of course, be raised, and it

is quite obvious that Western Australia must be left out of consideration. She is not yet ripe for federation, and she would be extremely unwise to accept the Bill.

Besides surrendering our customs revenue, we are called upon to give up the control of our post and telegraph offices. We know that now there is nothing but growling from one end of the colony to the other, over the Post Office Department, but how much more growling would there be if we had to wait for replies from a Government 2,000 miles away? Although there might be federal officers in this colony under the Commonwealth, if it became necessary to erect a telegraph or telephone line, say from Perth to Fremantle, the consent of the Central Government would have to be obtained, and the delay could be nothing less than irritating. Is it not better to go on as we are to-day? We are practically undeveloped, so far as telegraphs are concerned, and as civilisation advances there must be this means of communication; but under federation our chances of development in this direction would be gone. Now when a goldfield springs up and a post office is wanted, a deputation waits on the Premier, who at once grants the request.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No, he does not.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: He does, except when the applicants do not deserve it. I do not think the Premier has ever refused the goldfields anything, and in return the goldfields people kick him. Personally, I can say that whenever people have been justified in asking for a post office or a telegraph office, the request has been granted; but under federation we would have to wait for weary months, and then, after all, might meet with a refusal. Under the Inter-State Commission, what would be the position of Western Australian railways? Would we be able to grant differential rates? I say we would not; and if that be so, we may say good-bye to the Collie coalfields. Although that is good coal, and there is a large field, this industry is like all other small industries, in so far as it requires subsidies in some form for the first few years, until it is put on a firm basis; and the Government are encouraging the industry, but in a way to which I take exception. The fact remains, however, that the Government are encouraging

an industry which ought to be encouraged; and if the present small concession were taken away the Collie field would be closed, and we should have the pleasure of feeding 1,000 people in Newcastle, New South Wales, in return for supplying us with coal. On many sides it is considered that one of the first things the Commonwealth Parliament will do will be to take over the railway lines of the various colonies. There was a long discussion at the Federal Convention in Melbourne, in regard to this matter. If the railways are taken over, what earthly chance is there of Western Australia developing? Western Australia, with her five members in the House of Representatives, cannot stop that. I have two or three instances here which I might quote, of members who, at the Convention, spoke very strongly on this matter; and everyone is agreed that one of the first things that the Commonwealth Parliament will do will be to take over the railways. I think that is very possible. Mr. Hackett will agree with me in that. The Commonwealth Parliament may fight over this matter; and in that fight where would our five representatives be?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We will go down, of course.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: We will not have any representatives there: we shall keep away.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The Bill also states that wherever the laws of the Commonwealth Parliament clash with the laws of a State, the laws of the Commonwealth override the laws of the State. At present we have many laws, and just laws too, prohibiting the importation, not of fruit, but of diseased fruit and of diseased fruit trees. It will be a very easy thing for the Commonwealth Parliament to override our laws and flood our market with diseased fruit. How shocked Mr. Matheson looks in regard to my statement that the Federal Parliament would ever do such a thing, but less likely things may happen than that. The other Australian colonies at the present moment have every disease that can be imagined amongst their fruit and fruit trees. Our market is short of fruit, and the other colonies can send us plenty. The Commonwealth Parliament will override our laws; they will do away with the prohibition against the introduction of

fruit, and we shall get the diseases here. The question that arises to my mind is, are we justified in trusting our future to the Commonwealth Parliament? Are we satisfied that the Commonwealth Parliament is actuated by a true federal spirit in desiring the federation of Australia? So far as the Federal Parliament is concerned, we shall have five representatives there; but to show you what these representatives mean to us—

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We shall have eleven.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We shall have five representatives and New South Wales will have 26, Victoria 23, Queensland 10, South Australia seven; Western Australia and Tasmania five each. So that practically, although people say that the small colonies will be able to combine and see that justice is done, what chance have Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania of combining. These three colonies combined will only have one more vote than New South Wales alone, and 23 votes less than New South Wales and Victoria combined.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Only in one House.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: We have seen the combination already when the interests of the different States clashed, and by the action of the other colonies we can come to a conclusion whether we are justified in trusting our future to them. During the debate in Melbourne, the delegates were quarrelling and haggling over the "pound of flesh." New South Wales wanted the federal capital, and unless that colony had the federal capital she would not join the federation. Victoria gave way, but although the federal capital is to be in New South Wales, the Parliament will meet in Melbourne, and the capital will be in Melbourne until such time as the federal capital is built; and Victoria will stop the federal capital being built as long as that colony possibly can. South Australia came in for what? That colony was frightened at the differential railway rates in New South Wales; that New South Wales would build a railway and take the trade from Broken Hill. It was nothing but the Broken Hill trade that made South Australia agree to join the union. What is Western Australia getting? This colony is getting nothing except the right to tax our people

to the extent of £300,000 to join as an original State. The other colonies want Western Australia to join, because they know that this colony cannot interfere in any shape or form with the markets of the other colonies. They will have no trade from Western Australia. Look at what Victoria did in regard to the idea of New Zealand joining the federation. New Zealand desired to join the union, but Victoria said: "We are not going to have New Zealand in the union, as that colony will swamp our markets, and New Zealand will not take anything from us in return, or very little." The other colonies want Western Australia in the union so that they can swamp our markets, and Western Australia can send practically nothing to the other colonies. Let us look at the action of the leading men of the other colonies in discussing the question of federation. Look at the language they used in regard to what they called "the 'sandgroppers' of Western Australia;" sandgroppers, inasmuch as we are not such fools as to join the federation and be united. Mr. Symon had the impertinence to come to this colony the other day and speak in anything but polite language of our Premier—a proceeding I can only look on with utter disgust; and coming from a gentleman in a high position, he ought at least to have had more common sense than to come to this colony and speak of our Premier as he did.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: They all do it.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Both Mr. Symon and Mr. Gordon fought hard at the Convention in Melbourne against the sliding scale, with all its faults and its questionable good to Western Australia. Then, again, look at Mr. Reid's remark about the terrier and the kittens: "If you put a terrier in a room," said Mr. Reid, "with five kittens, who will get fat first?" We, according to Mr. Reid, are one of these unfortunate kittens, but if we accept federation we ought to be looked upon as an animal with big ears, not a kitten at all. What is the action of the other colonies in regard to the just amendments which the Joint Select Committee have suggested in the Bill? I said just now that even with the amendments, I am against the colony federating; but, to discuss this matter, what is the position the other colonies take

up in regard to the amendments which have been discussed by sensible business men who see that federation under the Bill means the wiping out of Western Australia? I voted, although I did not agree to the Bill, with them for peace and quietness, accepting amendments. And as the leader of this House has pointed out, we are asking for very little—everybody agrees upon that; in fact most people outside were for the moment dumfounded that the Select Committee did not ask for more. The Select Committee asked that the Commonwealth Parliament should have the right to construct a railway line through another colony to Western Australia. Practically that means that a line should be built through South Australia to Western Australia. As far as that line is concerned it is nonsense: it would not pay for 50 years, and we do not want the railway. We ask for it, and South Australia says, "That is just what we want; we want a railway line." But our experience of the "home of churches" is not so very nice. We want any agreement of that kind in black and white.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: But Kingston has gone.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: There are worse people than Mr. Kingston in South Australia. It does not take a man with double sight to see through what South Australia wants. Their idea is that if we have a railway line through their colony the line must go to Adelaide, but we do not want to travel 500 miles out of our way to get to Sydney. We want the line to go straight across South Australia. South Australia will allow us a railway line if we go to Adelaide, but we want the Commonwealth Parliament to order a line right across their territory. Look at the sliding scale; the Convention gave us a sliding scale by which our industries could stand alone at the end of five years, so that our industries would not be hurt by competition with the industries of the other colonies, and that the finances of the Government would not be in any worse position than they are to-day. We want the right to collect our duties for four and a half years, but the other colonies say, "You shall not have that." The other colonies are using their best endeavours in England at the present time to try and influence the Imperial Government not to listen to our petition



that the amendments suggested be made to the Bill. Mr. Symon said that the people in England look with disgust on Western Australia and our actions. I say that Mr. Symon is talking all moonshine, that there is not one man in a million in England who knows anything about the federation of Australia. As I gather from persons coming from England who have spoken to me, the English people are pleased with the idea that Australia is going to federate, because they consider that under federation England will have a favoured-nation clause, such as Canada gave; that is, they will be able to send goods into Australia on better terms than any other nation can do. I maintain that when they know the Commonwealth means that there will be free-trade between the colonies and a prohibitive tariff against the people of Great Britain, the people there will have a different idea altogether, and I am confident they will uphold Western Australia in the stand this colony is going to take in regard to the Bill. My hon. friend, Mr. Briggs, had a good deal to say in quoting Mr. Chamberlain, in order to show he was in favour of Western Australia federating. It is easy to take a bit like that out of a sentence; but I do not think the remarks referred to applied to Western Australia, because at a banquet in honour of Sir Gerard Smith, Mr. Chamberlain, in speaking of Western Australia, said :

We may venture to hope that this colony (Western Australia), while profiting by the experience of other self-governing communities, will not hesitate to strike out a line for itself, if its interests should dictate a separate course.

I think that altogether knocks on the head the quotations made by Mr. Briggs; for here we have Mr. Chamberlain stating openly that if it is found necessary for Western Australia to stand aloof and strike out a course of its own, Western Australia should do so. But, practically speaking, I maintain that the Bill when it goes home to England will have to be altered; and, if we insist upon it, our alterations will be inserted. I hope, however, that the people of this colony will vote against the Bill at any price. Not only are the people in the other colonies using their best endeavours in every shape and form to force Western Australia into this union, but they are

adopting means that are to my mind disreputable, in the bullying tone in which the people of Western Australia are referred to in leading articles and other writings in regard to us. I consider that all this bullying, all this insult heaped upon the people of this colony who have stood the heat and burden of the day, and who are prepared still to bear the heat and burden of the day and to stand alone, points to one thing, that being that these people want to force us into political suicide. There is no doubt they have in their mouth to-day a taste of Western Australia. They know what the market of Western Australia means. I have travelled and heard people talking, and I say it is not love for the people here, it is not the federal spirit at all, that animates them in this desire to force us to join the union, but it is purely and simply a game of greed and gain, a game in which they are aware we are perfectly helpless to hold our own, a game in which they know they will, practically speaking, dominate the market of Western Australia, and the whole of our gold from our gold mines will in a short time, instead of being used in this colony to feed thousands of happy and prosperous families, be sent to keep women and children in Victoria. One of the threats used is that of isolation. Even at this late hour of the night the presumption of isolation makes me laugh. Can anyone for a moment think of isolating a colony such as this, turning out as it does ten millions a year, and possessing a revenue of two and three-quarter millions, a few mines that are now developed paying two millions a year in dividends, whilst there are dozens of good undeveloped mines? Isolate a colony such as this! The very idea is ridiculous. They say they will retaliate. Fancy the hungry people in Victoria retaliating against Western Australia, which is sending them £2,000,000 a year! I maintain there is no such thing as retaliation against Western Australia. If we stand out of federation, we shall go on as we have been doing all along. The amount of money passing from our colony to the others, and the business done, will prohibit any idea of retaliation. It may be that the Governments and leading men of those colonies will preach retaliation, but will a lot of hungry merchants study their Ministers?

Not likely. As long as they get the gold from Western Australia, they will trade with Western Australia as much as ever. Then they say we cannot get the mail steamers. I say "tommy rot." If we cannot get the mail steamers we will get them "made in Germany": we will have mail steamers by the dozen; all the mail steamers we require. Steamers will go, without insurance, to a part of the world which at present it is dangerous to approach. They will do that simply for trade, and how much sooner will they come to Western Australia, with its great harbour and the tremendous quantity of goods they have to take away? I may say, in conclusion, that surely none of those actions I have mentioned point to a federal spirit. None of the actions of the leading men of the other colonies point to the conclusion that we have any right in any shape or form to ask the people of this colony to trust—because it is purely a matter of trust—the future of a great country like this to a Parliament consisting of 76 persons, of which we have only five members.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Eleven.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: My hon. friend says we will have 11 members in the Federal Parliament. I say we have five. We have six in the Senate, but you must remember that it is laid down in the Commonwealth Bill that, when it comes to a question of division, both Chambers will sit together and vote as one; and where shall we be then? We might just as well have no Senate at all.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And it is the same franchise.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Yes; certainly. They hold out another threat, this being that if we do not come in at the present day and join as an original State, when we desire to come in we will have to do so on our knees, crawling, at any price they like.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Abject slaves.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: That is another of the nonsensical arguments put forward by people who preach federation at any price. To judge whether any of the arguments they put forward have any sense in them, let us for a moment look at the Dominion of Canada. British Columbia stood out from the federation of Canada. She would not come in.

Others stood out also; but I deal only with British Columbia. She stood out, and when she wanted to come in she came in on her own terms, one of them being that the Dominion should build a railway costing three or four millions. She came in on any terms she liked, and I maintain that when we desire to come into the union, we will come in on our own terms, because it is utterly impossible to think that, with the position we will have gained in another 20 years, any federation of the Australian colonies would have the presumption to say, "You can come in second hand." Looking at the subject with all its surroundings, I say that in 20 years we can come in on terms quite as good as those now offered, if not better. In looking round and discussing this matter, I tried to find some of the benefits we are to derive from federation. My friends Mr. Matheson and Mr. Leake have put several benefits before the people, but most of them are sentimental.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Imaginary.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Sentiment is all very well. If there were no sentiment in the composition of human nature, we should indeed be miserable people; but I would remind hon. members that you cannot live on sentiment any more than you can live on climate. You must have a little of something to eat, as well as sentiment, or else you will die. We are told that federation will be the means of a large influx of population; but I cannot understand how persons can arrive at that conclusion, because here are we with liberal land laws, a grand climate, and everything going on splendidly, and yet the moment the idea of federation was mooted the influx of population stopped dead. The returns from the Government offices prove that the moment it was dreamed that federation would be adopted, the taking up of land for agricultural purposes was stopped; yet we are told that directly we federate we shall have a huge influx of population. If, with all the benefits to be derived from coming here to-day, people stop away, I do not see what there is in federation to make them come. We are told that, if we federate, one of the benefits we shall derive is that we shall be defended. I maintain that it is utterly impossible for the other colonies to defend Western Australia with her tremendous

sea line. To do so would mean a cost of something like ten millions of money.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: More than that.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Even supposing she could raise the ten millions, there would have to be a land tax, and the Lord knows what, and we should have to pay our share of it. Is it not better to stop where we are with the protection we have at present? I cannot think of any better protection than that which we live under—the flag of England.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: You will have that protection then.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: What would be the position if an enemy landed on our shores and we had to wait until a thousand or two soldiers could get across the Australian Bight? And what condition would they be in when they got here? The idea of defence is ridiculous. It was said that federation will cheapen government, but I do not know how it is going to do so in this colony. We will have to continue the same government as to-day. Federation may cheapen government in the other colonies, where members are paid £300 a year for—I will not say what—but at any rate they are paid £300 a year. Here the members of Parliament are not paid, but if we go into federated Australia we shall immediately have to contribute towards the cost of the Federal Parliament. For what? For ruin. It is said—and this is the most remarkable and ridiculous statement of the whole lot—that there will be cheaper living in Western Australia. That is what they preach to the unfortunate people on the goldfields, and I maintain that those who preach it should be ashamed of themselves, because their desire is to see estranged the people who should be closer to us. The only way they can stir them up is through their pockets.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Name those doing it.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: What is the good of telling you what you know?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Put it on record.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It is said these people will have cheaper living, but what are the facts? They first of all have to pay intercolonial duties for five years, which means they are practically taxed £300,000 more than any other colony in the Australasian group, and on

top of that they will have to stand enormous taxation for the Federal Parliament. Tea, kerosene, rice, and all those things which are now absolutely free, will be taxed. The people of Western Australia will, for a year or two at least, be taxed one and a-half times as much as those of any of the other Australian colonies, and yet we are told we are going to get cheaper living. There may be cheaper living for a little while after the five years, but the people will have to pay for it in another way. And where does this cry for federation come from? Does it come from the settled population of the colony?

HON. C. A. PRESSE: They know better.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It does not come from the settled population, but mostly from people who have no stake whatever in the country. Does this desire for federation spring from the ignorance of the people as to the Government of the colony? Does it spring from animosity against the present Government, or does it spring from ignorance of their methods? I think it springs, especially on the goldfields, from the latter. I desire to be most careful in speaking of the population on the goldfields, because I maintain it is the duty of every member in the House, and of every person in the colony, to try by every possible means to bring the inhabitants of the goldfields into closer touch with the residents of the coastal districts. There is a great estrangement between the two sections of the community now; and I am sure such language as was used by a member of this House a month or six weeks ago will not tend in any way to draw the relations closer. But, in discussing this matter of federation, I must say the population on the goldfields have not been here long enough to look on themselves as West Australians. They come, a good many of them, from the colony I came from, while others come from Victoria and New South Wales, and their sympathies lie where their families are. These men draw large wages, which they send out of the colony, and I know numerous persons who, with money earned here, are clearing off debts on their farms or houses in the other colonies. I know that the moment these debts are cleared off those people will return to their homes; and are they,

who have no stake in the country, to be trusted to vote on the question of federation for Western Australia? If I were in South Australia, New South Wales, or any other colony, the question of the referendum would not trouble me in the slightest, because I know everybody there has a stake in the country. But when it comes to Western Australia, we find a huge majority of the population who, for certain reasons which are not good, are talking about separation, or about anything but settling in the country. They seem to have a terrible "down" on the present Government.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And that after the Government have spent millions for their benefit.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I devoted a lot of time trying to find out, if possible, how much public money has really been spent on the goldfields.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: About £4,000,000.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I had not time to go back further than 1895, but I find that in the last four years, the Government have spent £2,866,078 on public works for the goldfields. Prior to 1895 the Government were pouring gold like water out of a bucket on the goldfields, and this £2,866,078 has been spent since, while over and above that, £2,500,000 is being devoted to the goldfields water supply scheme. And although the Government have met the slightest wish on the goldfields, even to the detriment of the Southern parts of the colony, the people there to-day, in a manner of speaking, are foreigners to Western Australia.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: Only a few of them.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: The great majority of them. Curse the people who are the cause of the estrangement! They are people who ought to be in gaol to-night along with the alluvialists. Parsons and others ought to be ashamed of the position they have taken up, in absolutely stirring up strife between the goldfields and the Southern districts; and if I had my way, and could only put a little backbone into the Government, several parsons and eight or nine justices of the peace would be side by side with the alluvialists in gaol—the proper place for such people. I would also send with the parsons and others, a few of the leading

editors on the goldfields, who day by day wilfully and knowingly misrepresent every word and action of the Government. No doubt the Government made mistakes during the boom; but what business man did not make similar mistakes? Whatever mistakes Sir John Forrest may have made, I am quite prepared to overlook them for the manly course he has taken in regard to federation. He was surrounded on every side by people who poured into his ears the desirability of Western Australia federating, and he for a time surrendered to the clamour; but, as I pointed out when addressing my constituents at Albany, the day was at hand when, having looked into the financial position, he would go back. Now that the Premier has looked at the financial position, he has not been afraid to acknowledge his mistake, and by his condemnation, considering his position, he has raised himself a thousand per cent. in my estimation: I have now only one or two other matters to deal with. The first is the referendum, a method of voting in which I do not believe, because, so far as my investigations have gone, I find it is absolutely unconstitutional.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And an unnecessary expenditure.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: In Canada there was no referendum, nor even in British Columbia, the representatives of the district fighting out the question amongst themselves; and I cannot find any occasion when the referendum has been used under the British constitution in the last thousand years. It is contended that the proper constitutional course is to place the question before the people at a general election; but while it may be all very well to tell the other House to submit themselves and the question to the people, while we sit down and watch them, I regard the suggestion as scarcely fair, and one, moreover, which would take time. Although I disagree totally with Western Australia entering the federation at any price, and although I agree that the referendum is unconstitutional, yet I am prepared to vote for the proposition as moved by the leader for the Government; and my reasons for this attitude are strong enough. As a practical man, I know that, owing to federation hanging over the colony, business has been seriously affected. Banks

refuse to make advances even to one-fifth the value of properties, because it is known that if federation become accomplished, properties here will not be worth anything; and if the Bill be thrown out by this House, the unrest and inquietude will continue, along with the agitation by certain sections of the community, for the referendum. Let the question be put to the people and the Bill thrown out once for all. I absolutely believe the Bill or Bills, whichever be sent, will be rejected by a big majority, because I cannot conceive, after the disastrous effects of federation on this colony have been so conclusively shown, that people are going to be such consummate asses as to ruin themselves.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Then why not vote against the Bill now?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The hon. member ought to vote for throwing out the Bill.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It has often been said that fortune knocks at a man's door sometime during his life, and if the saying may be applied to nations, I should say that if ever fortune knocked at a country's door, it is now knocking at the door of Western Australia hard enough for everybody to hear.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: And yet you mean to shut the door.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Fortune is telling us that if this colony remain out of federation, we shall achieve development and prosperity.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Then why not vote for throwing out the Bill?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: In the other colonies people are farming and carrying on business under protection, without which they could not live; and under intercolonial free-trade only those parts of the colonies which by nature are perfectly and thoroughly adapted for cultivation will be used. This practically means that thousands of people will have to give up their present mode of living and look for pastures new; and where can they look for those pastures if Western Australia join the union? If Western Australia, with our wealth, magnificent markets, and good government, stand out of federation, people will come here by the thousand, and help to build up the big nation we expect here in 20 years; while if we federate, those people must either change their occupations or leave Australia

altogether. I have only a few more words to say, and I do not intend to apologise for my lengthy speech, because, as I said at the start, I consider it is the duty of every man to speak exhaustively on this question, and I know that I am not only speaking to members of this House, but through the House to the people. I can assure hon. members I have spent much time in studying the Bill thoroughly from every point of view, and have endeavoured honestly, but in vain, to bring myself to approve of federation; and as a member of this House I feel my position keenly. But my position is an honourable one, arrived at only after much trouble and most serious consideration. In this magnificent colony we have everything required to build up a great and flourishing nation; but once we join federation, our pledge binds us, even to the crack of doom. This, therefore, is a most serious question; and it is for us to consider whether we, as a people, shall bind future generations for ever. For our children, whom we all love, we are struggling to leave a glorious and happy inheritance; and we must take every care that we do not leave them a career of sorrow. So far as Western Australia is concerned, any one can read across the Federal Bill, in plain and unmistakable letters, the word "ruin."

On motion by HON. E. McLARTY, debate adjourned till the next day.

#### REGISTRATION OF FIRMS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.33 o'clock, until the next day.