

GENERAL MANAGER,—

Please supply the information asked for.

(Signed) C. B. ROBERTSON,
for Under Secretary for Railways.

20th June, 1899.

THE AUDITOR GENERAL,—

With reference to the enclosures.

The engine in question was purchased from Messrs. Jas. Martin & Co., Gawler, S.A., during 1896, and it was erected during March of that year.

I am sorry I cannot supply you with particulars of the Vote to which the cost of this engine was debited. The transaction was arranged during the time the Engineer-in-Chief was acting in the capacity of General Manager, and the matter was arranged in his office.

The information is sent you direct in accordance with your wish, expressed verbally.

(Signed) J. DAVIES,

General Manager.

per C. S. Gallagher,

30th June, 1899.

The Auditor General to the Honourable the Colonial Secretary.

As the Right Hon. the Premier has instructed the proceeds of sale of the engine in question to be placed to the credit of the Loan Vote, and in view of the correspondence which has passed on a previous similar question, as reported to Parliament in my last Annual Report, I feel it incumbent upon me to enter most respectfully my protest against the proceeds of sale being placed to the credit of the Loan Vote, on the grounds that the debit was outside the current financial year.

2. Will you kindly submit the papers for the information of the Right Hon. the Premier, as I purpose placing this matter before Parliament, at an early date, in a Supplementary Report.

(Signed) FRED. SPENCER,

Auditor General.

30th June, 1899.

There, in defiance of a properly-constituted officer, who forbids the money to be accounted for in a certain way, and in defiance of the Audit Act and every principle of honesty, the Government pay the money to current account, making it appear that the money voted for the year was sufficient, whereas the revenue was supplemented from outside sources. That is about the strongest report ever laid on the table of any Legislature in the British dominions. I desire to close my remarks. Perhaps I could have gone a little further. There are several matters to which I would like to refer, but I do not want to unduly take up the time of the House. In conclusion, I wish to place upon record my intention of voting

against any proposition to construct railways on the goldfields, or to construct any railways at all unless the credit of the country has improved, and unless the Government inform us from where they are going to get the money.

On the motion of the Hon. A. P. MATHESON, the debate was adjourned.

CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

Introduced by Hon. A. B. KIDSON, and read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8 o'clock p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 4th July, 1899.

Papers presented Question: Railway Carriages Reserved, Charges Question: Railway Demurrage on Timber—Address-in-Reply: Mr. Leake's Amendment and Division; Third day of debate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the DEPUTY SPEAKER:

By the PREMIER: 1, Report of Penal Commission; 2, Report of Commission on City Railway Traffic; 3, Report of Surveyor General for 1898; 4, Report of Conservator of Forests; 5, Report on Gaols and Prisoners for 1898; 6, Report of Education Department for 1898.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CARRIAGES RESERVED, CHARGES.

MR. QUINLAN asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1. Upon what terms railway carriages were reserved upon race days. 2. What concession was given to stewards of race clubs, if any.

3. Whether it was a fact that favour was shown to certain people. 4. Whether he would issue instructions that no carriages be reserved unless charges were prepaid.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—
1. Carriages are not reserved on race trains, except under special circumstances, and then only when fares are paid. 2. No concession is granted to stewards of race clubs. Accommodation is, however, reserved for them according to general custom, fares being paid. 3. No favour is shown, except as stated above. 4. Further instruction is unnecessary in view of our present regulations.

QUESTION—RAILWAY DEMURRAGE ON TIMBER.

MR. HIGHAM asked the Commissioner of Railways, What demurrage had been paid to the Railway Department, during the last six months, by the several timber companies for delaying trucks on their sidings awaiting loading.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—
The particulars asked for are as follow—
Canning Jarrah Timber Company, W.A., Ltd., £70 7s. 6d.; Millar's Karri and Jarrah Forests, Ltd., £75 16s.; Jarrah Timber and Wood Paving Corporation, Ltd., £9 12s.; Jarrah Wood and Saw Mills Company, Ltd., £2 4s.; Westralian Jarrah Forests, Ltd., £4 4s.; total, £162 3s. 6d.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

MR. LEAKE'S AMENDMENT.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed on motion for adoption of Address-in-Reply, and on an amendment notified by Mr. Leake to add a new paragraph, expressing regret that Ministers had given no assurance of their determination to submit the Commonwealth Bill to the vote of the electors.

MR. LEAKE (Albany), said: Mr. Harper, before I address myself to the subject of my amendment, I wish first to congratulate you, sir, upon the position which you occupy as Deputy-Speaker of this House; and I am sure I am only expressing the views of every member on this side of the House, when I say we are pleased to see you occupying that position,

we know full well, with absolute dignity and for the benefit of the members and the order of debate. With regard to the Governor's Speech which is now before us, I notice that, following out the practice somewhat which was adopted last year, we have very lengthy paragraphs dealing with matters which are of little public interest, and which savour rather of extracts from the diary of the Director of Public Works. But there are points of interest, and though they are few, probably they are important; and these subjects offer themselves as texts, no doubt, for very lengthy debate. But to-day I propose to deal only with one question, which is a matter more of omission than of commission. References have of course been made to the financial position of the colony, to proposed railway extension, to electoral reform, and to federation; but, curiously enough, since the copy of His Excellency's Speech has been in the hands of members, we find important departures with regard to the policy of the Government announced in the public Press. I refer to the proposed immediate redistribution of seats, and the women's franchise. It would have been far more interesting had those matters been dealt with in the Speech, and Parliament taken directly into the confidence of the Government, rather than that we should gather, through the medium of the public Press, that these important reforms are contemplated. Special opportunities will be given to us, later in the session, of discussing all the matters which I have referred to; and I select for to-day's discussion the question which is involved in paragraph 2 of the Speech, which refers to federation. Why I have specially selected the question of federation for immediate discussion is that, as I understand paragraph 2 of His Excellency's Speech, it is the intention of the Government to shelve federation; not only to shelve it as a big national question, but to burke discussion on the subject.

MR. MORGANS: No, no.

MR. LEAKE: It is of course a matter of pleasure to me to prevent these tactics being carried out, if I can; and I am satisfied that in what I do in that direction I shall receive the support of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). Before I sit down it is my intention to move, as an amendment, that the follow-

ing new paragraph be added to the Address-in-Reply :—

We regret that your Excellency's Ministers have given no assurance of their determination to submit the Commonwealth Bill to the vote of the electors.

There is an absolute necessity for a distinct pronouncement by the Government on this all-important question, which has been a burning one in the other colonies for upwards of twelve months, and has now become a question of the very first interest to the electors of this colony. I hope that before I sit down I shall be able to persuade hon. members that the proposed amendment is not brought forward in any factious spirit, but with a desire, and an earnest desire, that Parliament may have an early opportunity of deciding what course shall be adopted so far as federation and the electors of this colony are concerned.

THE PREMIER: Do you not intend the amendment as a vote of want of confidence?

MR. LEAKE: It is not for me to say what the amendment is.

THE PREMIER: You have said it is a vote of want of confidence.

MR. LEAKE: I will not say it is not. I will answer a direct question as directly as that question is put; and I am bound to say that, if this amendment of mine be carried, the Premier cannot with dignity remain in his present position for more than five minutes.

MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: That is what I think; but if we go back to the debates of last session we find that, when a similar amendment was proposed, the Premier declared he would not regard such an amendment as a vote of no confidence.

THE PREMIER: That was about the second or third amendment of the kind in the session.

MR. LEAKE: No, it was not; it was an amendment to the Address-in-Reply.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. LEAKE: It was proposed before the debate on the Address-in-Reply concluded, and, owing to the fact that the Premier himself could not speak again on the subject, he put up his friend, the Minister of Mines, to say that if the amendment were carried the Ministry would have to consider their position. In

fact, they treated the amendment as a no-confidence motion.

THE PREMIER: I do not think that was the first amendment of the kind in the session.

MR. LEAKE: I have looked the matter up in *Hansard*, and I know I am quite right in what I say.

THE PREMIER: I beg your pardon.

MR. LEAKE: Briefly, the position of the federal movement is that a draft Bill was approved, somewhere about March of last year, by the Federal Convention. At that time, under our Enabling Act it was arranged that, should the draft Bill as approved by the Convention be subsequently adopted by New South Wales, the necessary machinery would then be provided by this Parliament for immediately referring the measure to the vote of the people of this colony. New South Wales approved the Bill by a bare majority of electors, but not by the statutory majority. The majority was not sufficient to enable New South Wales to join the proposed federation; but in the neighbouring colonies of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, the draft Bill was approved by the electors. Had it not been for the fact that the majority of the New South Wales electors were barred from adopting federation by the failure to secure the necessary statutory majority, federation would then and there have been an accomplished fact, as practically it is to-day under the amended Bill, and we should forthwith have had to send the Bill to the electors of Western Australia. Subsequently to that vote, at the beginning of this year, as members well know, there was a conference of Australian Premiers in Melbourne. At that conference it was resolved to adopt the Bill as provided by the Convention, with certain amendments. The previous policy of the different Governments, in regard to the original Bill, was to be pursued with regard to the amended Bill, and the Government of Western Australia had full knowledge therefore of all the facts and circumstances surrounding this great movement. The approval of the Bill in its amended form was, after this conference of Premiers, a foregone conclusion, and we know that as a fact the Bill has been approved by New South Wales and South Australia, and there can be no doubt at all it will also be adopted by

Victoria and Tasmania. There has been no sufficient alteration in our circumstances to warrant any departure from our originally expressed intention, namely, that Western Australia should have a referendum vote upon this question immediately on the adoption of the federal constitution by New South Wales.

THE PREMIER: The constitution has not been adopted yet.

MR. LEAKE: It has been adopted by New South Wales.

THE PREMIER: It has not been before Parliament yet.

MR. LEAKE: Well, it has been adopted by Parliament, and Parliament sent it to the people.

THE PREMIER: It has not been adopted.

MR. LEAKE: I still say that its adoption is a foregone conclusion, and even the right hon. gentleman will not deny that.

THE PREMIER: You said the Bill had been adopted.

MR. LEAKE: What I say is that it is a foregone conclusion that the constitution will be adopted; and in saying that I am well within the mark. We have no need to quibble over a subject of this kind. Why should we not in this colony have the same privileges which were granted to us in respect to the original Bill, when practically all the circumstances are the same? All the conditions precedent have been performed, and we are now ready to discuss this question and express our willingness that the people should vote "aye" or "no" upon it. It is important, in considering the amendment, to take into account the peculiar and precise wording of paragraph 2 of this Speech. I cannot help admitting that this paragraph is very cleverly worded—very cleverly worded, indeed. I appreciate the position which this paragraph has put me in, but after due consideration I have decided to adopt my present course. Whatever be the result of this debate, the atmosphere will be fairly well cleared, and we shall know exactly where we are, and so will the people of the country.

MR. GEORGE: You should have thought of that when at the Convention, you know.

MR. LEAKE: The Speech says:

The public feeling in favour of a closer union is almost universal, and that being so,

the only question which will require your careful consideration in the event of the Commonwealth Bill being adopted by the rest of Australia, is whether the Bill so safeguards our financial interests at the present time as to justify us, as prudent people, with great responsibilities, giving up, to a very large extent, the control and management of our fiscal policy.

The paragraph goes on:

The Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, has been forwarded to every elector in the colony, and so soon as it has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia will be submitted for your consideration. My Ministers are of opinion that the Bill, as now framed, is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies, and this is freely admitted by all the leaders of the movement in the other Australian colonies, and by all who have given the financial clauses any close consideration. It will, therefore, be obligatory on you to give that portion of the Bill the closest and most careful examination.

Now these words, if they mean anything, mean delay.

MR. GEORGE: Why should there not be delay?

MR. LEAKE: There has been discussion and there has been agitation during the recess; and the people have been preparing themselves for almost the final consideration of the federal question. They have had, up to the present hour at any rate, a belief in the Premier's intention to finally send the Bill to the electors. They know perfectly well what the Premier's expressed opinion was at the Conference of Premiers, and that he approved of the amendments then proposed. But, unfortunately, during the last few weeks, or few months at any rate, there have been some out-and-out opponents of federation on any terms, or conditions, or at any price whatever, at work on the Premier, and he has been forced to reconsider the question and see how best he could, by a process of delay, avoid the necessity of discussing this question in the way the people have been led to suppose it would be discussed. We know perfectly well—and I can assure hon. members of this without any breach of confidence—that the majority of the Premier's colleagues are opposed to federation, and that the two morning papers in Perth take the same stand. This combination would kill the federation movement if it could, and all that force has been brought to

bear on the Premier, who has my sympathy in his somewhat difficult position. In his attempt to please everybody he has been led to lay a nice little trap for all federationists and the Opposition in particular, and that trap is embodied in the phraseology of paragraph 2 of His Excellency's Speech. As I say, I sympathise with the Premier, who has only the courses left to him of either offending his colleagues and the morning newspapers, or of changing front. Of course, the changing of front is undoubtedly preferable, as being more closely associated with the interesting process of "climbing down," and, consequently, an attempt is made to do this; but, at the same time, if it is the wish of the Government to "climb down," we will be willing, and will place absolutely no obstacle in their way. What we are going to ask is that we shall have some absolutely distinct assurance from the Government that the necessary legislation will at once be introduced to enable the Bill to go to the people without delay.

MR. MORGANS: We are all agreed on that.

MR. LEAKE: That is all my amendment means; and while I thought the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) was with me in this debate, I am heartily glad to find that he is. It was only last night that a speech was delivered in Fremantle by the Premier, in which he said that he had stated in 1890 that if there was to be federation, there should be a railway connecting the capital of this colony with the capital of South Australia. Well, it is a curious circumstance that this condition has not occurred to the right hon. gentleman between 1890 and the present time; or, if it has occurred to him in the interval, it is curious that the condition was not considered by him of sufficient importance to be embodied in any of his public utterances.

THE PREMIER: I have often said it.

MR. LEAKE: What is practically announced in this paragraph of the Governor's Speech is that the Government are opposed to federation at the present time; and, if that be so, why do they not say so? That is all we ask. If the Government will tell us they are against federation at the present moment, we shall know where we are. They do not say they are in favour of federation, but they

say they will allow us to consider the matter on the happening of a certain event. We (the Opposition) say, "No; we want to discuss the question at once." But what is the contingency? And here is the pith of the whole situation. We are told we may not discuss the question until the other colonies of Australia have adopted the Commonwealth Bill. It is not a question now of waiting for New South Wales; it is not a question of waiting for any other colony; but it is a question of waiting for the whole lot. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that, for all practical purposes, federation is an accomplished fact. I do not suppose anything which may happen can prevent the federation of the foremost of the Australian colonies; and, with that fact in view, we have no right to burk discussion, and we have no right to go back from the position we originally took up, namely that when federation is within grasping distance, the people of this colony shall have an opportunity of declaring aye or no, whether they are in favour of or against federation. By telling us we must wait for a lead from the rest of Australia, we are thereby relegated to the position of the least important among the Australian colonies; a position which we occupied in the past, but I, for one, am not prepared to admit that our colony now is the least significant of the group. We may claim to be on even terms with Queensland, with South Australia, and with Tasmania, if indeed we cannot claim to be before them; yet by the terms of the second paragraph of His Excellency's Speech, we are asked to take the lead from them, and are practically told that if those colonies do not adopt the draft Federation Bill, then not only can our people not vote upon it, but even this Parliament shall not discuss it. That is a position I resent; but if my interpretation of the paragraph is incorrect, and if I can have a distinct assurance from the Premier that the necessary enabling legislation will be brought down forthwith, with the idea of sending the Bill to a vote of the people, then I shall be satisfied. I say this now with due deliberation, that if this assurance is given I will withdraw this amendment. Does that look like making this a party question? Does it not rather appear that I want some assurance that

the pledges which have been made by all the public men shall be carried out, and that the people shall have an opportunity of discussing and voting upon the question. We know perfectly well that a majority of members of this Parliament have declared in public that they are in favour of sending the Bill to the people at once; therefore I ask those members to support me in this amendment, because I tell them the only object I have in view is that the Bill shall go to the people at once. I cannot repeat this too often, that if I get this assurance I will withdraw the amendment; but, on the other hand, if this amendment is to go to a division after all, then the responsibility must rest with those who create it. We are placed in an undignified position, and it is an indignity also upon our electors, to say that they must wait until the rest of Australia has approved of the Bill. It will be observed that my amendment makes no special demand as to terms, that it does not say on what terms the reference to the people shall be made—that is all left to subsequent parliamentary discussion; and the amendment merely affirms, in effect, the principle that the Bill shall be referred at once to the people. If Parliament, when the Enabling Bill itself comes before it, chooses to say that it will wait until the rest of Australia assents to the Federation Bill, well and good; but I say, let us discuss it. I only ask for discussion in Parliament or before the electors. Terms can be made by Parliament as to what majority vote, if any, shall be required, or whether the decision shall be by a bare majority. My amendment is silent as to the terms; but we are deprived of the privilege of even discussing these questions, if we approve of paragraph 2 of the Speech.

THE PREMIER: You are not asked to approve of it.

MR. LEAKE: What will be the actual result if we wait for the approval of all the other colonies? The Bill cannot pass through the whole lot of them until about October, and by that time this session will have about reached the end of its term, so that it will then be too late to bring down the necessary enabling legislation for this Parliament to deal with. But the approval of Queensland is yet uncertain; and should Queensland stand

out, the effect of paragraph 2 is that we shall never have the opportunity of discussing the question of federation, because paragraph 2 says that nothing will be presented to us for consideration until the rest of Australia has approved of the Federation Bill. It will then be too late for us to pass the necessary legislation; but, in addition to that, what will be the effect if Queensland stands out? We in this colony want to be in a position to say, supposing the majority of members are in favour of federation, that the non-entrance of Queensland into the league is not necessarily fatal to the federal movement, either as regards this colony or the other colonies, because the other colonies will federate whether Queensland stands out or not; but this paragraph says Western Australia cannot join the federation if Queensland stands out, and that is a condition I object to. Whether it was meant that we should be delayed in this way, I do not know; but that is the exact, literal meaning of paragraph 2 in His Excellency's Speech. Let me have an assurance from the Government that my inference is wrong, and that they are desirous of referring the Federation Bill to the electors, and then I withdraw the amendment.

MR. MORGANS: We must find that out.

MR. LEAKE: If Queensland stands out, we cannot negotiate for terms, for Parliament cannot then discuss the question at all; and matters have arrived at that stage when the making of terms for federation cannot be carried on merely by the Government, but has to be carried on by Parliament and the people generally. I appreciate the importance and the delicacy of the position I am in, because our side of the House, or those who are in favour of federation, if we had permitted this clause to pass unchallenged, would have been told hereafter, if we then complained that we were not permitted to discuss the question until we had the lead of Queensland and Tasmania, that the discussion of the Address-in-Reply was the proper occasion to have raised this question, and that by not raising it in connection with that discussion we had tacitly consented to wait until those colonies had given us this lead. Therefore, I say I am right in raising this question definitely and distinctly on

the present occasion, and I am justified in demanding an assurance as to what is the course to be pursued. Have the Government, under the circumstances, any intention of bringing forward the necessary legislation for sending this Bill to the electors of the country? Or do they intend to shelve it until after the next general election? In my opinion, this is an attempt to shelve the question for 12 months, and to shelve it possibly until after the general election. I claim that the Government have already a distinct parliamentary mandate to refer this Bill to the people, because the circumstances between the passing of the original Enabling Act and now have not so altered as to justify any departure from the then proposed procedure. If circumstances have so altered, then by all means let us hear what these circumstances are.

THE PREMIER: This is not the same Bill.

MR. LEAKE: It is not the same Bill? Well, it is not in exactly the same words, but it is practically the same.

MR. MORAN: Not at all.

MR. LEAKE: If it is different, why does not Parliament discuss it at once?

THE PREMIER: It can be discussed.

MR. LEAKE: We are not allowed to discuss it. Discussion is the very thing I am battling for.

THE PREMIER: Why not?

MR. LEAKE: Because you will not bring it down until the rest of Australia tells you that you may.

THE PREMIER: You can bring it down.

MR. LEAKE: I cannot.

MR. MORAN: It is open to any member of the House to do so.

THE PREMIER: You or anyone else can raise a debate upon it.

MR. LEAKE: I do not think that a great national matter like this should be introduced by anyone save the leader of the Government.

MR. MORAN: It is open to any private member to take the initiative.

MR. LEAKE: But I will tell the leader of the Government that, if he will declare in favour of federation, and will avow his intention of bringing forward the necessary enabling legislation, I will support him to the best of my ability, both inside and outside of Parliament.

MR. MORAN: Bring in the Bill. Introduce the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: As I have said, I find myself in a peculiar and delicate position; and I am accused, and shall be accused in the House, as I am accused outside, of attempting to make this a question of party politics. That allegation I entirely deny. I repudiate it as loudly as I can.

THE PREMIER: You would be bound to get something to quarrel about. If federation did not suit, something else would be found.

MR. LEAKE: That is no reason why the matter should not be discussed. I do not wish to make this a question of party politics, or anything of the kind; and again I say, if the Government give me the assurance that I ask for, I will withdraw the amendment; and that does not look like party tactics.

THE PREMIER: The party has deserted, apparently.

MR. LEAKE: There seems to have been a misunderstanding, either on this side of the House or on that. It is either a misunderstanding between me and my followers, or between the Premier and his colleagues. What does the public Press say about that? Why, it says there is a misunderstanding between the Premier and his colleagues on the question of federation; but why not lash them up as usual, and make them follow your lead?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That will be done at the proper time.

MR. LEAKE: Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to help to do that. One of the chief dangers of delay is that this question may be dragged into the arena of party politics, and that, too, in the worst possible fashion, because the more we discuss this in public, and the more we fight for it, the more likely are the feelings of the electors to become embittered. The question is not at present approached with any feelings of bitterness or resentment, and those who are in favour of and those who are against the movement are still open to reason and to argument. But we have all along expected that the question would be discussed in public, and that it would be shorn of all party traits; that it should go to the people, to the electors, alone and unconnected with any other political movement. But so sure as this question gets mixed up with local politics and with a general election, then we shall have it dragged into party politics in the

worst possible form. That is what I wish to avoid.

THE PREMIER: It will be your fault if it happens.

MR. LEAKE: How can it be said that it will be my fault, when I am appealing to the right hon. gentleman to give me an assurance that he will send this Bill forthwith to the electors, and that he will send it alone—by itself? If it be my fault that the Bill goes to the electors at once, I will accept the blame; but I shall be proud of it. The people of the colony cannot be better educated up to understanding the situation, than by the discussion of this Bill from all points of view as a single, simple question placed before them for their determination. We do not want to say: "If you will vote for federation, we will give you a bridge over that river down the road; if you will vote for federation, we will give you a new court-house in some country town, or a railway to some particular centre." That is the danger attending the dragging of this all-important question into a general election. And why should we not follow the precedent that has been established in the other colonies, by sending the Bill as it has been approved, straight away to the people? If we delay—if we wait until the rest of Australia has approved, or till the rest of Australia has not approved, then undoubtedly, at the general election which must take place next year, there will be all sorts of trouble. We know there is to be a redistribution of seats; we know there is to be the woman's franchise. Now the last of these important questions has been taken up by one or two writers in the public Press, who maintain that the granting of the woman's franchise will give the coastal electorates—the electorates in the coastal or earlier-settled districts—a bigger proportionate majority of electors than they at present have; and perhaps it is as well for those who represent the goldfields to bear this fact in mind.

THE PREMIER: The goldfields electors are all in favour of woman's franchise.

MR. LEAKE: I know they are. I am not arguing against the woman's suffrage. But they are not in favour of giving an extra adverse vote on the question of federation.

THE PREMIER: Why should it be adverse?

MR. MORAN: Who said it would be adverse?

MR. LEAKE: Because we know that pretty well all the electors of the agricultural districts are against federation. It will give you an extra opportunity, and when we get the ladies into politics we shall find that they will, to some extent, introduce new party questions, and federation ought not to be discussed at the same time as those other questions which interest womankind.

MR. MORAN: Have not women sufficient intelligence to understand federation?

MR. GEORGE: Oh, he will not reply to you.

MR. MORAN: Women, as a rule, are very anxious about federation.

MR. LEAKE: It has been urged that we may get new terms if we delay. That is an argument which does not impress me, and I hope hon. members will not be led away by it. It seems to me that as the Bill now stands, in its amended form, the time for negotiation is past. It is useless for the Government to attempt to arrange with the other colonies for better terms or conditions.

MR. MORAN: Why?

MR. LEAKE: Because they cannot grant them. New South Wales and South Australia have approved of the Bill as amended in the conference of Premiers; and do you suppose for one moment that New South Wales and South Australia are willing, at the dictation or at the request of Western Australia, to submit to the trouble of a fresh referendum, just to please us?

MR. MORGANS: What about the Imperial Parliament?

MR. LEAKE: Pardon me, I am coming to that.

MR. MORGANS: Thank you.

MR. LEAKE: But it is impossible for our Government to arrange definite terms. Really the only power with which we can negotiate will be the federal authority, when it is established; and as a matter of fact, it will be established within a very few months. We cannot get away from that fact.

MR. MORAN: Not months, surely.

MR. LEAKE: It must be established shortly. The only alternative is to approach the Imperial Parliament—(**MR. MORGANS:** Hear, hear)—by asking them to amend this Enabling Bill, which will

appear in the form of a schedule to the Imperial Enabling Bill. But if there is to be a negotiation for better terms, why should not the people of the country know of it?

MR. MORGANS: They do know of it.

MR. LEAKE: They do know of it? The hon. member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) does not represent the whole colony. He represents a certain district, and we know that he is taken into the confidence of the Government. But, unfortunately, he is nearly as close as Ministers themselves, and it is as difficult to get information out of him as to get it out of the Premier.

MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: The Premiers of the other colonies could not now amend the Bill; and it is not at all likely—it is outside any practical suggestion—to think that, now that they can get federation whether Western Australia joins or not, they are going out of their way to consult our convenience. When the federal authority is established and we are asked to join, it is open to us then to say: "No; we will not join unless you do such and such a thing." At the same time, we should have to go before the electors on any question of importance. But what are the terms? We have not heard of any. None have ever been mentioned by any member of the Government. Why? As I have pointed out, the Government are, as a whole, opposed to federation. How then can we expect negotiations for terms to be carried out by them? It is ridiculous; and such a contention is only a sort of stop-gap argument to justify delaying this question until the next general election. The other colonies are not likely to imperil their destiny by consulting our convenience, and if we were to ask for or demand better terms, we should really make ourselves a laughing-stock in Australia. I ask hon. members to remember this, that the amendment which I propose does not decide the fate of federation, neither does it bind us to adopt or to reject it, nor does the referendum bind us to adopt or reject it.

MR. MORAN: Yes, it does.

MR. LEAKE: But we are bound, by reason of our previous action with regard to this question, to refer it without delay to the people; because not only has New

South Wales approved—which was a condition precedent—but South Australia has approved, and we know, too, that Victoria and Tasmania are about to approve. What possible objection there can be to referring this question at once to the people, I cannot at present imagine.

MR. MORGANS: The conditions may be different.

MR. LEAKE: The conditions may be different? Should not we have found that out last year.

MR. MORGANS: Certainly.

MR. LEAKE: Why base our political reputation on a mere political hypothesis such as that? It is ridiculous, and I am astonished to think that a member of the standing of the member for Coolgardie should venture to support an argument which comes from the other side, by such utterances. I have purposely refrained, in introducing this amendment, from discussing the question on a broader basis, and I do not propose to advance arguments for or against federation. A vote on such a question as this is not necessarily effective, so far as the fate of the movement is concerned; but I do ask that the people should be consulted at once. We should keep faith with the people, and not wait until we get a mandate or authority from our neighbours, who may or may not care a fig whether we join the federation movement or not. That is the position, and again I say if I can get an assurance from the Government that they will bring down enabling legislation at once, I will not only withdraw the amendment, but will support them in their efforts. Beyond that I do not think I can speak more fairly. It is true that I am in favour of federation, but I do not wish to thrust my opinion down the throat of anybody. I am prepared at the proper time, and in the proper place, to advance arguments in support, and I am prepared also to be impressed by arguments which may be advanced against my position on such an important question. Federation is not a condition that can be adopted to-day and rejected to-morrow; because, if we once join, we make or mar our destiny. I agree entirely that this question should not be carried into the arena of party politics, and that parties should not be harassed over such a matter. We ought to fight such a question as this on its merits. I

join with members on both sides of the House in urging that this question should be properly and fairly ventilated, both in Parliament and before the people. But let us know exactly where we are; let us know whether the people are in favour of federation. If we go to a popular vote and that vote is against federation, there the matter must rest, and Parliament can go on with the work of politics, satisfied to do the best outside of federation. But on the other hand, if the majority of the people are in favour of federation, and the principles of federation are sufficiently laid down in the Bill which was passed at the Convention, and which has been amended by the Premiers, then we shall know exactly how we stand, and whether it is possible in any circumstances to make terms. If we know what terms are suggested, is it not better that Parliament should be unanimous in suggesting any fresh terms to be imposed? Would that not be better than that hon. members should go on the hustings and attempt to deceive one another by saying, "I am in favour of these terms," or "I am against them"? That is not the proper spirit in which we should approach the discussion of this question. Let us, before there is any unnecessary heat, take a popular vote, and Parliament will then know exactly how this colony stands in regard to federation. The vote would not decide the matter, because an Act of authorisation must be passed by the Imperial Parliament, and the Bill must then come before this Parliament, when an opportunity would still be afforded of revoking or reconsidering previously expressed opinions. These are my reasons for introducing this amendment. This question should be attacked in public at once; there should be no delay; and we should not be at the beck and call of any single one of the other colonies, or be put in the position of indignity in which I think the delay would place us. I ask members not to regard this amendment as a trick on the part of myself or of members of the Opposition. But the Opposition do insist that this question should at once go to the people, and that faith should be kept with the electors, according to the promise made when the first Enabling Bill came before Parliament. If the Premier cannot get the support of his colleagues

on the question, there are others who will support him if he will only declare in public what his real intentions are, and whether he intends to send this Bill to the electors. If we do not discuss this question now, it will be too late to discuss it later on in the session, and we shall not get the Bill to the people for another twelve months. If there is going to be a redistribution of seats—and we are told on the authority of the Government that there is—the election under the redistribution would, unless the federal question be settled now, be mixed up with the discussion of the latter. Let the people decide "aye" or "no" for the Federal Bill, and let the newly constituted Parliament, when it meets after an election under the redistribution of seats, confirm or annul the decision of the people. That is the fairest way to proceed.

MR. MORAN: Would you like the Bill annulled?

MR. LEAKE: We would then know what action had been taken by the other colonies and by the Imperial Parliament, and Parliament and the Government of the day would then be able to say definitely as to whether Western Australia should join the federation. I am not going to be drawn into a discussion on the details of the Commonwealth Bill, because, if I were, two or three hours would not suffice for my speech. The only question now is whether the Bill is going to the people. If the Government say they will not send this Bill to the people until all Australia has approved of it, then should Queensland not approve, the question would not be sent to the people of Western Australia. I, for one, am not going to submit to be placed in such a position without protest. I have protested, and I trust that members who are in favour of the Federation Bill going to the people will say so now distinctly and emphatically. We ought, if we can, to come to an understanding without a division. Can I say anything fairer than that? And in this suggestion I am supported by members who sit on my left.

THE PREMIER: You are "climbing down" a bit.

MR. LEAKE: I will climb down if you will. I will do anything in reason

you ask me, as a public man, to enable you to send this Bill before the electors forthwith.

A MEMBER: You want to make this a party question, clearly enough.

MR. LEAKE: If there is a party question, it is not in federation, but in the action of the Government in regard to federation.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I expect it is a new experience to most hon. members to find an addendum to the Address-in-Reply proposed by the leader of the Opposition. That hon. member informs us that this amendment constitutes a vote of want of confidence, and must be taken as such, and he asks the Government to make terms with him in order that he may get out of the difficulty he has created for himself. He tells us that if we will do something he will do something else; in fact, he will do nearly anything in order to meet our wishes.

MR. LEAKE: If you are true to your colours.

THE PREMIER: Is that a reasonable request from the hon. member, when he is submitting an amendment which he tells us is a vote of want of confidence? Do hon. members suppose for one moment that, politically, the leader of the Opposition has any regard for members sitting on the Government side of the House?

MR. LEAKE: I have none; absolutely none.

THE PREMIER: Is the hon. member desirous to do something to meet our wishes, in order that the Government may stand better before the country than we do at the present moment? Hon. members will entertain no such idea. The desire of the leader of the Opposition is to discount the Government, and to place us in as false a position as he can with the people of the country; in fact, politically, he seeks to do us the greatest possible injury. Let there be no mistake about this. If the hon. member had been in earnest in regard to federation, could he not have said all that he has said now, and a great deal more to the point, on the Address-in-Reply, without moving this adverse amendment? Is it not competent for every member in the House to address himself to the question of federation, on the Address-

in-Reply, without making it a party question? For the hon. member to say he is in earnest in regard to federation, and that this is the only means he has to show the House he is in earnest, is absolutely absurd. We all know the debate on the Address-in-Reply is the opportunity when everyone can say what he likes in regard to the administration of affairs generally. There is no reason whatever, except for party and political purposes, why the hon. member should have moved this amendment at this time. The Address-in-Reply is purposely framed as non-committal: it commits no member of the House to anything. The leader of the Opposition has told us that if we pass the Address-in-Reply we shall be committed to paragraph 2 of His Excellency's Speech. Is that a correct statement? What does the Address-in-Reply say? It thanks His Excellency for his Speech, and promises to give attention to the matters contained in it and to all matters which may come before Parliament. Does it commit members in the slightest degree to acquiescence in any part of His Excellency's Speech? Members with experience of Parliamentary business in other places know very well that the reason the Address-in-Reply is framed in this way is in order that it may not commit anyone to any statement contained in the Speech from the Governor, and formerly the Address-in-Reply attained that end by simply being a sort of paraphrase of the Speech itself. Hon. members are not so foolish as the leader of the Opposition thinks they are. The hon. member tried his best to get some peg in the Speech on which he could hang an adverse amendment, and we know that he had in view the question of the redistribution of seats.

MR. LEAKE: No, he had not.

THE PREMIER: Do not tell me that. I know very well that was the subject the hon. member had in view; but it was swept away from him, and he had to find something else, and the next best thing he thought of was the federation referendum. The hon. member seems to be one of those either careless or autocratic persons who do things without consulting others in any way; and he now finds that the party he leads is not prepared to follow him blindly in

the course he is anxious to take, and consequently he is anxious to retreat from the position he has taken up. That is the whole truth of the matter. The hon. member finds himself in a little difficulty, and, instead of coming forward in a straightforward, manly way, and saying "I wish to withdraw my amendment," he tries to offer the Government terms, by means of which he may disparage the present Administration with the people of the country. But we are not going to be caught by the hon. member, if we can avoid it. The Government will take it on his own word that this is an adverse amendment, and we will fight it; and if the hon. member is successful, we will adopt the constitutional course, and he can take the management of the country, and do with federation as he thinks best.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You would not do that.

THE PREMIER: New converts are always anxious to appear to be enthusiastic, and no doubt the member for Central Murchison is a new convert to federation: at least, I believe so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I was a federationist before I came to this colony, anyhow.

THE PREMIER: The member for Albany seems to wish above all things that the Government should make a distinct pronouncement—I think that was the word he used—in regard to the intention of the Government on federation. I think our statement in His Excellency's Speech in regard to federation is not obscure.

MR. LEAKE: Who drafted the paragraph?

THE PREMIER: I did. This paragraph is pretty clear in regard to what the Government think on the question, for it says:—

The public feeling in favour of a closer union is almost universal, and that being so, the only question which will require your careful consideration in the event of the Commonwealth Bill being adopted by the rest of Australia, is whether the Bill so safeguards our financial interests at the present time as to justify us, as prudent people, with great responsibilities, giving up, to a very large extent, the control and management of our fiscal policy.

Is not that a reasonable proposition to put before reasonable people, that after having considered the question, and

having great responsibilities, and being prudent people, they should give careful consideration to the question before they give up the control and management of their fiscal policy? The paragraph goes on to say:—

The Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, has been forwarded to every elector in the colony, and so soon as it has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia will be submitted for your consideration. My Ministers are of opinion that the Bill, as now framed, is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies, and this is freely admitted by all the leaders of the movement in the other Australian colonies, and by all who have given the financial clauses any close consideration. It will, therefore, be obligatory on you to give that portion of the Bill the closest and most careful examination.

I do not think that is an unreasonable proposition.

MR. LEAKE: Why wait for the other colonies?

THE PREMIER: I do not want to go into a discussion now in regard to federation generally; but this I will say, that if the great colony of Queensland does not join the federation, that important fact will require the gravest consideration from me, and I am going to consider that fact, and will not rush headlong into federation. I am giving this question further consideration at the present time, and hope to be able to place before the people of this country facts and figures which have an important bearing on the question. I hope to do this in no party spirit, for my desire is that the people shall have an opportunity of considering the question with a full knowledge of the facts. The member for Albany seems on this occasion to be enthusiastic in the cause of federation. I did not observe his enthusiasm when he had previous opportunities of showing it, and at those times I do not think he gave much attention to the question, nor has he ever given it much attention, so far as I have had opportunities of knowing. The paragraph says:—

My Ministers are of opinion that the Bill as now framed is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies.

All this is freely admitted. I am aware there are persons in the other colonies, persons of position, who would deny that statement; but I am sure they are unable

to prove it is untrue, because I know you cannot get one responsible person in all this country, including the hon. member opposite (Mr. Leake), who can show that this colony will gain anything by federation. I have never said we should not lose. I have said I hoped we would be able to show that we would not lose by federation, but I have never said we could gain anything by federation. I have said that I had great fear in regard to the financial question; and I have great fear still, and I am at work on that question at the present time, for having been so busy and had so many things to attend to, I confess I have not been able to give that attention to this aspect of the question which its importance deserves. The paragraph in his Excellency's Speech states the views of the Government on federation; and in advising these Chambers of Parliament, all we say is that it is obligatory on members to give that portion of the Bill the closest and most careful examination. Is that taking a personal position, or is it dealing with this as a non-party question? In replying the other evening to a question put by the member for East Perth (Mr. James), what did I say? I said:—

Federation has not been made a political party question in any part of Australia, and it would, in my opinion, be very unfortunate if it were attempted to be made so in this colony. So soon as the Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia, I will be prepared to introduce an Enabling Bill submitting the Commonwealth Bill, as amended, for the consideration of Parliament, with a view to its submission to the vote of the people at the time and in the manner that Parliament may then decide upon.

Is there anything in that which says the Government do not wish to refer this question to the people?

MR. LEAKE: Yes; everything. You want to delay it.

THE PREMIER: You want to hurry it on.

MR. LEAKE: Certainly.

THE PREMIER: I think you had better be careful, instead of hurrying on. The hon. member would like me to make it a party question; and now he comes here and appeals to us on his knees, asking us to make terms. He uses this question as a means of attacking us; and now that he has taken this course, we will not help him out of the

difficulty he has got into, but will leave him where he is. The hon. member wants an assurance that we will deal with the Federation Bill. Have I not given an assurance to deal with it, in my reply to the question put by the member for East Perth? If ever the other colonies do federate, I shall be sorry if some means cannot be found by which this colony can enter the federation. The member for Albany thinks there are no difficulties before us, in dealing with this question; but I know there are difficulties, and if all the other colonies do federate under this Bill, there will still be difficulties for us. If the hon. member had been in earnest in reference to the matter, he could have said all he wished to say now on federation, and not mix it up with party politics. I say the hon. member wishes us to believe his amendment is not a trick. I believe it is nothing more than a political dodge on the part of the hon. member, to try and place some members on this side of the House in a false position before their constituents.

MR. LEAKE: I shall not be sorry.

THE PREMIER: No; there you are! The hon. member is thoroughly sincere in regard to this amendment. I say that it is the intention of the hon. member to make this a trial of strength at the beginning of the session; and, as he wishes to displace the present Government, I recognise his amendment as an attempt to do so, and the hon. member admits it is. It is no use making these plausible appeals to us, that they will do this if we will do that. I say we will do nothing of the sort. We will accept the challenge which the hon. member has thrown down. The exact terms of his amendment we will leave out altogether; for it makes no difference what the terms are, when we know the effect is the same. His amendment is a parliamentary trick, and one that is never resorted to in any country where parties are definitely divided. In England such a trick could never occur, because parties there are well ascertained and defined; and such a trick would fall to the ground, as I believe it will fall here. If the hon. member relies on his supporters in this House, we know he cannot depend on them; but his idea is to try and win over two or three members on this side of the House, in order to carry out what he desires.

MR. WILSON: So they do in England.

THE PREMIER: No; a member in England does not leave his party in one session and go back to it the next session. Indeed, very seldom does a member leave the party he is elected to support, and it is only in new countries and under conditions totally different that such things are done. The hon. member desires to place me before the country as one opposed to federation. There is no doubt he does so, but I do not see that it would be in the interests of federation to do that. I shall not be influenced, I hope, by what the hon. member does. I have desired federation for years and years. My desire is that this country should join and become a part of federated Australia; but I recognise that it would be an irrevocable step, and therefore I am not going to ask the people of this country to take that step until I have well considered the whole subject myself. Some time ago, when we talked of this subject without that full sense of responsibility which we ought to feel, we may not have been so careful as we should now, when we are on the threshold of federation. It is now the bounden duty of every man in this Legislature to consider the question and understand it as well as he can. I hope in a short time to place some facts before hon. members and the people of this country, so that they may be able to decide for themselves this important question, not because they may have a feeling that federation is good or is bad in itself, but because they believe that federation will be for their interests and in the interests of this country, not only at the present time but for all time. Surely no one in this colony desires that we shall federate in order that we may injure ourselves? We cannot very well afford to do so, however much we may desire it. There is such a thing as necessity. We have obligations, and we must see that we are in a position to carry them out. There is one clause in that Bill which is fatal in its effect. I do not know how it escaped me at the Convention, or how it escaped the astuteness of the hon. member opposite (Mr. Leake).

MR. GEORGE: He must have been away.

THE PREMIER: Well, its meaning certainly never came home to me in the sense in which I now understand it—that we cannot build a railway from any

point in our own railway system, to join with the railway systems of the other colonies, without the consent of South Australia. That proposition is, to my mind, a blot upon the whole Bill, because it gives to South Australia power to prevent us from joining the railway systems of Eastern Australia for ever and for ever. Will hon. members say that this blot must not be removed? I say it must. It is a stain upon the Bill, because while it remains, we can never hope to have what we all want—a connection by rail with the other colonies. We can never have that, under this Bill, unless South Australia gives consent. [MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear.] Well, are we going to federate with that blot on the Bill? I should like to ask the hon. member (Mr. Leake) why such an astute lawyer as he did not point this out at the Convention, and safeguard the interests of this country? It never came home to me: I never understood it before, but I understand it now, and I shall do my very best, and I am doing it at present, to have that blot removed from the Bill; because, unless it is removed, it remains as an obstacle which we cannot get over. We must have that blot removed, and the Federal Parliament must remove it somehow, in order that we may be connected with the railway systems of the eastern colonies.

MR. LEAKE: To what clause do you refer?

THE PREMIER: It is one of those under the heading "Legislative Powers of the Parliament," and reads "Railway construction and extension in any State with the consent of that State." The hon. member does not even know of the clause. I expect he has never seen it before. At all events, it is there, and will have to be removed before the Bill will suit this colony.

MR. GEORGE: There is no occasion to discuss the question now.

THE PREMIER: I am only mentioning it. The question now is, that the hon. member and those who support him—I hope there will not be many—are by their action trying, for mere party purposes, to make this question of federation a party question and nothing more. The hon. member desires, if possible, to put the Government in a false position, and in a difficulty; he desires to drag this

great and noble cause of federation into the arena of party politics. I say again to hon. members: take no notice whatever of the wording of this motion. No matter how it may be worded, it is a no-confidence motion, and as such we must deal with it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why did you not adjourn the House?

THE PREMIER: We did adjourn. I beg the hon. member's pardon. The hon. member (Mr. Leake) moved his motion before the Address-in-Reply was seconded, in order, as he thought, to get in first. This is the hon. member who is so desirous of federation being made a non-party question, and who yet, at the beginning of the session, makes it a test vote as to whether the Government shall or shall not hold office.

MR. LEAKE: I am awfully sorry if I have put you to inconvenience.

THE PREMIER: Oh, not at all. You do not inconvenience me, but I dare say you injure yourself.

MR. OLDHAM: At all events, you seem to be very much annoyed about it.

THE PREMIER: Oh, no; I am not at all annoyed about it. I take up this position: if the hon. member be in earnest in regard to federation, if it be his desire that it should not be made a party question, the course open to him is perfectly clear: he should have debated this point on the Address-in-Reply. He might even have moved some motion, so as to have it discussed, thus keeping it altogether outside of party politics. But what does he do? He searches through that long Speech, which is so long that hon. members have really been weary of listening to it—they are so little interested in what is going on in this colony, that they could not even bear to give the necessary time to listen to the Governor's Speech—he looks all through that long Speech, to see whether he could find some hole in the armour of the Government.

MR. GEORGE: Make it shorter next year, if it is too long.

THE PREMIER: I should advise the hon. member to get some new Mentor to guide him on the next occasion, if he wants a guide; but I do not think he wants any guide at all. I think he should be guided by his own sense of what is right and just, rather than by

the advice of certain people who lead him into devious paths. Here, in His Excellency's Speech, we have a programme which, if read attentively, will be found to embrace a good many proposals for the future, which are submitted for the consideration of Parliament. We have a programme of railways—I think there are four railways proposed—of harbour improvements, of public batteries; we have reference to the Coolgardie water scheme; we have a redistribution of seats; we have a large number of Bills to consider, Bills more important in character, from a social point of view at all events, than have ever come before this Legislature, and many of them too are of a controversial nature. And, looking all through this Speech, containing as it does so many questions of importance to the country, and so many of a controversial character, the very best point, in the opinion of the hon. member and his advisers—the very best point on which to attack the Government was by dragging this great and noble cause of federation into this House as a party question, with a view of trying to oust the Ministry. The hon. member appeals to us to give him assurances, and appeals for those assurances not in the way usually adopted by people who are anxious to be on good terms with others, but asks for assurances at the very point of the bayonet, by moving a vote of want-of-confidence. Is that the way to obtain any assurance from us? I say that if I were willing to give any assurance to the hon. member on an occasion such as this, I should be unworthy of the position I occupy as one who is trusted by hon. members on this side of the House. He can have no assurance from us when he comes at us with the bayonet. If he wants assurances, he must ask for them properly, and we shall always be very glad to meet his wishes as far as possible. It shows to what straits the hon. member and the one or two members advising him—though perhaps he has a good many advisers—it shows to what straits they were put to find cause for complaint in the Speech. This is all he could find. The only device he thought would serve his purpose was to drag the cause of federation into the arena of party politics. It reminds me of the fable I remember reading when I was a boy, entitled the wolf and the lamb. The wolf,

though higher up the stream than the lamb, complained of the lamb for raising mud in the water.

MR. OLDHAM: Who is the lamb in this instance?

THE PREMIER: In this case I am the lamb. The hon. member could find no cause of complaint in me; he could find no cause of complaint in the Speech, looking at it as a political document; and he had to go out of his way by referring to a non-political question, so that he might have some cry with which to go to the people.

MR. LEAKE: But remember that, in the fable, the wolf ate the lamb.

THE PREMIER: No doubt you will try it, but I do not think you will eat me this time. "The Bill to the people" was thought to be a good cry, like the cry of the Germans, "To the Rhine!" The hon. member cannot find, in paragraph 2 of the Speech or in my reply to the member for East Perth (Mr. James), anything I have said which can give rise to the idea that I desire to keep back this Bill from the people. But with the hon. member, federation, redistribution of seats, and everything else can go to the winds, so long as he can do something to entice from the Government side the votes of two or three members. He knows there are members on this side of the House who represent large constituencies, which are in favour of federation; and he thought to himself, "I will put those gentlemen in such a hole that they will be obliged to desert the Government, and to help me." But I think the hon. member does not know those gentlemen, and I think he will find that they will not desert the Government because of a party trick such as this, and that he will not get the assistance he expects.

MR. OLDHAM: We do not expect much.

THE PREMIER: Well, you did expect it, but I do not think you expect it now.

MR. OLDHAM: We never expected it.

THE PREMIER: One thing, however, this division when it takes place will show; one good will result. Out of evil often comes good, and it will be so in this case. It will show the weakness of the hon. member, and will perhaps teach him that, if he wants to oust the Government, he must show some good cause,

some substantial ground, and must not expect to do it by a mere party or political trick.

MR. LEAKE: That ought not to annoy you.

THE PREMIER: It seems to me that the hon. gentleman, unless he can get up some excitement by a motion of no-confidence, or by some other movement which he thinks is very much adverse to this side of the House, takes no interest whatever in politics. You cannot get the hon. member here, unless it be on some exciting occasion. What we want him to do is to set to work. We have plenty of business to transact, and we ought to do it, instead of wasting time over these no-confidence motions, which he, at the present time, would like to say are not no-confidence motions, though he cannot help admitting that they are. He appealed to us as if we were all friends politically, and told us how glad he would be to withdraw his motion if we would give him some assurance; but, as I said before, we will give him no assurance. I can only say in conclusion that I much regret the introduction of this motion. If the hon. member had moved that this House had no longer any confidence in the present Administration, I think he would have been much fairer to everyone concerned. We should all then have known where we were. We should have been able to vote for or against the motion, knowing exactly what we were doing, and for what we were voting. How much better would that have been than this attempt to gain an advantage by a side-wind, or, as I said before, by a trick? During all the years the hon. member has been in this House, neither he nor those who are with him—I class them altogether, because I suppose he and the front Opposition bench are all in accord—he and his friends have never introduced a direct vote of want-of-confidence in this Government. They have several times tried to get by a side-wind what they did not seem to have the courage to attempt directly. Now, I do not think this is the way in which we ought to carry on our business. It is useless to try to oust the Government from office in this fashion. It is useless to try to catch votes on one subject only, when the Government are strongly supported on general

questions; and it seems to me that such tactics do not tend to make our parliamentary life as comfortable as it might otherwise be. The hon. member might easily have moved a direct vote of want-of-confidence in the present Government; and that challenge would have been accepted, and fought out on its merits. The hon. member might then have gone over the whole field of Government administration during the past year and, after the Government had replied, a vote could have been taken. That is the way in which the business of the country ought to be carried on. This other procedure has become more and more the fashion in other colonies, though I am not aware that it has become so in England, where the position of the Government and of Parliament is fixed and well-understood, and voting is by parties. Here, of course, we are influenced by one idea or another, and members may be glad to support the leader of the Opposition generally, but not able to support him on certain points. No Government should be ousted from office by a trick, when the Government have a large majority behind them on general questions. But the hon. member has, I am sorry to say, taken that course. If it should ever be my lot to be in opposition, as no doubt I shall be in time, I promise I will not descend to dodges of this sort. I would prefer to move a direct vote of want-of-confidence in the Government and take a vote of the House, because that is the straightforward course. But somehow or other, the hon. member, who desires to do what is best, gets under the influence of members who have very little knowledge of parliamentary rules in the colonies, with the result that he frames tricky motions—I cannot call them anything else—in order to weaken the Government vote on a particular point, while the Government or even the Opposition might be much stronger on a direct vote than they would be on a vote which really seems to have regard to the placing of certain persons in a false position. There is a great deal of business to do this session. The hon. member has taken the course of not discussing generally the Address-in-Reply, and therefore, when this amendment is disposed of, members will have an opportunity of discussing the administration in all its bearings. In

bringing forward this amendment, the hon. member has addressed himself to the one question of federation. I follow in the same way, confining myself to the one question; and if we all do that, we shall be able to dispose of that question and then go on quickly with the general debate on the Address-in-Reply, in dealing with which hon. members can discuss generally the Governor's Speech and other matters of interest to themselves and the people of the colony. I shall offer my most strenuous objection to the amendment, and do my best to defeat it.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): At first I felt inclined to allow this question to proceed to the vote, because a great deal of what the Premier has told us is perfectly correct. There is a large amount of work before us this session, and it would be better if we could go straightway to that work; but I feel that the question which has been placed before us is one on which it behoves most of us to give some reason for the way in which we shall vote. The Premier is quite right when he accuses the leader of the Opposition—such as that Opposition is—of bringing forward a tricky amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why do you not sit on the Ministerial side?

MR. GEORGE: Last session I told one of those gentlemen who form a numerous part of a divided Opposition, that I should sit in this House exactly where I pleased, and say what I chose, and I intend to go on with that programme, even though it does not agree with the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). That hon. member treats us to a great deal of what is called parliamentary procedure, but he disobeys his leader by interjecting, when he has no business to. And now, having crushed that hon. member, I will proceed with my speech. I was saying that I agree with the hon. the Premier that this amendment of the member for Albany is a tricky one. I believe the reason why the member for Albany does not obtain more support than he has hitherto received, is owing to the fact that he does put people into an awkward position. If the hon. member were to try to appeal to the people's sense of right and justice, and let them exercise a little independence of thought, he would get support very much

more frequently than he does now. Instead of taking that course, however, he will, on isolated remarks in speeches of members, bring forward an amendment, for which those members may be tricked into voting. Now, what does this amendment mean? It simply means that the hon. member knows there are a number of public men in the colony who stated publicly they wished the Federation Bill to go to the people. What I am saying now, I said twelve months ago, and also while the leader of the Opposition was away in England; and my opinion is that, though he may get a few members to vote with him, he will not get many; and that is about as straight a truth as I can tell him. I was prepared to vote for the Bill going to the people, and I would give that vote even if 43 members were against that proceeding and I stood alone, and I would stand alone as long as my physical strength would allow. I do not require to be told by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), or the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham), what my duty is to the people of the colony, because I know my duty, and I will do it when the time comes.

MR. OLDHAM: We will all do our duty.

MR. GEORGE: Very well; but when it comes to a question of an amendment of this sort, for the purpose of kicking the Government out of seats which they have filled very well, and filled much better than the present members of the Opposition possibly would, I prefer the devils I know to the devils I do not know. We can criticise the present Government, and we now pretty well know the length of the tether of the mistakes they can make. We are sanguine enough, some of us—my party at any rate, of which I am the undisputed leader—to believe that we will be able to deal with the present Government more easily than we could deal with the new colts of the Opposition. I do not want to deal with the question of federation at any length now, but I will take the opportunity of saying that I cannot understand why the leader of the Opposition wishes such indecent haste in sending the Bill to the people. I do not think I ought to say what I feel about his action, because it might be cruel, and hurt his feelings.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, don't be afraid.

MR. GEORGE: Then I will say the hon. member diligently did not do his duty to the country. It is a surprising fact to me that the bulk of the people who are trying to understand this federation question, and place it before the people, are despised tothersiders and not Western Australians. What did the member for East Perth (Mr. James) and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) do at the Federation Convention in Melbourne? Did they watch the interests of Western Australia? If they did it was by being silent. Yet the member for Albany tells us practically that this colony is ready for the slaughter. Will the other colonies listen to Western Australia, which they regard as a mere bag of sand not wanted by them? The other colonies want our gold or whatever else they can get from us. If that is the opinion formed by the hon. member, after attending the Conventions—for which attendance this country paid his expenses—then I say distinctly it was that gentleman's duty to let the whole of this country know the fact at once.

MR. LEAKE: Of course you know that this is a misstatement.

MR. GEORGE: I know the statement to be true. If I did not know it to be true I would not make it.

MR. LEAKE: I thought you might not know it was a misstatement.

MR. GEORGE: I have not got the gift of saying untrue things and dressing them up in the garb of truth. What I say I believe, and if I should prove to be wrong, I am man enough to apologise. We are told by the member for Albany that he is prepared to assist the Government in any shape or form, but I do not think he was quite accurate in that statement. The only particle of truth there may be in it is that he would be very ready to help the Government to the "happy despatch," if he possibly could. If he is willing to help the Government, why did he not last session assist with his legal knowledge in dealing with a lot of Bills brought before Parliament? Take, for instance, the infamous Bankruptcy Bill.

A MEMBER: What has that to do with federation?

MR. GEORGE: It has to do with federation, because if we join the other

colonies on the present terms it will mean bankruptcy for this colony. I do not know whether there will be special bankruptcy laws for the federated colonies, or whether there are infamous lawyers prepared to carry out such a law so far as this colony is concerned. The Bankruptcy Act is a piece of pettifogging legislation which is a disgrace to the commercial world, and under which a disreputable class of lawyers, as there are disreputable men in every trade, are prepared to assist in robbing honest traders. It is the duty of every member of the House to devote his special knowledge to making as correct as possible Bills which are brought before the House.

MR. OLDHAM: Why did you not do so?

MR. GEORGE: I did my little best, but I left the lawyers to look after the law, while the lawyers left me to look after dishonourable bankrupts who owed me money and flouted me. This amendment before the House is pretty nearly the same sort as that proposed last session, and it seemed to me, in listening to the Premier, just for all the world as if I were reading the right hon. gentleman's speech in last session's *Hansard*. This amendment is brought forward as a tricky proposal. It is brought forward to catch votes, but I think that instead of catching votes the hon. member will "catch a crab." When the Premier was last tackled on an amendment of this character he gave the House an assurance in regard to the food duties. I believe that assurance was subsequently carried out; and the other evening the right hon. gentleman gave us an assurance in reply to the member for East Perth (Mr. James) that he would send the Federation Bill to the people.

MR. LEAKE: When?

MR. GEORGE: When he pleases, and he will have to please when the House makes him.

MR. WILSON: We are trying to make him please now.

MR. GEORGE: But we do not want to do that in five minutes. We want work done, but we want to know first what federation means, and both sides must be shown to the people, so that they may not be misled by one party or the other. Up to the present there has been a tremendous lot of talk on this question,

but very little said. There has been an amount of abuse from both sides, and after the preliminary stages, the whole country has a right to expect members of Parliament to address themselves to the subject and show the people exactly what is to be voted upon. It is an insult to the people to ask them to vote merely on the platform utterances of either one side or the other. The question of the Federation Bill seems to have been made entirely a party question. We do not want "bill-ites" and "anti-billites" here, but we do want an intermediate party which will go before the people and point out the advantages and disadvantages of the measure, and show the exact position.

MR. LEAKE: That is what we want to do.

MR. GEORGE: That is what we can do if the Opposition will only allow us, and that is what we are trying to do. The hon. member for Albany went to the Federal Convention as a delegate, and it was his duty when he returned to this colony to go right through the country and explain the Bill to the people. Did the hon. member do that? Where are the other delegates who did it?

At 6.30 p.m. the DEPUTY SPEAKER left chair.

At 7.30 the DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the chair.

MR. GEORGE (resuming): I was furnishing a few arguments with regard to the amendment before us, and I think little remains for me to say. It is not my intention to go into the subject of federation now, for I recognise this is not the opportunity when the matter may be fairly and fully threshed out; but when the question does come before us at the proper time, which I trust will not be long hence, we can then address ourselves to the various aspects of federation with the view to getting a proper appreciation of what the question really means for this colony. We have received the assurance of the Premier this evening, and on the other evening, that it is the intention of the Government to allow the Bill to go to the people after it has been debated in Parliament. I do not think there is any reason to doubt that the Premier will keep his promise, and I take it to mean,

and hope it does mean, that the question will be gone into thoroughly during this session, and that at as early a time as possible the people will have the question placed before them for their decision. I trust the promise means that this shall be done not in six months or in four months from this time, but as far as I am concerned the assurance is that in two months the Bill will be given to the people for their decision on it. I am quite satisfied to take the assurance in that sense.

MR. LEAKE: How are we to know?

MR. GEORGE: So far as some hon. members who have spoken are concerned, it seems to me that they do not trust the people; that they fear the people—fear that if any little delay occurs, say only two months, the people may by that time so thoroughly understand the question that they will not accept the views which some members of the Opposition have placed before them.

MR. LEAKE: It is not certain that we can get the Bill put before them in two months. Where is the assurance?

MR. GEORGE: That is what I am endeavouring to place before the House. I am not in a position to give an assurance on the part of the Premier, but I do hope to hear from him that in two months time the question will be placed before the people of this colony. The Premier has not heard my view before, and it may give him thought. I should like to say also that there should be no necessity, and there is no necessity, for any political association to send round a circular, such as was sent a few weeks ago, asking members of Parliament practically to pledge themselves one way or the other, their replies being afterwards published and bearing simply on the view so put forth. I believe the object of that circular sent round by the Australian Natives' Association was a preparation for the amendment that has been placed before us this evening; and, speaking without disrespect of that association, it was an attempt to get pledges from members of Parliament, with the idea that such pledges might be of assistance with regard to the amendment to be brought forward in Parliament. The member for Albany has told us this evening that he expected members to keep faith with the people. As one of

those members, I do not require the member for Albany to tell me to keep faith with the electors who sent me here; but I may say that more than 12 months ago I told the people of the Murray, not only by letter but by word of mouth on the platform, that when this question came before us in Parliament it would be my duty to endeavour to have the Federation Bill placed before the people of the colony, for their decision, at as early a date as possible. That is my view to-night; therefore I shall not vote with the member for Albany.

MR. EWING (Swan): The amendment I rise to support is a simple one indeed. It is to the effect, practically, that it is desirable the Government should take steps in the immediate future to submit the Commonwealth Bill to the vote of the electors in this colony; and I think the Premier fully realised the spirit in which this amendment was moved, when he said the leader of the Opposition had appealed to him as a friend, had appealed to the gentlemen on that side of the House as friends, to endeavour to bring about the state of things which this amendment contemplates. I believe the leader of the Opposition did appeal to the right hon. gentleman as a friend. Those who sit behind the member for Albany and sit with him are friends to the cause of federation; and he was quite right when he said we were not approaching the Premier with the bayonet, but really were approaching him as federalists, and were holding out the hand of friendship by endeavouring to bring before the people what is the greatest question that has ever been submitted for their consideration. It is the duty of the Opposition, when they find a subject like federation introduced into the Governor's Speech, to see the subject is dealt with in a manner which the Opposition as a body, and the people of the country in their opinion, will approve. The Government have introduced in that Speech the question of federation; and it is said, because certain members of this House disagree with the method that the Government intend to adopt with regard to that question, and have moved an amendment which embodies their views, that this is done for party and paltry purposes; that it is degrading a great question, and

is taking a step which the member who is the head of the Opposition should not take. I think he is taking a step which, as leader of the Opposition, he certainly should take; for it is one of the first duties of the Opposition, when a line of policy is indicated in the Governor's Speech, to do what they can to see that such a policy is in accordance with the wishes of the community; and this is one of our first duties when we see the question of federation introduced. I would submit that the Opposition have not introduced the question of federation into the Governor's Speech: it is the Ministry who have thought fit to bring this question into the Speech. They have thereby submitted it to Parliament, and we are asked directly or indirectly to approve of what is therein embodied; and I fully agree with the previous speakers that, if we passed over this second paragraph of the Governor's Speech without amendment, we would be told on future occasions that we had lost our opportunity for considering the matter, and that, if we had anything to say upon the subject, we should have said it when the question was first submitted to Parliament; because, as I understand the Governor's Speech, it is an outline of the policy that the Government intend to adopt.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but you need not move a motion.

MR. EWING: We need not move a motion upon it if we are in accord with it; but, if we are not in accord with it, then it is our duty to move a motion which meets with our approval; and in moving this motion, we endeavour to bring before the Government the desirableness of submitting this great question to the people of the colony. If the Government have been misunderstood by the members of the Opposition, and if we as a body have misconceived their intentions, it is simple enough for the learned leader of the Government to tell us what they are.

THE PREMIER: I am not learned.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are an LL.D., anyhow.

MR. EWING: I think I am fully justified in using the expression. It is simple enough for the learned leader of the Government to tell us that we have not fully understood the meaning of the

words he has used—that we have not completely grasped the truth he intended to convey; and if he came before us and said, “You have moved the amendment under a misconception; you have made a mistake; I intend to submit the question to the people at the earliest opportunity;” then it would be our duty, and it is his privilege, to submit the question to the House in the way that he intended. But what does he do here? There is no assurance in the Governor's Speech that this question will be submitted to the people; an amendment is moved asking for that assurance; and, if the Premier really intends to submit that question to the people, surely it is easy for him to say that this will be done at the earliest possible opportunity? He has the assurance of the leader of the Opposition that, after such a promise, the amendment will be withdrawn. But the Premier says, “I will not pursue such a course: I choose to take the amendment as a motion of censure.” I would ask, who is responsible for the party aspect this debate is about to assume? I would ask whether it lies with the leader of the Opposition to create a motion of censure, or whether it is for the Government to say if they will or will not accept the amendment as such a vote? We have been told that the Government will not back down, and is not in the habit of backing down; but I think it is within the recollection of every hon. member of this House that, during the last session of Parliament, a motion was introduced dealing with the food duties. When that motion came before us, the Premier said, during the early stages of the debate, that he did not intend to accept it as a motion of censure. At a later stage a person in authority was put up in the House to say that the motion was accepted as a motion of censure; and then, lo! what did we find? We found the Premier giving the House an assurance that he would do that which the motion of censure asked him to do; and if in that case he saw fit to adopt the Opposition's motion, and to agree with the principles embodied in it, on a comparatively narrow question like that of the food duties, I say that it is a thousand times more his bounden duty, if he really believes that the question of federation should go to the people, to say to this House, “I approve

of this amendment." He has created a precedent during the debate on the food duties. He said, "I will reduce the duties in accordance with your wishes, and therefore there is no necessity to go further with your motion." Why cannot he do the same thing here to-night? Why did he do it on the food duties question? Simply because he knew the Government had a majority against them. Why will he not do it to-night? Simply because he firmly believes that, by telling hon. members to put aside the principle of the motion, and to vote on the question as a motion of censure, he will be able to defeat the motion. Now we submit that in dealing with public questions, the elected representatives of the people are not justified, in order to support the Government, in sinking the whole of the views they have placed before their electors. I believe that members are returned to this House with a certain amount of individuality; and that individuality should not be destroyed by the mere fact that the Premier stands up in his place and says, "If you vote according to your convictions, if you vote as you have pledged yourselves to the people to vote, then you are voting against the Ministry;" or, in other words, "Place me and the Ministry in front of your professed convictions; place me and the Ministry in the paramount position as far as your duties as legislators are concerned." I submit that any member taking that narrow view of his duties in this House is making a serious mistake, and I say it with all respect. I think we are here to represent our electors—that we are returned, not to support the Government, but to support principles, and only to support a Government so long as that Government acts in accordance with the principles which our constituents sent us here to represent. I do not intend to keep the House for any length of time in this debate. I fully agree with the member for the Murray (Mr. George), when he says that, if the Premier would give the House an assurance that, even within two months, he would submit this Bill to the people, the Opposition would be satisfied. I will go even further than the hon. member, and as an individual I will say that, if the right hon. gentleman would agree to bring down this Bill to the House within two

months, and to add another clause, that the referendum should not take place for another three months afterwards, I would be perfectly satisfied as an individual. I believe all we want to do is to ensure the passage of this Bill through Parliament before this House is prorogued, or before the opportunity of dealing with it is taken away. We have been told by the Premier that there is a stain which he has lately discovered upon this Bill. I agree that the matter he has mentioned is rather serious; I agree that it is a matter which, when this Bill is before the House, should be taken into consideration; but all that the amendment of the member for Albany embodies is that the Commonwealth Bill shall be submitted to the people—not that the members of this House are to blindly submit this Bill to the people with all its defects. I say it is perfectly open to this House, when the Bill is introduced, to put that Bill in such order as this House considers necessary before it is submitted to the people. We are here to safeguard their interests; we are here to see that Western Australia is not injured; and if in the wisdom of this House it seems that other clauses are necessary, or that the amendment of existing clauses is necessary, then I maintain it is the privilege of this House to introduce those amendments in the best form possible, without hampering or affecting the question further than they can possibly help. I would submit to the Premier that if this blot exist upon the Commonwealth Bill, then the earlier the Bill is introduced for the consideration of this Assembly, the better. The earlier the opportunity is given us to introduce the necessary amendments, the better; and I would suggest, in that there are blemishes upon the Bill which the Premier points out, that is one of the most cogent arguments that could be used for the early introduction of the measure.

MR. MORGANS: The Premier has promised that.

MR. EWING: We have heard from several persons round this House that the Premier has promised that. I am perfectly willing, and as the hon. member has heard from the member for the Murray (Mr. George), he is perfectly willing, and the leader of the Opposition has said that he is perfectly willing,

to withdraw the amendment. If the Premier will only give us his word that he will introduce this Bill within two months for the consideration of this House, then I believe the persons who are supporting this amendment will be satisfied; but what we do demand from the Government is this. We say it is not the duty of the leader of the Opposition to introduce a Bill of this character: it is the duty of the gentleman who has the honour of standing at the head of things political in this colony to introduce such a Bill—the most important Bill that has ever been mooted in this House. I say that if the leader of the Opposition presumed to introduce that measure, it would be taking upon himself a duty which I, as a member of the Opposition, would be very sorry to see him perform. It is the Premier's duty, and the Premier's place, to introduce this measure; and I believe, if the Premier will give us his assurance that this Bill would be introduced for the consideration of members, and with a view to submitting it to the people, say within two months, as has been suggested, that this is the last he will hear of this amendment; and he will find members on this side of the House co-operating with him, and joining with him, in the endeavour to make it the best Bill it possibly can be, not only from the Australasian national standpoint, but with due regard to the interests of Western Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): When Parliament passed the Act No. 32, sections 28 and 29, it was clearly understood by this House and by the country that, so soon as three of the large colonies, of which New South Wales was to be one, adopted federation——

THE PREMIER: Not one of them has done so yet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not say they had, sir.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is not the point I rise to discuss. The point I rise to discuss is that, by an Act of Parliament, it is understood in this country that, as soon as three colonies have adopted federation, of which colonies New South Wales is to be one, then a Bill is to be placed before this House for the consideration of this House, and, if

approved by this House, is to be referred to the people. The objections that have been raised on either side to this question do not touch a point that seems to me to be of serious import. We have here an Act of Parliament; we have here the Governor's Speech, for which the Ministry are responsible. The Act of Parliament says that, as soon as three colonies, of which New South Wales is one, shall adopt the Federal Enabling Bill, then this House shall have an opportunity of discussing the Bill, and, if they approve, of sending it to the people. Now the Government have taken upon themselves to say in this Speech—and of course we ought to take this Speech as embodying the policy of the Government: if this is not the policy of the Government, then it has no business to be here—this Speech foreshadows the policy of the Government for the session we have now commenced; and in spite of all the Premier has said about the insignificance of passing the Address-in-Reply without raising protests, I submit that in every Parliament every member is bound to express his intentions in regard to the general principles and policy of the proposals of the Government in debating the Address-in-Reply, just as members are called upon to express their adherence or otherwise to the general principles of a Bill during the debate on its second reading. The Premier is fully aware that this is the attitude in which we stand in this debate.

THE PREMIER: Not at all. You moved an adverse motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am fully aware that we moved an adverse motion.

THE PREMIER: That alters the whole thing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: With due respect, sir, I contend that it does not altogether alter the principle. Of course I am fully aware that it alters the whole aspect of the debate, so far as the Ministry are concerned.

THE PREMIER: Ah!--hear, hear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Of course it does; but it does not alter the relation of members to the question that is before the House. If the Government choose to take upon themselves to say that a motion tabled from any part of the House is a vote of want of confidence, that is their business; and of course we are fully

aware that any amendment, however insignificant, to the Address-in-Reply may be taken virtually by the Government as an attack on themselves, if they like to accept it as such.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear; but these amendments should not be moved if they are not so meant.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not aware it has been said that the Opposition did not mean this amendment to be so considered.

THE PREMIER: You have said you did not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The member for the Murray (Mr. George) has said that the leader of the Opposition is not sincere; but I am not aware that the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) or anyone has said that he is not sincere in his desire to oust the Government, because I think he said he was prepared to take that step.

THE PREMIER: Let him keep to that, and he is all right.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: One of the duties of the Opposition is to see that the Government and the House conduct the business of the country in accordance with the views of members of the House, and if the Government are not prepared to conduct the business in that way they must move from the Treasury benches and make room for men who are prepared to take the position.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is the true position of the Opposition, and of members of this House, and it is the duty of the Government to defend the measures and proposals they bring forward.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is the duty of the Opposition to point out weaknesses in the proposals of the Government, and if the measures introduced by the Government will not stand that test, they are not fit to become the law of the country. The Government took on themselves to say that an Act of Parliament which provides that as soon as three colonies—

THE PREMIER: That Act of Parliament does not apply. This is not the same Bill as it was.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That does not affect the question in the least, although the Premier seems to think it does.

THE PREMIER: That is the point.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am sorry that a gentleman who has the degree of LL.D. is not a little more logical. His interjection does not affect the question in the smallest degree. This Bill as amended by the Premiers has been accepted by three colonies.

THE PREMIER: By one colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Excuse me, three colonies. The referendum has not yet been taken in Victoria.

THE PREMIER: It has not been adopted yet by the Legislatures.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are welcome to any slight accuracy of that kind, because it does not affect the argument.

THE PREMIER: It does affect the argument very much.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The position is that the Government of this colony have taken on themselves to say that they will not bring before this House a Bill on the federation question until the whole of the Australian colonies have adopted it. That may be the policy of the Government. Is it the policy of the Government? That is what we want to know. Is it a fact the Government do not intend to bring before the House this Bill until the whole of the Australian colonies have federated, or rather until they have adopted the Bill? The clause in his Excellency's Speech says, "as soon as"—and consequently not before—"as soon as the whole of the Australian colonies have adopted the Bill" this Government will bring in a measure dealing with the federal question. The Act which this colony has approved sets forth that the only sanction that the Government have for action on this question is the provision that when three colonies federate, so long as New South Wales is one of the three, then the Bill must be brought in. What I object to is the unconstitutional mode of procedure. The Government, in order to meet the exigencies of the case, with a divided Ministry and a majority in the Ministry against the introduction of the Federation Bill, take upon themselves to state in his Excellency's Speech that the Bill is adverse to this colony. That may or may not be so, and I might be with the Government on that point.

THE PREMIER: We think the Bill is adverse to this colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Perhaps I think so too.

THE PREMIER : Well, say so, then.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I will not say so just now, because I do not desire to discuss the Bill.

THE PREMIER : It does not suit you to do so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The Premier must not consider that to discuss the Bill would be inconvenient to me, because that would not disturb me in the least; but it does disturb me that the Government in the recess practically—because the Governor's Speech is composed in the recess—decided to come to Parliament this session and say that on the great federal question, although practically approved by all Australia, there is a difference of opinion here as to whether it would be profitable to Western Australia to enter into federation. What the Government say is that they will not bring in a Bill nor allow this question to be discussed on the floor of the House, that they will not take steps to put the question before the people, until the whole of the Australian colonies have accepted the measure.

THE PREMIER : I do not think our words go that far. I think you are exaggerating.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I should be very pleased if the Government would simply say that they do not mean what they say.

THE PREMIER : You should not put a false construction on the words.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Usually I take the Premier seriously, and I look on politics as somewhat a serious matter.

THE PREMIER : You ought not to go too far.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I am not going too far. I look on this question as the most serious that this colony has ever been called upon to discuss.

THE PREMIER : I hope you have made up your mind about it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I have not made up my mind, and I hope there is no member in the House who has made up his mind. I say advisedly to the House that there is no man in the country who has given the Bill the consideration its importance deserves.

THE PREMIER : Hear, hear; then why be in such a hurry about it?

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I am not in a hurry; indeed, the Premier seems to be the member who is in a hurry. He is endeavouring to get the members of this House to vote against the provision that after some time, in accordance with the Act, this subject shall be placed before the House. The Government are trying to attain that end by passing the Address-in-Reply without comment, and waiting for the discussion of federation until the whole of the other colonies have voted affirmatively. Suppose, by way of illustration, that Tasmania does not accept the Bill.

THE PREMIER : The Speech does not say "Australasia," does it? It says "Australia."

MR. ILLINGWORTH : So far as I know, Tasmania is in Australia.

THE PREMIER : Tasmania is part of Australasia. There is no doubt about that, because Tasmania is an island.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Well you say you do not mean Tasmania in this case?

THE PREMIER : I certainly do not mean it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Then why not say Queensland and be done with it? If the Premier wants to be frank with the House, why does he not say what he means? When he wishes words "to darken counsel without knowledge" there must be some reason; and we all know there is a dispute amongst Ministers on this question.

THE PREMIER : That is absolutely untrue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : On this question in the Cabinet there is difference of opinion.

A MEMBER : A split.

THE PREMIER : There is no split at all.

MR. LEAKE : Then Ministers are all against federation.

THE PREMIER : We have not considered it as a Ministerial question at all yet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : We shall get at the truth directly. Is there no disagreement amongst Ministers on the federation question—no difference of opinion? We happen to know what is the straight-out opinion of some of the Ministers, but we will accept the statement of the Premier for what it is worth, that there is no difference of opinion amongst them on this question.

We know the Attorney-General's opinion. The Premier does not qualify clause 2, and he says there is no difference of opinion in the Cabinet on the subject. We know exactly what the opinion of the Attorney-General is, and yet we are told there is no difference of opinion.

THE PREMIER: You would like to see a difference of opinion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Undoubtedly I would like to have the best judgment of the Premier on a question of so much importance, and I hope that the Attorney-General and other members of the Ministry will be able to reconsider some of the statements they have made on this question. The most important phase of this question to me is that under federation the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) would not be able to bring in a Divorce Bill. When federation is brought about it is a business done for ever, and the question requires grave consideration. I have refused to speak in public on the question, because I do not think it possible that justice can be done to it by two or three speakers at a popular meeting. I say advisedly that the first utterances of members of this House on this question would have been better if they had been given in this Chamber with the deliberation and care that the importance of the Bill demands. I am expecting an opportunity to deal with the subject myself, and I may say that as a sentiment and as a great idea I have been in favour of federation ever since the question was mooted. But I am not going to close my eyes to the fact that there are grave questions which have to be considered in a country like this, and which make me hesitate even to say whether the final issue of federation would be for the good or evil of the country. But I have no hesitation in saying that in the way the question has been presented to the country there has been a vast amount of exaggeration, both as to the good and the evil. This Bill will not affect this country, either for good or evil, to the extent some people think. It will affect the country in very material issues, to which it is proper that every member should give careful attention, if there is to be deliberation and discussion of this great question, which is practically the marriage of the whole of the colonies of this great Austra-

lian continent. The men to discuss the question, and the place in which it should first be discussed, are the members of this House and in this Chamber. There should be no haste, but full deliberation in that discussion; and the reason why the amendment should be carried is that this deliberation should begin as soon as possible. One of the many reasons for this course is that the people should not get a wrong impression of what the Bill will really do. It may be, perhaps, an egotistical view to take that the representatives of the people in the two Houses of Parliament, so far as there are representatives, are the best people to first discuss this question; but from this House should go forth arguments and discussions calculated to educate the people on this question. I entirely dissent from an idea which is prevalent, and which I dissented from at Cue when the Premier was there. The Bill is the work of six Premiers in a private room, without any proper discussion. There has been deliberation with a view to removing difficulties and of coming together, and so far good; but it is not a fair or a just thing to throw this Bill before the electors and direct them to say "Yes" or "No." It is our duty as representatives of the colony to fairly and squarely deal with the question, and on the floor of the House tell the people what we think about it. That being so, what is there unreasonable in asking the Government what they mean by this clause in His Excellency's Speech? Will the Government tell us whether they mean to submit the Bill to the country before Queensland passes it? I would like an answer to this question from the Premier.

THE PREMIER: What is that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Granted that in accordance with the Act, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia pass this Bill, is the Premier or the Government prepared to bring in a Bill as set forth in the Act passed by this House, with a view of this House approving of and submitting it to the voice of the people?

THE PREMIER: Did I not say so?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have not said so.

THE PREMIER: I said so in reply to a question from the member for East Perth (Mr. James).

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier did not say so.

THE PREMIER: What did I say?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You used the words "all the other colonies," and I questioned the words at the time.

THE PREMIER: Well, we will know as to all the other colonies on the 2nd September.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is it the intention of the Government, after the 2nd of September, to bring in the Bill?

THE PREMIER: I cannot tell what the result of the vote may be. All the colonies may not join.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then it follows that, if Queensland should reject the Bill, this Government, falling back on the statement in the Governor's Speech, need not, and I believe will not—and I say this advisedly—submit this Bill to the people. The Government, so far as we are to gather from their words, have no intention of placing the Bill before the House until a similar Bill is accepted by Queensland.

THE PREMIER: You can put what meaning you like on the words, so far as I am concerned.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will the Premier put a meaning on the words?

THE PREMIER: I would not put that meaning on them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will the Premier put any meaning on the words?

THE PREMIER: I will not answer you at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If the Premier will not put a meaning on the words, I will place my meaning before any set of men, or any man capable of construing the English language, and if any person can say that any other conclusion than that which I have shown could be drawn from those words, I would like to hear that conclusion. I say that these words imply that the Government will not bring the Bill before this House until Queensland passes a similar measure.

THE PREMIER: You are trying to kill federation: that is your object.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I believe that if I could kill federation, I would be the greatest possible benefactor to the Government.

THE PREMIER: Why?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Because the Government would be delighted.

THE PREMIER: Then you will not do it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, I will not, because it would please the Government. I have no objection to doing the right thing to please the Government, but I am not disposed to do a wrong thing to please them, though I would do a great deal to that end. As I understand the amendment, what is intended is to find out, if possible, whether the Government will be kind, condescending, and generous enough to inform the ignorant people on the Opposition side of the House, and the country, whether they really mean to place the Federation Bill before Parliament as soon as three colonies, of which New South Wales is one, pass a similar measure. The clause in the Speech leads to the conclusion that the Government do not intend to do that. It does not follow that because a Bill is brought in it will be accepted. I myself might vote against it. I will not pledge myself to vote for a measure because I advocate it should be submitted, and I am not asking members to pledge themselves to vote for the Bill; but I think it is a fair thing to ask the Government to state their intentions on a great question such as this. This question touches the whole of Australia from end to end, and the agitation is doing a good deal of work for Australia even in London. I am in a position to say that the financial position of the colony rests very considerably on the question as to whether we enter federation or not.

THE PREMIER: Oh, no!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not dogmatising, and I do not say my opinion is absolutely correct. The only dogmatist I know in the House is the Premier, but, of course, he is always right. Indeed, I never yet knew him to admit he was wrong; not even when he is proved wrong does he confess it. The only construction that can be placed on the paragraph in the Governor's Speech to which I have referred is that the Government do not intend to give this House or the country an opportunity to consider the federation question until Queensland and the other colonies join. I will give the Premier the benefit of Tasmania, if that benefit be worth anything to him. We are all liable to err and make mistakes

in reading and construing English, but when that English is written by a doctor of laws and logic, who received his degree at Cambridge, he ought to be able to give us reasonable language which we can understand. I do not pride myself on my power to construe English, but I think the reasonable construction to be placed on the words referred to is that, when all the other Australian colonies have accepted the Bill, then the Western Australian Government intend to bring in a federation measure and, if the Bill pass, give the people an opportunity of voting upon it. There is no particular difference of opinion. What the leader of the Opposition desires is an answer from the Government as to whether, when three other colonies, of which New South Wales is one, accept the Federation Bill, —whether that be in September, or ten years hence—they will bring in a similar measure which may be discussed in this House, and after discussion, and may be amendment, shall be sent to the people. I want to speak on the Governor's Speech as a whole, and do not intend to occupy the time of the House further now, except to simply say my objection is that the Government take upon themselves, as a Government, to practically override an Act of Parliament, and to say that Parliament should not have an opportunity of considering federation when three colonies, of which New South Wales is one, shall have passed the Federal Bill. The Government now propose to alter the provision of three acquiescing colonies into four, or perhaps five colonies. Can we not get an answer to the question, which is all that is asked for by the amendment? If the amendment asks for anything more than that I have pointed out, I have no sympathy with it. But it is fair that the country and the House should know whether, when New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia should accept this Bill, the Government will carry out the promise of the Enabling Act, and give an opportunity for the discussion of a federal measure. It is a fair question to ask, and it ought to receive an answer.

MR. OLDHAM (North Perth): The Government have adopted a remarkable method in treating an amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition as a vote of no confidence, and then leaving

it in silence. Even those members who represent the goldfields, and sit on the Government side of the House, cannot find any arguments to justify the course they are supporting.

MR. MORGANS: We have not heard anything to answer yet.

MR. OLDHAM: I will give the hon. member something to answer before I have finished. I have risen totally unprepared on this occasion, but I want to put one phase of the question before the House and the country. When the division-bell rings, there will be found voting with the leader of the Opposition men who are not afraid to send the Bill to the people, and, on the other side, will be found voting the men who desire not to delay this question for a time, but to delay it, so far as Western Australia is concerned, as long as they are able.

MR. MORGANS: That is where the trick comes in.

MR. OLDHAM: I do not think it fair to say that this amendment is a dodge. How can it be a dodge? All we ask hon. members on the Government side to do is to vote in accordance with their expressed convictions. Are they afraid of sending the Bill to the people?

MR. GEORGE: Send it in two months time.

MR. OLDHAM: The hon. member knows that, if this motion is defeated, then so far as Western Australia is concerned the people who are in favour of federation will have to "whistle" for it. I have no desire to discuss whether federation is going to be good for this country or otherwise, but I believe that out of the bundle of nonsensical arguments which have been used on both sides of the House in reference to this question, we have one or two which can fairly be said to have some bearing on it. I believe this country will tread the path of progress just as quickly under federation as it will otherwise.

MR. MORGANS: That is what you believe, but it is no argument.

MR. OLDHAM: Will the hon. member allow me to put the matter in my own way? I believe this country will tread the path of progress accordingly as the intrinsic value of its resources will enable it to do. This amendment has not been brought forward for the purpose of ousting the Government.

MR. GEORGE: Is that official?

MR. OLDHAM: I can assure the House that we on this (the Opposition) side have the greatest admiration for hon. gentlemen who occupy seats on the Government benches. My own opinion in regard to them may be expressed in some lines I will quote to the House; and as the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) broke into poetry on a recent occasion, if I transgress in this respect, the only excuse I can offer will be the example of that hon. member. The lines I am about to quote were written by Hosea Biglow, in reference to some American politicians, and his words pretty aptly apply to some members of this Government:—

What's good is all Gov'ment: all thet isn't,
aint.

What profits them is alers right and just;
And if yew don't read Scriptur so, yew
must.

They've got the Ten Commandments in
ther pu's,
And (West Australia) couldn't move onless
she went as nu's.

They're all thet's hon'rble, and just, and
fair;

And when the Virtues died, left them as
heir.

I am certain the House will believe me that, having this opinion of the Government, it is rather superfluous to say that we on this (the Opposition) side are desirous of turning the Government out of office. All we desire is to make it plain who are in favour of sending the Bill to the people.

MR. MORGANS: We all are.

MR. OLDHAM: Members on that side of the House are federationists—but? I believe the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) is a federationist—but?

MR. GEORGE: There is virtue in a "but." Don't forget that.

MR. OLDHAM: I believe the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) is a federationist—but? I believe the Attorney General, who in his speech to his constituents evidently desired to give them the impression that the people of the other colonies are a lot of cannibals desirous of eating us up, is a federationist—when?

MR. MORGANS: He did not say "but."

MR. OLDHAM: He is a federationist—when? He is, like the Premier, a federationist—"when." I desire to ask those hon. members who have led the federa-

tion movement up to the present time, if they are prepared to hand over the navigation of the federal ship to the hon. members who sit on the Government side of the House. (A MEMBER: Yes.) Well, let us just examine them. I heard the Premier make a magnificent speech in St. George's Hall on one occasion, when he strongly supported federation. On that occasion he endeavoured to point out all the advantages of federation; but when he came to a knotty question—and this is a phrase he used pretty frequently—he said "I will deal with that later on." I certainly heard him try and persuade the people in that hall that it would be advantageous for this colony to join the federation of Australia, to join in a partnership with New South Wales. He said something to this effect: If we were going into partnership with a big firm, would it not be advantageous to us? Therefore will it not be advantageous for a poor colony like Western Australia to join with a rich country like New South Wales?

THE PREMIER: A rich country, I said. I never said a poor country.

MR. OLDHAM: I have heard the right hon. gentleman say, many a time, that this was a poor country before people came here from the other colonies—before the t'othersiders came here.

MR. MORAN: T'otherside was fairly poor before the people left it to come here.

MR. OLDHAM: I want to ask those who have approached this question not only as sentimentalists, but from the vast national standpoint: are they prepared to hand over the navigation of the federation ship to a Premier who, a few months ago, was a federationist when New South Wales had joined, but who at the present time is a federationist when Queensland joins? He wants to take the ship round, not *via* New South Wales now, but is going round by way of Queensland, and when he gets to Queensland he will want to go to New Zealand.

MR. GEORGE: And a good country, too.

MR. OLDHAM: It is not a bad country. I demand something like an assurance from the Government that this question shall be treated in a proper spirit. Surely the Premier does not mean to say he is going to "jockey" the

country over this matter. Let us vote straight from the shoulder. Let us know whom we are fighting. Let us know whether we are to fight anti-federationists or wolves in sheep's clothing. That is the position at the present time. We have on that (the Government) side of the House not a single man who declares he is against federation.

MR. MITCHELL: You are wrong there. I am against it, for one.

MR. MORAN: There are a few on your side against it, you know.

MR. OLDHAM: I am speaking of members on the Government side of the House.

MR. MORAN: You clean out your own house on that side, first.

MR. OLDHAM: I want to put this fairly to those hon. members, and to ask them if there is one on that side, except the member for the Murchison, who says he is distinctly against federation.

MR. MORGANS: Yes; the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

MR. OLDHAM: No; he says "I am in favour of federation—but?" I again ask those members who have been taking an active part in pushing it as a national question, who believe federation will be a great thing for the colonies, Western Australia included: are they prepared to leave the navigation of the ship in the hands of a gentleman who is a federationist—when? Are they prepared to leave it to him with a crew who, from the cook to the cabin boy, will desert on the first favourable opportunity? Let us analyse the actions of those gentlemen. Look at them, and you will find they are about as mild a mannered lot of men

As ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

These are the men who are going to sink the ship of federation. If it were not so, why should we have this pledge put in the second paragraph of His Excellency's Speech? Why should it not be made clearer? Why does not the right hon. gentleman take the country into his confidence? I think the House is entitled to be taken into the confidence of the Premier; and I have heard it stated that the right hon. gentleman is endeavouring at the present moment to make terms with the Premiers of the other colonies, more favourable for this colony.

MR. GEORGE: Why should he not do it?

MR. OLDHAM: He should not do any such thing.

MR. MORAN: Why not?

MR. OLDHAM: It is for this House to make terms. How do we know that the terms which the right hon. gentleman may make will be acceptable to this country? Let us go by the proper constitutional procedure, and not leave one man to make terms for this colony. Can hon. members on that side of the House consistently support a gentleman who believes all the utterances even from his colleagues, who have made as pretty a "kettle of fish" of this question as ever was? Let us see what are the terms the right hon. gentleman would make, which are likely to meet with the approval of this House or of his own constituents. I have seen a letter published in the *West Australian*, and written by one of his colleagues, and this is the way in which that colleague comments on the terms which the right hon. gentleman has made for this colony:—

I have, I confess, reluctantly come to the conclusion that I cannot now support the change. The circumstances of the colony are at present, even more than a year ago, such that I think I may safely say disaster would follow.

Hon. members on that side of the House must be particularly proud of the leader of the Government, when he cannot make better terms than those. The letter further says:

We load ourselves with debt for the construction of railways, harbours, and other public works, for the benefit of other countries, while we pursue the suicidal policy of arresting development of the colony's resources, by stopping any further immigration.

That is what the Premier's colleague says, and he goes on further:—

If federation meant anything, it meant the destruction of a large number of these (local industries); artisans and workers in other lines thrown out of employment, and their consequent removal elsewhere.

Hon. members on that side of the House must be particularly proud of the leader of the Government, when he cannot make better terms than these. The letter continues:—

From my point of view, it is absolutely of the first importance that, so far from taking any step which would injuriously interfere with industries already established, our true

interests lie in encouraging expansion in this direction.

It all goes on in the same strain. That letter was written by the Minister of Education, who is also Colonial Secretary (Mr. Randell); and that is his opinion of the Bill which has been drafted for the acceptance of the people of this colony.

MR. MORAN: A very good letter, too.

MR. OLDHAM: Let us see what the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) said. He said the Bill meant "absolute ruin for this colony." Then he ought to be proud of the Premier. If that is the best bargain the right hon. gentleman can get for this colony, it means ruin, it means disaster; and yet hon. members on that side of the House will support the right hon. gentleman in continuing to hold the strings of office in this country. If hon. members on that side had the courage of their convictions, if they believed the Premier was taking a course that would practically lead this colony to disaster, what is the proper thing for them to do? The proper thing for them to do, independently of any action which may be taken by this side of the House, is to move a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

MR. A. FORREST: Address your own side.

MR. OLDHAM: I said that I had not the slightest desire to discuss the merits or demerits of federation—not the slightest. I am not going to be led away on that track, because that is not the question. I am willing to believe that hon. members opposite or on this side of the House can reasonably hold very divergent views upon this matter; but there is not the slightest doubt that those gentlemen who profess to represent democratic constituencies must either vote with the leader of the Opposition or fail in their duty to their constituents. It is not for me, of course—

MR. MORAN: Certainly not.

MR. OLDHAM: I do not wish to lecture hon. gentlemen opposite. I have not the slightest intention of doing so.

MR. MORAN: You keep your eye on the main chance all the time, too.

MR. OLDHAM: But, out of consideration for some of my hon. friends over there, and particularly for my friend the member for East Coolgardie (Mr.

Moran), I desire to ask him to pause before he follows the Government in this division—

MR. MORAN: On four paws.

MR. OLDHAM: To think of what he is doing. If the hon. member has made up his mind to vote with the Government—

MR. MORAN: Just write me a private letter on the subject.

MR. OLDHAM: If the hon. member has made up his mind to vote with the Government, I cannot help it. I want to put him right before his constituents.

MR. MORAN: Good iron.

MR. GEORGE: And good gold.

MR. OLDHAM: I want his constituents thoroughly to understand, and I want the constituents of every hon. member opposite who represents men and not sheep—

MR. MORAN: What about your own constituents in North Perth?

MR. OLDHAM: I am going to vote for sending the Bill to my own people.

MR. A. FORREST: Oh, we are all going to vote for that.

MR. OLDHAM: Then I presume the Government are going to be defeated?

MR. MORAN: It is very unwise to presume. You may come down.

MR. OLDHAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think these continual interruptions add to the dignity of the debate—[MR. MORAN: Hear, hear]—and I always endeavour as far as I possibly can—[MR. WOOD: Do not lecture us, Mr. Oldham]—not to subject a speaker to a running fire of interjections.

MR. MORAN: Give him a standing fire.

MR. OLDHAM: Not that it makes much difference, because, generally speaking, the interjections which come from the Government side of the House lose all their point in crossing the floor, or possibly hit some member on the side where they originated. By way of conclusion, I again desire to ask those members upon that and upon this side of the House whether or not they are going to vote for submitting this question to the people. In settling the fate of this amendment, I am convinced that those who vote with the leader of the Opposition will be getting for the people of this country a voice in building up the Australian nation.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): So far as my reading tells me, the question of federation in all the Australian colonies has been made a non-party question. Only the week before last, in the Parliament of Victoria, the Opposition met, and not only decided not to make a party question of federation, and not to introduce any motion bearing upon it at all, but decided that they would not introduce any motion of want-of-confidence until after the Federal Bill had been submitted to that Parliament and had been disposed of on non-party lines. Not only, as I say, was federation left out of the question of a no-confidence motion, but the Opposition also decided not in any way to hamper the Government of that colony until the Bill could be brought down and dealt with on a non-party basis. In New South Wales, the Ministry agreed to differ, and they took opposing sides upon the great question of federation; and the two great giants of politics in that colony—Messrs. Reid and Barton, opposed as they were, red-hot from a very fierce election, opposed in every way politically, having each come back with strong support from the electors—they, once inside the Chamber, having agreed to discuss federation, at once forgot their opposition, and fought the question of federation side-by-side; and Mr. Reid was even opposed by some of his own Ministers on that great question. Therefore the New South Wales Cabinet agreed to differ, and to disagree in a statesman-like manner, and to carry matters in such a fashion that the great question at issue should not be dragged into the mire of party politics. The same thing is happening in Queensland—identically the same thing—identically the same is the position in South Australia. It remains, therefore, for Western Australia, on the second day after the meeting of her Parliament, when this great question is about to be discussed in this House—for it certainly will be discussed before this session terminates—it remains, therefore, for Western Australia to open its session of Parliament with a vote of want-of-confidence on the subject of federation.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Give us the certainty that the Bill will be introduced this session, and we will stop.

MR. MORAN: Sir, I will give you the words of your leader, if you have one; if you have not a leader, then blunder on as best you may. We will all arrive at the same point if we vote for the Bill going to the people. The leader of the Opposition is decidedly frank and honest, as he always is in regard to his intentions, in bringing motions into this House. Let us do him justice to say he never shirks the truth in regard to these matters; and he frankly admitted to the Premier to-night: "I certainly think," said he, "that the Government cannot hold office five minutes if we put them out on this question." There are no "bones" about that. There is no uncertain sound about that whatever. The leader, at least, is of that opinion, but it remains for the followers to arise and try to show that what the leader says is absolutely untrue. The member for North Perth has spent considerable time in trying to persuade others as to their duty, but is particularly anxious not to say one word about his views on federation—you cannot catch him like that, you know; he is not yet quite certain whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. There are a good many more like him in this country. It is not so long since the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) discovered that his views were not quite in accord either with his own beliefs or with those of his constituents—I do not know which; but I say the member for North Perth very laboriously tried to prove to this House that what his leader had just said to be true, was absolutely untrue—in other words, that this amendment is not one of want-of-confidence, although the leader of the Opposition very honestly and frankly confessed that it is. The House has heard both speakers. Now this is the position: is this particular Federation Bill the property of the Government any more than it is the property of any private member in this House?

MR. GEORGE: Certainly not.

MR. MORAN: Certainly not; and if the Government did not bring down that Bill in time to deal with it this session, and to send it to the people, and to deal with it again after the referendum has been taken, then it is the right and duty of any private member to introduce the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You try to do that, and you will soon find that the rules of the House will upset you.

MR. MORAN: If I were to try it, I should expect to have your very kind assistance.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should certainly vote for it.

MR. MORAN: I tell you another whose assistance I should decidedly expect to have—the assistance of the only man in Western Australia who has done a “tap” for federation up to date—and that is the Premier of this colony, the only prominent federal delegate we have so far seen in Western Australia. The numbers are not up yet, and it remains to be seen whether this attempt to push the Government of this colony into a corner will succeed or not, whether the good sense of the majority of hon. members will say that the Premier should be allowed a free hand in this matter, and that he should not be pushed unwillingly out of federation. What are the facts of the case? Here we have a Parliament opened within the last few days. The Premier of Victoria said, and Mr. Chamberlain in the old country said also, that it will be impossible to introduce the Federal Enabling Bill into the British House of Commons this year. That is an accepted fact. We know that it is absolutely true. There is no hope of the Federal Bill being sent to England or introduced in the House of Commons before next year. That is to say, almost twelve months must elapse before that can be done. Here we have the Government of this colony coming down with a most progressive platform, with the most progressive programme of social legislation that this House has ever seen. Whether it be that the Government have climbed down of their own free-will, or whether they have been forced down, the Premier of this colony is introducing legislation this session which must meet with the support, and with the very heartiest assistance, of every true democrat in Western Australia. He has proposed legislation which the country has been asking for, and he is now proposing to give representation to the great population in the larger centres. I will not enumerate a list of other measures which the Government intend to bring in, but there is ample time this ses-

sion to do all the business, and to send the federation question to the referendum of the people as well. What would happen if the Government were defeated tonight? The leader of the Opposition is the spokesman of his party, notwithstanding recalcitrant members who say he is not telling the truth as to his intentions; and if the amendment were carried the present Ministry would vacate the Treasury benches, as they say, in five minutes, and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) and his friends would take office. But how long would the present members of the Opposition hold office?

MR. LEAKE: Another five minutes.

MR. MORAN: Perfectly true. Not much harm could be done in that time, and the country might thank God the new Government were not there longer than five minutes. If the present Opposition took office there would be a reversal of policy, and there must be a dissolution. If neither party can hold power, there must be an appeal to the country; and if that were brought about in the way I have described, the people would be robbed of the measure for the redistribution of seats, and of the measure for female franchise, not that the latter loss would be any great curse. Not only that, but the people of the northern gold-fields in twenty or thirty large centres would be robbed of the railway accommodation which the present Government propose to provide. The Government are carrying out a progressive platform, and while there is a large and overwhelming majority ready to see that the Federation Bill is submitted to the people, there is not a majority in the House at present prepared to turn the Forrest Ministry out, or to turn federation-mad. There is, I hope, a majority of the House who believe that the time for sending the Federation Bill to the people is probably near at hand, but there is other work to be done as well. We must not forget to legislate for the local requirements of Western Australia in the meanwhile. Parliament consents to cut one year off its life, and our duty is to pass an amendment of the Constitution Act providing for a redistribution of seats and for giving female franchise, and to further provide, if possible, for the extension of the railway system north for the benefit of the gold-mining population. There need

be no undue haste about federation. The Parliament of Western Australia in regard to federation has every privilege that the New South Wales Parliament had, and no matter what other people may do, the member who is not "game" to assert those privileges is a crawler. If a member of Parliament is not able to maintain parliamentary privileges he is not fit to be a member of the Legislature. We, as members, have all to go to the country, and let us take the consequences as men, while doing our plain duty. We will not deprive the people of the right of the referendum, but we have a right to do what the New South Wales, Queensland, and other Parliaments did, namely, discuss the Federation Bill. Not only did the Parliament of New South Wales—that great mother-colony into whose arms we are breaking our necks to fall—discuss the Bill, but as the leader of the Opposition said, had it not been that New South Wales had fixed a minimum, federation would have been an accomplished fact to-day. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake) admits that the New South Wales Parliament fixed a minimum for the majority, and George Reid was the man who brought that about. Although a five-thousand majority in New South Wales said they wanted federation, Mr. Reid and his party said the people could not have it; and yet there are people in this colony who would deprive this Parliament of the right to discuss the federation question. This colony has a right to discuss that measure, as did the Parliament in Queensland, where the labour party, almost as one man, opposed the Bill and moved amendments, only one man of that party, Mr. Higgs, supporting the measure. Who will tell me that in Western Australia we are more democratic, or more representative of the working classes, than the labour members in Queensland, who tried their level best to amend the Bill? The New South Wales Parliament made amendments in the measure, and surely we have the same right as that and other legislative bodies? Are we going to be robbed of our privileges because we are afraid of the voice of the people?

MR. LEAKE: We want the question put to the voice of the people.

MR. MORAN: Men who are afraid of the voice of the people, or indeed are

afraid to stand up against the voice of the people, are not fit to be parliamentary representatives. It is our undoubted right and privilege, we who hold the majority in this House, to let the machinery of legislation go right ahead this session, and to do the work immediately to hand. We ought not to turn out a Government who are doing the best work possible for the country, who are becoming more liberal and more democratic every day, who have grappled with the finances, and are doing all the Opposition could wish. There is no man in this House who could find fault with the present policy of the Government, or would turn the Government out on a non-party motion. I hope and trust that the Federation Bill may be discussed this session, and may be passed for the consideration of the people. When that has been done we shall see what is the will of the people. But the member for Albany says that after the people have voted on the question, Parliament could consider whether the Bill should be passed. Would any man have the temerity to stand up in the House after the Bill had been submitted on the referendum, and propose to burk the wishes of the majority of the people? There is no man who would have sufficient temerity to do so. Once the Bill goes to the people, and the will of the people is known, the House is bound by that will. This is the popular Chamber, and whatever representatives who are chosen in another place to represent acres may do is not our business. We are supposed to represent heads, but the other House are returned to represent acres; and if in their wisdom they decide that the federation measure is against the interests of Western Australia, let them exercise their constitutional right as they think fit. I say the present amendment, as far as I can understand it, is delaying federation in this colony. We might have gone through this business, and in two months' time the whole of this liberal and progressive chapter of legislation which the Government have put before us might have been disposed of, and we might have the referendum in this colony very shortly after Queensland has taken the vote of the people there. Whatever may be the result of the referendum in the great colony of Queensland, I maintain that Western Australia has a position

unique in reference to federation. All the other Australian colonies to the eastward are bound together and connected by rivers, by uninterrupted settlement, and by uninterrupted railways, enabling the people in those colonies to pass readily from one to the other; whereas Western Australia is separated from the eastern seaboard of Australia by as much as we are separated from South Africa. Our land connection by a region of desert is worse than nothing. We have only one link with the other colonies of Australia, and that is by the ocean; and as long as the Federation Bill remains in its present state, South Australia can prevent this colony from being connected by a railway line with the colonies of the eastern seaboard. To realise how different is the position of the other colonies in those relations which promote federation, I may remind hon. members that, starting from the north of Queensland you have only to cross rivers and you can run right through the four colonies without interruption. Those are the conditions made by nature; but nature has not made similar conditions here, so that here can be no true connection between this colony and the other colonies of Australia except by railway. Therefore this is a special reason why Western Australia should not be asked to give her decision on the federation question before the other colonies have done so. I do not say that, if Queensland does not go in the federation, this colony should not join. The referendum should, in any case, be made to our people here, for they have a right to say "yea" or "nay" to any conditions in the Federation Bill. It is the right and the duty of this Parliament to give the people every chance to see what Parliament is doing on this question, for we know that very few people in this colony understand the Federation Bill thoroughly. It is true we have had large meetings all over the country, and the cry for federation has been boomed as a national sentiment. The principle of centralising and of creating large nations is coming into vogue, and Australia is bitten with the sentiment at present; but the duty of every member in this House is deliberately, and with careful attention, to place the Federation Bill before the country in such a straightforward and truthful way that the people may clearly understand it—

not to find out first what the people think, and then talk as they want you to talk. How many are there in this House against sending the Bill to the people? I know of only one. I give all due credit to one member of the Opposition (Mr. Vosper), who is not in his place to-night, and who has faced his electors at Kanoona by addressing them on the federation question; and although he and I have had words of difference in this House occasionally, yet I recognise in this matter that he has acted as a man by going before his electors and explaining his views. He told them that we can have no true federation while South Australia has the power of deciding this railway question against Western Australia, and for ever. How was that member received in his constituency, where the people had been howling for federation? He was treated respectfully, and not only that, but he got a vote of confidence after his speech; and I say every true man who goes before his constituents in such a manly way deserves it. This colony is going to have a redistribution of seats: that is a noble and great work ahead of us. We cannot have federation for two years anyhow, but we can have a redistribution of seats in one year, and I trust that in a short time we shall have a long and earnest debate on the Federation Bill in this Chamber, the same as in every other legislative chamber in Australia. I have made all the study of the Bill that I can, and shall be prepared to give my opinions on it in this Chamber when the question comes up, so that through the columns of the Press the people in the country may learn the opinions of their representatives, and be in a position to say whether they approve of those opinions or not. Of course there is always some "Johnny" outside who wants to get in, and who will say that the opinions of members here do not represent the people; but I say the people do not always see it in that light. We should send the Bill to the people for their decision, and we should deal with the Bill after its return and before this Parliament dissolves. The leader of the Opposition did not beat about the bush, in proposing his amendment, for he said it means a want of confidence in the Government; but I ask whether the hon. member is thereby

advancing the cause of federation? And if he carries a vote of no-confidence, I ask what will follow?

MR. LEAKE: Federation.

MR. MORAN: No; conglomeration, confusion, and after it the deluge. We should refer the Bill to the people, and after it comes back to us we can deal with it. We should take the wish of the people as the law on this matter. I maintain that for the sake of the dignity of the Parliament of Western Australia, to which perhaps some of us may not be returned at the next election, while we are here we should uphold our rights as legislators; because Parliament is a sacred institution, and we should do our duty as a Parliament by discussing the Bill, and should be not less eager to find faults or merits in it, as we know the other legislatures in Australia have done, and we should do this freely, so that Minister may fight Minister on the question, and Oppositionist may fight Oppositionist; keeping aloof from small party politics, which, after all, are inconsiderable in comparison with the great question of federation.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I certainly agree with the remarks of the member who has just sat down, inasmuch as we are not at present to decide the fate of the Commonwealth Bill; and that, I take it, is the object of the leader of the Opposition in introducing this amendment. I want to put this matter clearly before hon. members from my point of view. In discussing this amendment, I do not think it is at all a question of federation, but we are discussing simply the action of the Government in dealing with the matter. I take it that it is not only the privilege of any Opposition in Parliament, but it is the duty of an Opposition, that when they take exception to any action on the part of the Government, they should bring in an amendment disagreeing with that action, and if the Ministry accept that amendment as one of no-confidence, the Opposition shall stick to their colours and press the question to a division. What is the position to-night with regard to the question of the Federation Enabling Bill? I turn to the minutes of the Premiers' Conference held in the early portion of this year, and I find it was agreed by the Premier of New South Wales that he would take

steps for the passage of a measure through the Parliament of New South Wales, providing for the referendum on the Bill as proposed to be altered by the Premiers. That agreement says:—

The Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion that, after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of their respective colonies for reference to the electors.

That clause was adopted by the remaining Premiers, including our own Premier, and it says the Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion that, after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of the respective colonies for reference to the electors. What I want to point out is that it is not "after the Parliament of New South Wales has accepted the Bill," but "after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill," that the Premiers have pledged themselves to submit it to the people in their respective colonies. What is the reason of the alteration which has since been made by the Premier here? He has not explained the reason for altering the decision which he with others agreed to at the Conference of Premiers. I can only judge from the wording of the Governor's Speech, in the second paragraph, the responsibility for which has just been acknowledged by the Premier, that it is his intention to shelve the great and momentous question for, at any rate, the next twelve months. Take the wording of the paragraph:—

The question of the federation of Australia has received a great deal of attention from the people of Eastern Australia and Tasmania during the recess. The public feeling in favour of a closer union is almost universal, and that being so, the only question which will require your careful consideration in the event of the Commonwealth Bill being adopted by the rest of Australia, is whether the Bill so safeguards our financial interests at the present time as to justify us, as prudent people, with great responsibilities, giving up, to a very large extent, the control and management of our fiscal policy. The Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne in February last, has been forwarded to every elector in the colony, and so soon as it has been accepted by all the other colonies of Australia will be submitted for your consideration. My Ministers are of opinion that the Bill, as now framed, is far less favourable to Western Australia than to any of the other colonies, and this is freely admitted by all

the leaders of the movement in the other Australian colonies, and by all who have given the financial clauses any close consideration. It will, therefore, be obligatory on you to give that portion of the Bill the closest and most careful examination.

There is no mistaking the meaning of these words, and no matter what hon. members on the Government side or on this (the Opposition) side may say by the way of explaining the attitude of the Premier, he cannot get away from the printed minutes of that conference held in Melbourne last February. This, I take it, is a distinct breach of faith on the part of our Ministry, if this agreement is not carried into effect. Clauses in the agreement are headed, "Mode of giving effect to agreement." Here is an agreement entered into by the Premier on behalf of this colony, that these decisions shall be given effect to. I state again without hesitation that, if the action of the Government is such as to place this colony in an invidious position in repudiating an agreement which has been entered into with the Premiers of the other colonies, then the Opposition in this House are certainly justified in using every means to force the hand of the Premier, and, if not, to turn the Ministry out of office. I should like to point out that, after this Bill has passed the referendum it has to be submitted again to the different Parliaments, so that if we wait until the Parliament of Queensland has passed her Enabling Bill and the Commonwealth Bill has been submitted to the people of Queensland, then we cannot possibly have the question put before us here previous to the ordinary time for proroguing our Parliament; therefore the Premier knows well that, so far as his action is concerned, if it is carried into effect the statement contained in the Governor's Speech, that the Parliament of this colony should discuss and consider this Bill, then it cannot be referred to the people at any rate until next year. I say we are entitled to discuss this important Bill; and should we, the members of the Opposition, be debarred from discussing the question from every point of view because the Government consider it is better to shelve the question for twelve months? I take it we have every right to demand and maintain our position here to discuss this question from every point of view,

and to come to some decision as to the terms on which it should go to the people. It is not a necessity that we should accept the Commonwealth Bill as it stands. I say that when the Enabling Bill is introduced into this House, it will be competent for any member to propose and carry, if he is able to do so, any amendment in connection with the Commonwealth Bill. Why then should we hesitate to bring the question forward at an early date? Some members have pleaded that the people must be educated up to the question. I agree with that, and I have always taken strong exception to the manner in which delegates to the Federal Convention were elected in this colony, on the ground that it did not give members of Parliament an opportunity of understanding the question at issue, and it certainly did not give the people an opportunity of grasping the importance of the measure that was to be submitted to their consideration; but I say now that if, as hon. members have argued, it is our duty to debate the Bill and educate ourselves, then the proper way is to bring the Enabling Bill into this House at an early date, so that it may be discussed, and by that means reports of our debates will be spread throughout the land, and the people will have an opportunity of grasping and ascertaining the position of their representatives on the matter. The sooner the measure is brought before the House, the sooner shall we educate ourselves, and the sooner shall we be able to educate the people, and have their vote and know which way they intend to go. Another point is that it is within the power of this House to decide as to when the Bill shall be submitted to the people. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) has said it should be submitted within two months. I should be satisfied if it were done within three or four months, if we could have that assurance. What we want is to have the Enabling Bill brought in, so that the question may be submitted to the people before the expiration of this year. To discuss any extraneous matters is not my intention to-night. I simply wanted to put forward my views on the amendment that is proposed by the leader of the Opposition; and I take it that he, as leader of the Opposition, was perfectly justified in bringing forward this amendment. No matter how the Premier may complain

that it has put the Government into a false position, no matter how he may sling out abuse across the House and call the amendment a trick and the member for Albany unreliable, I maintain the leader of the Opposition is justified in forcing their hand, so that we may have the Bill discussed at an early date; particularly after, as I have pointed out, the Premier has committed himself and his Ministry and this colony to an agreement, which provides that as soon as the people of New South Wales have agreed to this Bill, it shall be brought before the people of Western Australia. If we do not carry out that agreement, I maintain that the Premier and his followers who support him in rejecting this amendment will commit a breach of faith, not only with the people of this colony, but with the people of the colonies on the eastern side of the continent.

MR. WOOD (West Perth): It is pretty well known in the House that I do not intend to vote for the amendment; and I think that goes without saying. But I may say at once that I am much disappointed with the leader of the Opposition, for bringing up this question as a party question. He can say what he likes; he can repudiate the idea altogether; but his action is nothing else but a party trick, because he knows that some of us are pledged to a certain line of policy.

MR. LEAKE: And you do not like to act up to your pledges; that is it.

MR. WOOD: I am going to act up to my pledges as much as the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) is going to act up to his conscientious feelings. I think if I follow the lead of the hon. member, no one can accuse me of acting unrighteously. I am, therefore, following his lead.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is a vacant seat for you beside me.

MR. WOOD: And if I only get to the golden gate behind the hon. member, I shall, indeed, be very well satisfied; and in following so closely in his footsteps, I am sure I am not committing any great offence in the eyes of my constituents. Besides, in my speeches to my electors, I have always expressed my disapproval of joining the federation at the present time. Federation has, by this amendment, been made a party question, and I intend to

stick to my party; and I am prepared to take the consequences next May or June.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You always do stick to your party.

MR. WOOD: I know that, because I think they are the worthiest. There is very little to be said to-night if we stick closely to the amendment before the House. I could not help feeling gratified at the remarks of the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing). He frankly admitted that this Bill was to be brought in and discussed in this House, and revised if necessary. That is the first utterance I have heard in that direction. Other hon. members have followed since; but I say that announcement is in direct opposition to what Messrs. Matheson, James and company have been preaching to the people outside, because they have always said, "This Bill, and nothing else but this Bill," right through the piece, from the start of the federal agitation; and I believe one of the gentlemen threatens to turn a somersault and to go back on the strong views he holds on the question.

MR. LEAKE: What has this to do with the amendment?

MR. WOOD: It has a great deal to do with it, because to-night you are all backing down. That is what you are doing. You are making that a pretext to back down on, and you ask for an assurance from the Government when the Premier is not prepared to give you the assurance.

MR. LEAKE: How does all this explain that paragraph in the agreement between the Premiers?

MR. WOOD: I know nothing about that, and I do not care. You can ask the Premier to explain it. You are making this a party question to-night: you want to turn out the Government and to put them in a false position if you can. Of what did the speech of the member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) consist? Of nothing but personal abuse of this (the Government) side of the House from beginning to end, and of abuse, too, of the Premier, whom he characterises as having thrown this colony over. Why did the Premier throw the colony over? Of course I do not admit that he did so; but supposing he did, why was it? Because he had no support in the Federation Convention from the people who went there with him. He was left alone to fight the battles of this

country; and how could he fight them against men like Reid, Barton, Holder—these great giants of the other colonies?

MR. LEAKE: The Premier was against federation there.

MR. WOOD: I say our men were thoroughly out-classed in those Conventions; they were as much afraid of getting up and speaking there as I am diffident in speaking in this House; and what were the consequences? Look down the list of our delegates at the Convention, and see how many of them supported our Premier in his efforts to obtain fair terms for this country. I am not prepared to say how many times each delegate spoke, but you can all find out by reading the reports of the debates in the Conventions. I have said all I propose to say on the subject, and I intend to vote against the amendment, as I suppose you are not much surprised to hear, and I have justified my action in the few remarks I have made.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): It is not my intention to give a silent vote upon this question. When we were asked to consider the amendment now before us, it was understood that federation was not to be made, in any sense, a party question. I am very sorry that the Government have made it so.

THE PREMIER: Oh, no.

MR. SOLOMON: The fact of there being no reference to the Bill going before the people is one of the greatest mistakes to be found in the Governor's Speech. From the educating process which has been going on during the last few months, the people naturally expected that, in the Speech, the Government, in alluding to federation, would have given them some assurance that, at an early date, or at least ultimately, the matter would be placed before the electors for their decision either one way or the other. Many people have spoken to me with that idea, and have thought it strange that no such reference was made. The decision of this question will not affect us merely for a day or a year; its results will remain for centuries; and I feel sure that both those for, and those against, federation will recognise the desirableness of educating the people; for, in the event of any disaster happening to this colony, the masses of the people will be the greatest sufferers and losers; con-

sequently it is for them to say, when the Bill is thoroughly understood by them, whether they will or will not federate. We. I take it, are not sent to this House to vote finally on a question such as this. It is not a local question, but national, an Australasian matter—the question of uniting together various colonies for good or for evil; and we have to take into consideration all the clauses of the Commonwealth Bill, and to seriously decide whether the Bill will suit our colony. For my part, I say frankly that I do not think it will, but at the same time the people are alive to it, are being educated upon the question, and understand that at a future date the Bill will be submitted to them for their decision. That appears to me to be the question now. It is in no party spirit that I rise to support the amendment, but it is with the feeling that we should know once and for all what is the intention of the Government with regard to this matter. We should know whether they intend towards the end of the session—I will say the end of the session, because I am not at all anxious that the matter should be hurried—we should have some definite time named when the Bill is to be brought before this House with a view to ultimately placing it before the people.

THE PREMIER: Ah, you are very anxious to do that.

MR. SOLOMON: It is unnecessary to go into the details of this Bill; but, as I said before, we have to consider it as a great national question; and when it does come before this House, let us discuss it calmly and without acrimony on the part of any member. Let us argue in such a way that the public, who will ultimately have to decide this great question, shall have it placed before them so that they can give a fair and honest decision.

MR. LEAKE (in reply): I have one word to say by way of emphasising what I said before, and in deprecation of the idea that I wish to drag this question into party politics. I have to point out as emphatically as was done by my friend on my left (Mr. Wilson) that I am bound in the interests of Parliament, and in the interests of this colony, to ask for a definite reason why the Premier has been guilty of a breach of faith, that breach of faith being the departure from the terms of the agreement arrived at

between him and the Premiers of the other colonies on the 3rd of February last. The Premiers at that Conference were Sir George Turner, Mr. Reid, Mr. Dickson, of Queensland, Mr. Kingston, Sir Edward Barton, and Sir John Forrest; and there it was distinctly agreed—not orally, but in writing, which is now in print before us—that the Premiers of those several colonies pledged themselves—

THE PREMIER: Read it.

MR. LEAKE: And consequently their colonies and their Parliaments to do this.

THE PREMIER: Read it.

MR. LEAKE: I will read it. It is as follows:—

The Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion—

and those Premiers included Mr. Dickson and Sir John Forrest—

that, after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of their respective colonies for reference to the electors.

What have we done to-night except to ask that this agreement shall be carried out, or, in the alternative, that we shall have some reasonable and honest explanation?

THE PREMIER: If there were any undue delay, could you not move in this House? If the Government did not do anything for a long time, you could move, could you not?

MR. LEAKE: The undertaking of the right hon. gentleman was, not that he might, but that he would, submit the Bill to his Parliament for reference to the electors.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.

MR. MORGANS: But he is going to do that.

MR. LEAKE: But would it be right that we as a Parliament should approve, or should pass without comment that paragraph in the Speech which states that, instead of submitting the Bill now that it has been approved by New South Wales to our Parliament and our electors, we shall wait until all the Australian colonies have approved of it; when we know full well that, acting under pressure both from within and from without the Ministry, the Premier wishes, desires, and intends that the consideration of this question shall not take place as

therein contemplated, but that it shall be delayed for at least twelve months?

THE PREMIER: That is the essence of your speech. Your last word was the biggest misstatement of the lot.

Amendment (Mr. Leake's) put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	10
Noes	24

Majority against	...	14
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Ewing	Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Holmes	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Kenny	Mr. George
Mr. Kingsmill	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Leake	Mr. Hall
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Higham
Mr. Wallace	Mr. Hooley
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Hubble
Mr. Oldham (Teller).	Mr. Lefroy
	Mr. Locke
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Pennefather
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Sholl
	Mr. Throssell
	Hon. H. W. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Morgans (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 9:50 p.m. until the next day.