

THE PREMIER: But the miner would hold his tenure under the Minister of Mines.

MR. WILSON: The timber lessee had an undoubted right to cross the land.

THE PREMIER: But the miner had also a right.

MR. WILSON: Then there must be compensation if the timber lessee were prevented from carrying his railways through the miner's lease.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: By this Bill a large concession was granted to the timber lessee. Under the present Goldfields Act any miner could go on a timber lease, take what timber he liked, and do as he liked within the four corners of his lease.

On motion by the PREMIER, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 8 minutes to 11 o'clock, the House adjourned until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 23rd November, 1899.

Paper presented.—Land Act Amendment Bill (private), third reading; Cemeteries Bill, third reading; Petition of Federal League; Motion to Affirm Amendment (moved), Division, adjourned.—Bank Holidays Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported.—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: By-laws, Municipality of Northam, under Width of Tires Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE).

Read a third time, on motion by HON. F. M. STONE, and passed.

CEMETERIES BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

PETITION OF FEDERAL LEAGUE.

MOTION TO APPROVE—AMENDMENT.

Debate resumed from 15th November, on motion by Hon. A. P. Matheson to approve of petition of Federal League that the Draft Commonwealth Bill be referred to the people without further amendment, in time to allow Western Australia to join the union as an original State.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (South-East): I have no desire to say anything in regard to the matter.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central): I beg to move the following amendment:

That all the words after "that" in first line be struck out, with a view of inserting, "at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony."

It appears to me that if the motion were carried, we should be lending ourselves to a form of procedure which has hitherto been unrecognised, and for which there is no precedent in the political history of this colony, at any rate. It has never been adopted here, and there is no power in the colony to allow a referendum. There is no machinery provided for anything of the kind, and I think that on a question of so great importance as that of federation it would not be satisfactory to the colony as a whole, but would be a most dangerous precedent to allow the principle of the referendum to be adopted. With the exception of colonies or countries where special provision has been made and special machinery provided to enable the referendum to be carried into effect, there is no system of an occasional referendum when a matter of considerable importance crops up between one general election and another. If there is a great desire on the part of Parliament that this matter shall be referred to the people, the proper course is—particularly in the case of a question on which the electors of the colony have not yet expressed an opinion—for the Government to dissolve Parlia-

ment and place the question before the electors in the ordinary constitutional manner. [HON. R. G. BURGESS: Hear, hear.] It does not seem to me that this is a time in which we should make any departure from the practice which has obtained hitherto. A very great deal has been said both here and outside the House, and particularly in another Legislative Chamber, about the right of the people to be heard, and to cast a vote on the subject. No one has any objection to their expressing as many opinions as they choose, or to their casting a vote on this particular question, but I think every hon. member of the House should insist upon its being done in a constitutional way or not at all. There is a general election coming on shortly at which this question can be discussed, or pressure can be brought to bear upon the leader of the Government to obtain a dissolution of Parliament and so submit the question to the popular vote.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Not this House.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Not this House. Parliament would be dissolved as far as it can be under our Constitution, and this House would be governed—or at any rate largely influenced—by the decision of the electors upon any prominent and important question such as this. I do not think, especially when one considers the amount of heat imported into the debates and discussions at public meetings on the great question of federation—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It has all died out now.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Whether it has died out or not, I do not think this is a time when we should depart from the established precedent of politics in Western Australia. We should not allow the people, because they seem to be rather more interested in this than they have previously been in some other questions, to have a particular “say” whether federation shall be adopted or not. If on this, why not on other questions? There has never been any suggestion of a referendum on any other question, such as a loan Bill, great water works scheme, or any of the large expenditure incurred by this colony. No policy taken in hand has been the subject of a referendum, and I think that so far as the people of

this colony are concerned, a huge public works policy requiring the expenditure of millions is as deserving to be dealt with in a special way as is the question of federation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: This is a national question.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The questions I have referred to are just as much national as this is. The question resolves itself into whether we shall hand over our colony, our resources, our bodies and souls so to speak, to a Government 3,000 miles away, and be prepared to bear any loss which may be incurred in the transaction. Are we to allow a referendum to be taken? A referendum of whom? The petition says the electors, and if you can judge by the signatures of the petition, those who are to vote on the question are to include every male adult on the goldfields, and as many others as can be got upon the roll. If the petition which is the subject of this motion had been properly brought before the House, it would have been accompanied by declarations or certificates in some form that each name was the signature of an individual, that no individual had signed twice, and that each person who signed was entitled to express his opinion. The names should not be those of anticipatory electors, but actual electors. Then it would have been entitled to our consideration, but the handing in of 23,000 names on a printed form without any certificate that the signatures are those of electors is a slight to the Council. I dare say that any member of the Council could, if you gave him a fortnight and a plentiful supply of ink, manufacture 23,000 signatures to any petition placed before him. There is no certificate as to the genuineness of any one of the signatures; and in the absence of any such guarantee, we are not called upon to give this matter as much consideration as we otherwise would.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Especially when we know people have signed five or six times.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We do not know that.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: So far as I understand, we have only reason to know of one individual who has signed twice, and that is on the individual's own admission.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: A barmaid signed the petition six times.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If a prominent member of the Assembly has signed twice, what is the probability of other persons in less responsible positions having so overcome their scruples as to sign more than twice? The first ground I have taken, why this amendment should not be carried, is sound and solid, namely that we have no constitutional precedent for the course proposed by Mr. Matheson, or the course requested in the petition. In the absence of any constitutional precedent, it would be dangerous for us to establish one, although we may have before us the examples of the other colonies, in which, perhaps, legislators have more courage than we have, or less regard for constitutional usage. Probably the latter is the case, in view of the fact that every member representing the Eastern colonies at the conventions at which this Federal Bill was discussed and settled, seemed to be imbued with the idea that the colony he represented was going to gain something in the general plunder. If hon. members will carry their recollection back to the time of the first of these conferences, they will remember that the Western Australian delegation was looked upon with the greatest scorn. There was considered to be no necessity to wait for our delegation, which was regarded as of no importance; in fact, Western Australia was a drug in the then federal market. Since that day Western Australia has progressed to a very large extent, and has come to the front as one of the principal colonies of the group. And now let us look at the reasons which, in the face of past events, may be taken as actuating the delegates of the other colonies in their extreme and almost fantastic desire to take this colony into the federal scheme—to bring it in so that we shall be, as it were, a prey for them. This colony has been their market for some years past, and they have made money out of us; at any rate the business men of the other colonies have made money out of Western Australia, because this colony has been the dumping ground for their produce, which has been poured in faster than we ourselves could produce anything to compete with them. It is only within the last 12 or 18 months

that the producers and agriculturists of this colony have been able in any way to compete or check the immense importation of agricultural produce poured into our ports. We also have reason to believe that great preparation has been made for the raid on Western Australia as soon as we shall consent to federation. It will be a friendly raid, of course, but it means taking our money, and, so far as I can judge, our political life also. Supposing federation were submitted to the electors or the people of the colony at the present stage and were adopted, I do not think it would be possible to avert from this colony not only national insolvency, but also the insolvency of people who have a stake in the country, or to prevent their being so bound and placed in such a position that their life for the future would be a life of hard labour. We shall not be able, in the absence of what may be taken from us by the proposed scheme, to obtain sufficient revenue to pay interest on our present indebtedness, much less to pay interest on the proposed indebtedness for works which are alleged to be absolutely necessary to the proper development of the colony; and if that be so, how is the colony going to retain its place? We are told that the other colonies will perhaps come to our assistance and guarantee our loans, but judging from past transactions, and judging from the anxiety evinced by the other colonies that we should go into the federation scheme—judging from the manner in which every public man in this colony who has expressed his opinion adversely to federation, has been vilified—the other colonies if they do assist, will assist us on terms ruinous to ourselves. Seeing the attitude taken by the public men of the Eastern colonies, after a doubt was first proclaimed as to whether the Bill would be sent to the people of Western Australia or not, there may be a very genuine wish for us to join, but that wish cannot be on sentimental grounds alone. These public men must have had their own people behind them, and they would not on sentimental grounds alone evince so keen a dislike, or so keen a hatred as has been evinced by people on the other side. In the face of that, I do not trust the other colonies. We are told we may trust the Federal Government, and the Federal

power, but I do not trust the Federal power, on account of what has been stated publicly by those who will probably constitute the first Federal Government.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Take the instance of the mail steamers.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That is a very good instance. A few months ago there was no objection whatever to the mail steamers calling at Fremantle; but now a doubt is raised, and we are told pretty plainly that the doubt so raised will never be settled until we settle the question of federation, that if we decide adversely to the wishes of the leaders of federation on the other side, they will place such difficulties in the way of the mail steamers calling at Fremantle, or any other Western Australian port, as to render it practically impossible for the steamers to call.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is not according to the correspondence.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: But it is to be found in speeches made in the Eastern colonies. Of course, we shall be told by those who advocate federation that this colony has been established by the capital, the sinew, the muscle, and everything else, from the Eastern colonies and from outside. The adoption of federation would only be the furtherance of the scheme of development which has been followed in the past by those who have exploited our goldfields. They will allow a collection of mines, or in this case they will allow a colony, to be partially developed, and then they will proceed to float it. And who suffers? In some cases, the original owner of the mine suffers, but always the field in which the mine is situated; and I think it would be better to develop the colony ourselves. In the last six years the colony has made much progress in developing its own resources; and we can be fairly well trusted to continue the development in the future, and to further prospect our immense wealth now hidden, and use it for our own purposes and not for the purposes of a glorified Australia. It would be better to use this wealth for a glorified Western Australia, which has one-third of the continent in its possession and under its rule, than to hand over the government of the whole to a few people of the Eastern colonies.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It would be the majority against the minority.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We are told that federation would be a great advantage to us, and that the other people—I call them “the other people”—would invest their money here and develop our resources, kindle industries, and generally make this place boom. That may be so, but I think before they dream of doing that, they will use this colony as a market while they develop their own resources. After they are satisfied, we can have such part of the loaf as may be left; but I do not feel inclined to take what is left, because we have our share of the loaf now, and it is better to keep what we have. I do not think that even on the strongest ground I have heard urged, there would be any great cheapening of the cost of living in this colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What has that got to do with the question of the people voting?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The principle of federation is so opposed to the best interests of Western Australia, that I think the people should not be allowed to vote on the question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Ah! that is all I want.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I am quite prepared to give voice to my opinions in the matter, and I go so far as to say that I, as a member of the Council, have been entrusted by my constituents to voice their opinions here. I was elected on the distinct ground that I was opposed to federation, and that I would do my utmost, when the opportunity came, to prevent the Bill in any shape or form going to the people. Mr. Matheson was present at Cue, which I call the goldfields centre of the Central Province, and he then heard and saw how my announcement to that effect was received. I do not think he could flatter himself that federation has much of a hold in that province, although that is a goldfields district, where they are supposed to be in favour of federation, while on the coast it is hardly safe to mention the word at all, except to say that the question shall not be referred to the people.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: And two elections for the Assembly since have been in the same direction.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Yes; certainly there was no opposition when Mr. Loton afterwards went up for election to the province; and the same opinions which held then, hold now. If we can judge from elections to this Chamber since, they show conclusively that in the central and southerly portions of the colony there is no desire for federation for Western Australia. Apart from that, even if I were satisfied a large proportion of my constituents, I will not say so much as half, but a large proportion, were in favour of the Bill going to the people, I should still oppose that course to the utmost of my ability. I consider that, as their representative here, I am called on not to vote or go with one portion of my constituency, and if there be a division of opinion amongst them, and no desire for a certain course is clearly expressed by representations or petition by the majority, I have a right to use my own judgment. And what is my duty I consider to be the duty of every member of the Council and every member of Parliament. If a measure comes up which, in his individual opinion, would be harmful for the colony to a serious extent, it is clearly a member's duty to do his best to prevent that measure becoming law; and if the process proposed whereby the measure shall become law and forced on Parliament, is that it shall be referred to the people to vote on, and an exceptional course followed, it is equally a member's duty to oppose that exceptional course. That being my opinion, I intend to oppose this Bill being sent to the referendum, because I do not think that a safe course. Assuming we are the custodians of the interests of this colony, we are in the same relative position as a parent to a child; and would a child be allowed to approach drugs or medicines which might be harmful and of which the child does not know the consequential effects? For the same reason I think the people of Western Australia do not yet appreciate the disadvantages of the proposals placed before them, and I will do my best to keep the question from them until they can understand what those disadvantages are.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Do not let them have what is not good for them.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: A poisonous Bill.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The expression, "poisonous Bill," uttered by Mr. Matheson, is a very apt one. We have an inverse parallel, if I may use the expression, between New Zealand and this colony, each equidistant from the proposed centre of federal life, and each in quite a different position, so far as the aspirations and hopes of the present federating colonies are concerned. The federating colonies will not have New Zealand, because New Zealand can produce more than they can, but they want to have Western Australia, because Western Australia cannot supply all she wants. They also want to have Western Australia, so that we shall not be able to deal with New Zealand, a market to our hand, so to speak—as much to our hand as New South Wales or Queensland.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: They want the Western Australian trade.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They have had it in the past, and, in the hopes of getting it, their public men, from Mr. George Reid downwards, have been dragooning as best they can the Premier of this colony, by referring to what he said and promised, and trying to force him to use his undoubted influence in the colony to get Western Australia to go into federation. Dragooning is the only expression I can apply. They have used every influence, every trick, and every dodge they can think of to get him to commit himself further than he has, unfortunately, already done. In my opinion, the most objectionable part in reference to federation is that the Premier of this colony pledged us as far as he was legally entitled to do (and happily it was not far) to go into federation. One thing which has struck me very forcibly is the great courage the right hon. gentleman has shown in withdrawing from the position he took up, and in stating publicly that he was mistaken; that although he returned to this colony and made a speech —

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Two speeches, unluckily.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: He made more than one speech in which he urged that federation would help the colony; but afterwards, when he had gone into the question more deeply, he had the courage—which I am afraid many members of Parliament at the present day

would not have—to publicly disavow his previous statements and to retract as far as he could. What the Premier thought was for the best was not for the best. Although he may feel morally bound to put the Bill before the people, I should, in view of the mistakes he made before, and the reasons which induced him to withdraw from them, have thought a great deal more of him as a public leader if, instead of adopting the unprecedented course referred to, he had taken the bit in his teeth, thrown the whole thing overboard, and said he was satisfied that federation, either as proposed by the Premiers or amended by the Select Committee, would not be in the interests of Western Australia. Had he stood his ground and declined to pledge Parliament to send the Bill to the people, it would have gained him more credit in the colony than the unfortunate course he has chosen to pursue has done. Half measures are no good. I do not know that we can gain anything by suggesting alterations to what we call the Bill of the Premiers. If I cannot do what I desire by means of this amendment, and prevent the Bill from going to the people at all, I would support the modified Bill in preference to the Bill of the Premiers; but I do not like either. I do not like federation in any shape or form. In my judgment federation would bring disaster upon us; and, therefore, I move that all the words after “that” be struck out, with a view of inserting “at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony.”

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I will support the amendment, and I fully concur in all those remarks. It would be unreasonable for this House to consider the petition, when we know that the question involved is one we disapprove of. A very large proportion of the members of the House disapprove of it and will show their disapproval before many days have passed. I have looked into the matter from every possible aspect, and have heard numerous opinions expressed. I am sure we can only come to one conclusion, that being that federation is most undesirable for this colony. Even though it may be admitted that a large proportion of the goldfields members will be in favour of it, and the people on the gold-

fields form a majority, we should appeal to their sense of reason, urging them not to advocate a measure which will in no way benefit them, and will be disastrous to the rest of the colony. I am quite satisfied that those who look into the question will see that the working classes cannot benefit by federation. The mining interests will not gain, and no interest in the colony will benefit by it. Considering the isolated position we occupy, and that instead of being separated by water, we have thousands of miles of sterile waterless country, which is more impassable than water, how can we be fairly represented by a Parliament over two thousand miles away from us? We know that the expenses of government, instead of being made more reasonable and economical than at present, would be doubled, and we know that our representation would only be 5 to 75. Some say, “would those States all act in opposition to the interests of Western Australia? Surely some of them would work for the benefit of Western Australia as well as support their own interests.” I say it is impossible for those States, so far removed from Western Australia, to know what is desirable for this country, and we are aware that human nature is selfish. You cannot put any other aspect upon it, and we could never, under the circumstances, expect to be fairly represented when our interests were likely to clash with those of the other colonies, either in regard to our railways or advances for future necessary public works. We also know that through loss of the duties a very large sum of money would be withdrawn from this colony, and that under the Commonwealth there would be power to tax us to any extent that might be necessary in order to meet the enormous expenses of the Federal Government. There does not seem to me to be any foundation to work upon with regard to probable expenses. I think I heard Mr. Loton say, when the matter was first discussed in the House, that there was no basis to go upon by which a fair and just estimate could be arrived at as to what federation would cost. Therefore we are perfectly in the dark as to what it will cost, but the great probabilities are that the cost will be a great deal more than it has been estimated at. We all know that in

matters of this kind there are all sorts of expenses that are bound to be entered into which cannot be foreseen in the commencement.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about settlement and industries?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Everyone must know that federation would paralyze, I might say, almost every industry in the colony; and after inducing people to come from the other colonies and settle upon the land, believing, as they had a right to believe, that the prices might be better than in other colonies, would it be right to adopt federation, knowing that our markets would be flooded with the produce of the other colonies, and that the settlers here would be obliged to put their produce into the market at ruinous rates, in the way the other colonies have done? Industries in the other colonies have been fostered to a fearful degree, and to a much greater extent than industries in Western Australia have been encouraged, and therefore a higher state of cultivation and production has been reached there than in this colony. We stand in a very different position now to that occupied by the colony a few years ago, and I think I could prove very satisfactorily that such is the case. With the land we have under cultivation we can supply the requirements of Western Australia both for hay and flour, and are fast approaching a condition in which we shall be able to supply the colony with vegetables, butter and everything else in a way that would be satisfactory to everybody. Why, then, is it necessary for us to depend entirely upon the other colonies and discourage those things which would make our own colony? If such industries are checked now, as they would be by federation, we shall be entirely dependent upon the other colonies, for those here could only produce at ruinous prices, which would not return sufficient to pay for food. Federation would discourage in the extreme all kinds of settlement and all kinds of production, and when I say all kinds of production, I include all kinds of agricultural produce as well as vines, vegetables, and everything else, because they all come under the same category. We know a great many of those who advocate federation have no vested interest in Western Australia. Their sympathies are with the other

colonies, and therefore if anything would be for the benefit of the other colonies they would vote for it without consideration for the land in which they live. I think, however, that when they come here to settle, they ought to look to the future of Western Australia, as well as the interests of that country they have left. In my opinion if these matters had been fully explained, and entered into on the goldfields, and those centres in which there seems to be the greatest desire for federation, three-quarters, or at least half the people there would have changed their views in respect of federation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Why have you not gone there?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I have too much to occupy my attention.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have been to your district.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It is a matter for regret that Mr. Matheson and the members who represent those districts have not taken a more liberal view of the matter, and considered the welfare of the whole colony, not advocating a measure which will be unsatisfactory and disastrous to the best interests of Western Australia. I have often thought that, if I had the ability and eloquence, there is nothing I would like better than to go among the people and try to establish goodwill in the community, endeavouring to make them reasonable and rational, and to cause them not to take the extreme views they often do.

HON. H. BRIGGS: They would not listen to you.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I do not know. Common sense, backed up by justice, often has a great amount of weight. I think that if people would go amongst the crowds and try to establish a feeling of this sort they would find it would accomplish a great deal of good.

[HON. A. P. MATHESON: Hear, hear.] I see among the names published in relation to the alluvial men at the present time, many which ought not to be there. The alluvial miners are supported by men who, instead of upholding them, should do all in their power to create a better feeling.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They ought to be in gaol with them.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Yes; I should say that. Instead of doing all

they can to establish good feeling, and impressing upon men the importance and desirability of keeping the laws of their country, they join with them and sympathise with them. That is not the right way to go to work to bring about unity and goodwill in the community.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: And these are the people a lot of whom have put their signatures to the petition, including reverend clergymen.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Petitions have been signed promiscuously by everybody who liked to sign, without question of whether they were voters or had any stake in Western Australia. Is a petition of that sort to have any weight with a House like this? I am sure that at all times this House has shown its anxiety to do all it possibly can for the welfare of the goldfields, and that it will always recognise the importance of the goldfields. It is only right that the goldfields should have a little consideration for this part of the colony, on which they must always depend for necessary supplies in the shape of agricultural produce.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The petition was signed all over the country, and not only on the goldfields.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The petition was signed by persons who have no interest in the colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There were 300 signatures in Bunbury.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I can admire the way in which Mr. Matheson twists the matter and defends a bad cause, and I hope the next measure he takes in hand will be one in which we shall all be able to assist him. I should have great pleasure in supporting him if he introduced a measure which I could see was desirable in the interests of the whole country; but when he introduces a measure which we know is undesirable, he cannot expect the assistance of the House. I like straightforward, honest conduct; and I would prefer to see this House, to a man, say and act in the manner we ought to on this question. I should like hon. members to say with one voice, "We consider that this measure is undesirable in the best interests of the colony, and, therefore, we will not entertain or consider it." If we were to adopt that course, we would be upheld throughout the colony, because people would say

that we had acted honestly and in a manly, straightforward way. At any rate our constituents would uphold us, and give us credit for acting in an honest and manly way.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: And we would save the colony from ruin.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: And we would save the colony from ruin, because it must be ruinous to Western Australia to join federation under existing circumstances. Why, as Mr. Whitcombe asked just now, are the other colonies not anxious to include New Zealand in the federal scheme? Because they know perfectly well New Zealand is a large producing country, and under federation she would be allowed to pour her agricultural produce into the Australian markets, and thus the Eastern colonies would not get so much benefit themselves. Our position is almost as isolated as that of New Zealand, because, though we have not such an expanse of water between us and the other colonies, there is an enormous extent of barren, waterless country, much harder to get over than the ocean, and, therefore, we have quite as good ground for remaining out of federation as has New Zealand. If the Eastern colonies had not some other object in view they would not be more anxious to include Western Australia than they are to include New Zealand. Then, how is it going to be proved that continual differences may not arise amongst the States themselves? We know the Eastern colonies are not the most peaceable on the face of the earth at the present time, because there are continual strikes and differences, and in Parliamentary matters they have had more disputes and discreditable conduct than has ever been known in Parliament here. In that respect they have not been an example to Western Australia, and under federation I do not think they would be secure from quarrels and differences of opinion. Before we rush into federation I should like to see it shown that we shall reap all the advantages which some people imagine, because, for my own part, I do not believe we shall get any advantage at all. Differences will continually be cropping up, which they will not be able to settle, and we should be better off under the old form of government than under a double-barrelled system, which will

cost twice as much and not bring any particular benefit; and unless we can see that there will be some enormous benefit we are not justified in entertaining the idea. I am not a good hand at continuing and exhausting a subject, but I have endeavoured to give my views, and I trust hon. members will show themselves manly enough to say without hesitation, "We are, one and all, opposed to federation, because we feel it will be undesirable in the interests of the colony." These are my views, and I have great pleasure in supporting the amendment of Mr. Whitcombe.

HON. H. LUKIN (East): I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment. It has been argued inside and outside this House that the Bill must go to the people; but I fail to agree with that view, because, if there is any reason for the existence of this chamber, it is that we may check and revise what we consider hasty and ill-advised legislation, and safeguard the interests of the people generally. If on a great occasion like this—and we must all recognise that it is a very great occasion in the country's history—we abrogate our functions to the people, who are not supposed to know so much about this intricate matter as we do, by referring the question to them simply because we will not take the onus of it upon ourselves, we shall not be doing our duty. Without going over the stock arguments we have been listening to for the last few months, for and against federation, I should like to give a few general reasons why I think we are justified in not referring the Bill to the people. Owing to the somewhat peculiar circumstances existing in the colony at the present time, we have every reason to believe that if this Bill be referred to the people, it will probably be carried, owing to a large proportion of our population being disaffected and not in sympathy with the general interests of the colony. But, in any case, we would be perfectly justified in throwing this Bill out, on the ground that it was carried by such a very narrow majority in the popular chamber.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: By the "representatives of the people."

HON. H. LUKIN: Yes, by the representatives of the people.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was not carried in the other House, but was thrown out.

HON. H. LUKIN: It was only carried by a very small majority, to refer the question to the people.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The petition was thrown out.

HON. H. LUKIN: Yes; the petition was thrown out; and I maintain we are perfectly justified in throwing it out here. A select committee was appointed some time ago to inquire into the whole question, and that committee spent a considerable amount of time and trouble in examining representative men from all over the colony as to the effect of federation, and the bulk of the evidence was clearly to the effect that federation would be against our best interests. To any thinking person it must be evident that the colony at the present time is on the eve of very great developments. It does not take a prophet to foresee that the colony in 10 or 12 years time, will be in a very different position from that it is in at the present time; and I maintain that to join federation now would be to virtually hand over the control of our affairs to a Government two thousand and odd miles away, a Government consisting of people who, on more than one occasion already, have shown they have no sympathy or very little sympathy with us, but who study self-interest. We have always got human nature to take into consideration in a matter of this kind; and if the House at the present juncture do not face the matter in the way in which it ought to be faced, and throw the measure out altogether, without temporising with it at all, we will not be doing our duty to the country.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): I have some diffidence in offering my opinions, after the able speakers who have addressed themselves to the question. The amendment really embraces the whole matter; and although I am not prepared to deal fully with the question to-day, I suppose it will be as well to express my opinions now, seeing that other hon. members have taken that course. For my part, I do not think the House should have any doubt as to the inexpediency of sending this Bill to the people. It is well known that this petition was professedly got up on the goldfields and signed by people, by the clergy of all denominations, I am sorry to say, who

were present at proceedings which were like a corroboree as much as anything else. People signed at street corners. Not only that, I heard a commercial traveller say he signed the petition 12 times, and would sign it 12 times more if he came across it. I have heard reliable men on the fields say that some barmaids in the large hotels made a boast of signing it five or six times. As Mr. Whitcombe has pointed out, we have nothing to show that these signatures are genuine at all: nothing to show that those who signed are voters, or may be voters.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: They are not voters.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I think Mr. Matheson and the federationists made a great mistake in bringing this matter forward as they have done at the present time, when they knew that the bulk of the people could not have a voice in it. Those who want federation at any price are running headlong into the mouth of a cannon, like the Boers have done; and they are doing it only to satisfy their own constituents. Mr. Matheson would be entitled to great credit for the way he has worked, if he were sincere in the matter.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I am sincere.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What did he say? He said he was prejudiced in favour of federation, and I assert that any man who makes a statement like that is unworthy of consideration. We must go to the foundation of this question. Now I am going to speak of other members who are supporting the Federal League, but I need not mention names. Some of the labour leaders have given it out that their only idea was that they would gain more if the Forrest Government were out. We know what has been going on in this country during the last few years. We know that a certain portion of the leaders of the Parliament of Western Australia want to get into power, and they do not care how they accomplish their object. That is the reason why several of these leaders have gone to the extreme they have with regard to having federation at any price. It is no use denying it, because some men who take a leading part in all matters in this colony, and are known and respected, acknowledge that. Is this House going to follow men who have made such state-

ments? If we only consider that alone we have sufficient ground to throw out this petition. Of course we know there are people in favour of this so-called petition, and that meetings have been held in support of it; but there is a constitutional course of putting the thing to the people. Are we following the British nation in this? Can my hon. and learned friend Mr. Briggs show me a case in which such a thing as that has been done by the British nation? There have been cases in which questions have been referred to the electors in municipalities, but the principle of the referendum has not been acknowledged by the British Constitution, except in minor matters. Look at our small population and think of what the effect of adopting the principle of the referendum may be in any place where there may be a large and sudden influx of people. What would have been the state of things about a couple of years ago when there was dissatisfaction on the goldfields? We have had twenty or thirty thousand people coming to the goldfields, and there is enough gold to bring twice that population in six months. Looking at the enormous area of gold and the rich shoots which are found now, we may have a great increase any day, and would it be advisable to adopt this principle of the referendum? Would it be advisable for any Upper House to encourage such a thing? What does it mean? What has it already done in Australia? I am not a great reader, but one only wants to know what is going on in our sister colonies with reference to this matter to form a conclusion. Only look at the vote taken in Queensland yesterday. With the principle of the referendum, there would be no stability about the Government at all. What will the cry be—and I am sorry it has often been raised in our House—with regard to payment of members? What is the payment of members doing in the other colonies? Look at the Premier of New South Wales, and consider the tricks he resorted to in order to keep in power. As soon as the mob took the matter into their own hands, he was out of it. There is a great democratic leader, and only one or two votes would turn him out of power to-morrow. On this question of federation, Mr. Matheson is only voicing the views of his constituents, and is not

thinking of the community at large; and these are the matters we must look into. I have already said that the weakest point in the whole thing is the way those few federationists have worked in relation to this subject, and I have shown that they have no real desire for the good of the country, but that most of them are working only for their own interests. I could even name men, but they are not in this House I am glad to say. I know of one man in this colony, who has written a pamphlet. What his desire is in regard to this question, goodness knows. I am not going to mention names, and when we speak of public matters it is not always desirable to do so. Some men only want to look forward for their own purposes. They know very well that only a very few leading men can be spared from this colony, and if this colony joins federation, some of the members will go away; so they are looking forward for something good to come out of this. Very likely there will be seven Ministers, and they must have a chance. Some of these men are acting wholly and solely against the interests of the country, and are only looking for self-aggrandisement. The main question in regard to this matter is whether it is advisable for Western Australia to adopt federation. It is well known, from letters that have been written, and from leaders that have appeared in our leading papers, that it is not. I have here some of the papers by Mr. Matheson, which I am going to deal with presently unless he has taken them away from me. (Laughter.) He gave me one printed in red, and also handed me another, and I see we would have a loss of about £600,000. He said that would be nothing in a new country like this. Fancy any hon. member trying to persuade the people that a loss of £600,000 would be nothing! He has shown that if we accepted federation, there would be a loss of that amount, and he says the only way to deal with that is to economise in public works. [MR. MATHESON: Hear, hear.] That is what it means; stopping the goldfields work; work carried on in a locality where the hon. member's own constituents reside. If we adopted federation at once, the whole of our revenue would be wiped out.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No, no.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I repeat that the whole of our revenue would be wiped out, and I ask members to listen to that assertion, and not to the interruptions of the hon. member. We have the sliding scale promised to us. In the first place it was shown we were not ripe for federation, and hon. members who will take up this report of the Convention proceedings—I have not had time to read the whole of it, but I have read extracts from speeches by leaders of the Convention—will see that the leaders themselves acknowledged that we could not accept federation on the same terms as themselves. I am sorry to say our delegates did not do their duty. [HON. F. T. CROWDER: Hear, hear.] They were led by a right hon. gentleman whom everyone respects, and who has done more for this colony, I think, than any other man will ever do for it. But every great man makes mistakes, and I am sorry the right hon. gentleman made a great mistake on this question, as far as Western Australia is concerned. He went to the first Convention, and until the end of it seven or eight out of the ten Western Australian representatives looked upon him as their leader. The Premier said he could not accept federation, but there was afterwards a banquet, and I may state that one member of the Convention with whom I was travelling told me that they had been talking the matter over together, and the right hon. gentleman promised to support federation. That is a nice thing. There is a great leader—I refer to the right hon. George Reid—who is a pretty clever man, and he was too cute for the rest of the Premiers. He knew that his only chance to keep in power was to bring about a conference of Premiers, and he did it to gain his own ends. What did our own Premier do? Some of his greatest friends support him whether he is right or wrong, but I am not going to support any man who is wrong. The Premier went to the Conference only last year, and signed that document without any mandate from this country, the question never having been put before the people. Every member who has any power to speak at all ought to get up and explain himself, and ought not to be afraid to give a solid vote against federation. He should not be like a block of wood. There is no member of the House, not even Mr. Matheson,

who does not know that if we accept federation it will put back everything in this colony, except perhaps the goldfields, for five or ten years.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Put it back? It would wipe it out.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It would almost wipe it out. That is what we may expect. Some hon. members have not had the experience that others of us had a few years back when prices were very low. In the last day or two, I have heard able men who have had some experience say that in a few years, or perhaps another year or two, we shall be producing our own cereals and other things. I am sorry to say we shall not be able to produce enough butter for some time yet. We shall be able to produce our own cereals, but it will be remembered that before the goldfields came into existence, we sent produce from this colony to China, India, Singapore, and other places.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: We shipped wheat to England.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes; and growing and preparing that wheat for the market was the hardest work I ever did in my life, with the crude machinery we then had. It is only within the last few years that the producers of this colony have made any progress, and have had a market to encourage them; and they cannot be expected to clear land, employ labour, and borrow money for improvements when they know no benefit will result to themselves. What will take place under federation, which I regard as a mere matter of sentiment? The provision as to suspending the uniform tariff, is only a trick of those cute men who have to support a position amongst democratic people. It has been said that the tariff will be immaterial when we can produce enough for ourselves; but we should remember that the population is only 170,000, and it does not take much to feed that number of people. Two or three shiploads of produce from the other colonies would be sufficient to paralyse the market here, especially if there happened to be good crops in England, America, or Russia; and it is curious, seeing that the sole idea of the Government seems to be to settle people on the land, there should yet be this attempt to introduce federation, and, by wiping out the local markets, ruin the

local producers. Protection to agriculturists, viticulturists, and producers generally would be taken away at once by federation; and even now, men who have put down, perhaps 40 or 50 acres of vines, are wondering how they will fare under federation, in view of the fact that wine is produced in the other colonies and sold at 6d. to 9d. a gallon. To give some inducement in the shape of protection or bounties for the growing of produce and cereals, is the only way to cheapen goods to the people, and that fact had been proved in the other colonies. A few years ago, New South Wales imported nearly all her produce from New Zealand and Victoria, but now the New South Wales people, with the aid of protection and other encouragement, supply for their own markets; and Victoria too, has benefited largely by protection, and has attracted a large population, amongst whom the producers have had possession of the market of Western Australia for the last three or four years. If this attempt to force federation be persisted in, people who have come from other colonies and settled here will find themselves deprived of a market, and will certainly find it more profitable to return to the places from whence they came, and export produce to Western Australia. My own opinion is that the question of federation should not be sent to the referendum, but should be held over until the next general election, which will be under a redistribution of seats, when members can be returned on this issue; and if a majority of representatives are found to be in favour of joining the Commonwealth, then, no doubt, the country will have to give way, although the step may really be inadvisable.

HON. W. T. LORON: How long would that stave federation off?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It would stave federation off until we could, perhaps, get better terms than are offered us at present. The Parliament then returned might be strong enough to insist on better terms, whereas now, there is no guarantee that even the conditions recommended by the Select Committee on the Commonwealth Bill, would be conceded. It is said by some people that if we do not join federation now, we shall lose a good deal; but my opinion is

that we might gain a great deal by waiting a year or two. Indeed, it is certain that we would gain, and could not lose by delay, because if the other colonies want Western Australia to join, this colony must be worth having, and would be taken in just as gladly in a year or two as now.

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

HON. R. G. BURGESS: This colony can surely hold its own with its splendid resources. Our gold yield is increasing yearly, and members ought to have faith, not only in the goldfields, but in the future of our agricultural industry. Large areas are devoted to agriculture, viticulture, and orchards, and in addition to that, we have our coal industry, our tin fields, and probably, other goldfields in the southern parts of the colony. Then we have our timber lands, and other immense areas in the South, which can only be developed when capitalists who have made their money on the goldfields and settled there; and there is no doubt that with the goldfields permanently established, numbers of people will reside and spend their money in the cool parts of the colony. Under federation we should suffer an immense decrease in revenue, and would be unable to continue the development of the country; because it is acknowledged by leading men that it would be a most difficult matter to carry on necessary public works in the face of the financial loss we would sustain. At the present time some millions of money have yet to be borrowed for public works, which must be carried out for the benefit of those people, for whom we have almost mortgaged the country, and who are now working against the interests of the community as a whole, and whom Mr. Matheson is leading to their ruin, in advocating measures that will cripple the resources of the Government. Under federation is it possible that railway extension could be carried on or that the great water scheme could be completed? Federation would not only reduce the revenue but would cripple our industries in the very beginning; and, as I said before, people who have already settled on the land and borrowed money from the Agricultural Bank with which to improve their holdings, would soon arrive at the opinion that it would pay

them just as well, or better, to grow produce in the other colonies and send it here. It has not yet been mentioned that the referendum would cost a large sum of money; and it is a question whether it would be worth while spending £11,000 or £12,000 just because a few members of Parliament are afraid to stand up and give a solid vote according to their convictions. Hon. members ought to consider well before they commit the country to this unnecessary expense, and unsettle the people by submitting a measure with which they will not be satisfied if they get it. As a fact, even if the Bill be passed, three-fourths of the members of Parliament who assisted in passing it must be of opinion that the measure is not advisable in the best interests of the people; and that would be the opinion, not only of the people who are now adverse to federation, but also of those people on the goldfields, who, I am sorry to say, are a disaffected class at the present moment.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It will be giving a stone when they ask for bread.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Would federation confer any benefit on those disaffected people? Would it give them cheaper food, or more political power? They possess political power now, and if they are strong enough, they can get everything they desire in the local Parliament; but, of course, if the majority of the people return members who will not give those disaffected people what they want, the latter must abide by the will of the majority. By the Constitution Bill now before the House, it is intended to give the people fair and equal representation, and this is all that is necessary. We will have to give representation, not according to population, but fair representation. I am surprised that one hon. member here voted yesterday in a way which showed how inconsistent a Liberal he is, and I do not think we should consider two or three men who are so inconsistent in their actions and their votes. We have disaffected people on the goldfields, and we should not give them federation. Let us give them what is their right, and then we can stand up and say, "We give you what is right and what is fair, and you will have to be satisfied. You have the power within yourselves." It is no use saying we can

keep that away from them under the Electoral Bill. Give them that, and they have nothing more to grumble about. Federation is not going to give them that. Federation is only a cry which has been raised, and it is used by one or two who want to get into power. We know that one of the leaders of the labour party gave evidence before the Select Committee, but he would hardly give any testimony at all. We can give to the goldfields all that they are entitled to, and under federation they can gain nothing. It is only a few agitators who are raising all this commotion. Can members of this House say it is advisable to put anything to an excited people? Do you know what an excited mob is? I have been on the goldfields, and I saw one man gather about him 6,000 or 7,000 people and address them. Those people were pretty orderly. I have often met people coming from the goldfields, and have had a chat with them, and you will find that they are discontented. Why? You will always find in new places a lot of people who are doing well, and have a lot of time on hand, and if they cannot do anything else they do mischief. Mr. Whitcombe says that among the alluvialists we have educated men, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and everything else. Those are the persons who cause this trouble: they are educated, and they get up and address those men and lead them into mischief. They have done no good to themselves, but they like to have a following and a little notoriety. That is what is causing this trouble; and are those the people to whom you are going to give the referendum—people who are led by agitators who have done no good to themselves, and are leading good men into trouble? I have been on the goldfields several times, and it is well known that any reasonable man you meet never wants any of those matters which will not be for the benefit of the community. They do not want anything unreasonable. You will find as reasonable men there as any place in the world. There are men who work eight hours a day, receive £4 or £5 a week, and during the rest of the time gather together and only lead others into mischief. Those are the people represented by Mr. Matheson, who has left his seat and does not like to be beside me any

more. (General laughter.) The hon. member is only following his constituents. He told me he was prejudiced in favour of federation. I give him credit for some of the papers he has produced, but when the hon. member tells us that he is prejudiced, I think we can place very little reliance upon his views.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What is the point you make about prejudice? I am strongly prejudiced.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I say that if a man goes before a judge or jury, and if the judge or jury be prejudiced, there will be a new trial.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I use the word "prejudice" in quite a different sense from that in which it is used by the hon. member. I use it in a very ordinary sense in the English language.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You cannot say you did not say you were prejudiced.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I maintain it. I am strongly prejudiced.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: A man who is prejudiced is not one who ought to be followed. The hon. member can take whatever view he likes, but I form my own opinion. With reference to this referendum, I am taking up the time of the House, and perhaps not doing much good. We will refer to the British Parliament, of which other nations are envious. Did the Marquis of Salisbury and his party have a referendum the other day with reference to the Boer war? No; the leaders were allowed to consider the matter, and public opinion followed.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Shoot first and ask afterwards.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is what this House ought to do. Let them give their opinions on the matter and vote solidly. We give those in favour of federation every credit for honesty of purpose, but they hold mistaken ideas. The hon. member opposite cannot have liberal ideas. He says people ought to have fair representation, but yesterday he would not give it to them, so I do not think we can give much consideration to him over the matter. He has thrown himself away altogether. He has already spoken on the matter and has made some blunders. It is nothing for me to make blunders; I have a different life to lead, and we know that the hon. member is posted in

these matters. I will just tell you a little more about him. With regard to the referendum, he read 14 columns before a literary debating society at Fremantle, and four columns of extracts were published in the *West Australian*. From what I could make out, the hon. member was not quite certain whether federation was a good thing or not, and I believe that is still his opinion, yet he is supporting it. He told me only yesterday that he doubted whether it was a good thing or not, but still he stood up here and made a blundering speech. There is no excuse for him. If I had the time and knowledge to do it I could expose these things. I could take up the report of the debates of that Convention and expose the thing from beginning to end, but I have not time to do it. I have to get my living another way. I know what plenty of these men have said, but I repeat I have not time to take up the matter.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: What does referendum mean.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Do not puzzle him.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It would mean the unsettling of every Government that adopts it, and it would mean also the unsettling of the people when any great question was brought forward. The cry all over Australia will be "go for the referendum." In the House of Representatives we should have 5 out of 75. If a measure is passed through the House of Representatives and sent down to the Senate, and the Senate reject it, it is sent back again. Then there is a conference of both Houses, and, if they disagree, a dissolution takes place. And what would that mean? Would not that be a nice state of things? For about two years matters would be at a standstill, and then we would have another referendum or perhaps another election for both Houses. These things all cost money, and this Federal Government is going to cost a great deal. The Federal Government will be carried on at a distance of two thousand miles from this colony, and how in the world can we be thought of unless it is to get something out of us? They will think of us then. What power have we with five members out of 75 in this House of Representatives? Would it not be a perfect

farce? Every member of the House, every federalist and non-federalist, must know that in a few years we must have a large population here, for we have large goldfields and people must come. There is only one place we can see at present to which a large portion of the British people are likely to go, except Western Australia, and that is Africa, where there may be considerable immigration after the war. There is a greater opening in this colony, where there has been development, which must bring people in the end, seeing that our goldfields are increasing, as they are, every day. That makes a market, and the people are bound to come. It is no use saying they are not. In the last day or two I have heard people say they are afraid the population is not going to increase, but, if our goldfields prosper, population must increase gradually. If we believe men who must know something about it, the output of our gold is going to be doubled, and that must bring population and help the development of the country. There is one other matter which many members have taken up, and it is that in not sending this Bill to the people we are not treating them with the respect we should. They say, "Why should we not send it to them and let them have a vote on it." Who placed us here? The electors. This House is an elected House.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There were 7,000 voters.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We are not nominated, but elected, and that gives us our power. We do not want to abuse our power. If we reject federation in this House, and the people are not satisfied, the question will come back again, and we have precedents for that. I believe that after satisfactory explanations have been given we shall hear very little about it, and the hon. member (Mr. Matheson) will be only too glad to drop it altogether. I think that if some of those other leaders could only get into power they would adopt very different tactics, or they would not be three months in power. We ought not to be afraid of expressing our opinion on this question, because every member has to go before his constituents for approval of his conduct. If hon. members are afraid to do their duty, the sooner the Legislative Council is done

away with the better, and the Assembly left to take the responsibility of these measures. The Legislative Council is not intended merely to correct little errors in Bills sent from another place, but has the duty of expressing an opinion on all important questions which arise. Members of the Assembly may be influenced by the fact that they will have to go before their constituents every three years, whereas members of the Legislative Council are elected for six years, and are, therefore, in a more independent position. We are placed here by election, which gives us a power we ought to exercise; and while I do not believe in abusing that power, or in taking away from the people any right which is theirs, it is our duty to act according to the best of our judgment, and give a true and independent voice on all questions which concern the welfare of the country. Hon. members who are wavering on this question ought to remember their responsibility as elected representatives, and should not allow petty jealousies connected with their own provinces to come in between them and the performance of their duty. It is acknowledged by every leading man in the country that this is the most important question that ever came before the Western Australian Parliament, and I believe there are very few members who will allow local considerations to influence them in the direction of voting for sending this Bill to the people.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: You said the other day that majorities were not often right.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But we have to abide by the rule of majorities, and it is for the other side, if they are strong enough, to prove that they are right. In Parliament we have to abide by the majority, and Parliament is a good place for a man to find his level in. Before I was returned to this House, I thought I would be able to do a good deal here, but I find that, although a member may have opinions of his own, he has to abide by the decision of the majority of his colleagues; and I do not think the majority will be very far wrong on this occasion. It is not likely that we are going to "knuckle down" to two or three hon. members, who may, however, fall in with more moderate views when we come

to the point; and I hope a solid vote will be given against federation at the present time. Mr. Matheson says the petition was signed by 300 people at Bunbury. Well, we know what that means; it means a few glasses of grog in one timber mill. I had a private conversation with Mr. Matheson the other night, but as we are public men, speaking on public matters, we must consider not men, but measures, and I feel justified in referring to what that gentleman said. When he told me that he intended to speak in support of the petition, I said I would move that the Order of the Day be discharged, to which he replied "I hope to goodness you will; it will save me a lot of trouble." That I think shows the hon. member has very little faith in his cause; and as to another member, Mr. S. J. Haynes, I hope he will read the speech he delivered in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, but which I am afraid he has forgotten.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No, I have not forgotten it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member said, I think, that it would not be advisable to accept federation at the present time.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I did not say that.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member said that federation had better be put off for some time; and if, after that speech, he votes for referring the question to the people, he will undoubtedly stultify himself, and show there is some petty jealousy existing in regard to harbour works. Are hon. members going to be actuated by such motives in a matter of this gravity, when we should all work for the common good of the country, and not sell our birthright to those at a distance, who have treated this colony with disrespect?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: What have harbour works to do with the question before the House?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is a question of Albany against Fremantle, and although the hon. member does not believe in federation himself, he appears—

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I rise to a point of order. Has the hon. member any right to impute motives to me?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. member (Mr. Burges) is imputing personal motives.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I am glad I have raised the hon. member's ire, and put some life into him, and I hope he will now look up his speech to which I have referred, when he will find that I am in the main correct in my recollection of his opinions then expressed. I think he has changed for the worse on this question.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It is the wicked influence of his constituents.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is not the wicked influence, but the powerful influence of his constituents which has affected the hon. member. They have been burning effigies of members of Parliament down at Albany lately, and if they had burned the Bill it would have been the best thing that could have happened to the country. Mr. Matheson has issued a hand-bill giving figures connected with federation, but he does not show how the loss of £600,000 is to be made up; and if he, with his ability and experience, had thought the question worth going into, he would have given some more information than is contained on this small piece of paper. This meagre one-sided hand-bill has been issued by the great advocate of federation at any price.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not advocate federation at any price.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How are the public works of the colony to be carried on when we are deprived of revenue by federation? Mr. Matheson has shown what the loss will be to this colony under the Commonwealth, but he has not shown how those losses are to be so made up so that our public works may be continued. I have a perfect right to speak on this question, because I was returned as an opponent to federation, although the gentleman who formerly held the position of Chairman of Committees in another place tried to steal a march on my constituency. That did not trouble me, but representations were made to me by people, and also by members of this House, and I went to the constituency and fought the matter out on the question of federation. I argued then that federation would ruin the country, and my opponent went round and did all he could to injure me by every political

means, though he had not the pluck to go and face the poll. He went to the towns, and then he went to the farming places, but at the latter he had a very hot reception; and it will be seen, therefore, that I have a perfect right to speak against the proposal to refer this Bill to the people.

At 6:30 the PRESIDENT left the Chair

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (continuing): I was speaking of the last election when I was returned as a member for the East province, and saying that the East province was an important part of the colony and quite as worthy of consideration as the goldfields. The Eastern districts existed years before the goldfields were known, and the people could manage to live then without them. We were, however, glad the goldfields were discovered, the discovery leading to further development, including that of railways and harbours, this enabling the settlers on the land to increase their production and open up the country. These goldfields have sprung up in a few years and great wealth has been produced; but there are other people in the country besides those on the goldfields, and they were here before the discovery of those fields. Some people seem to think that because the gold is there, everything else should be forgotten, and that the goldfields alone should have the whole and sole voice in any matter affecting the welfare of this country. These people forget, and I think some hon. members themselves—who ought to have all this information at their backs—also forget that the people of this colony opened up the country, made good roads and erected small tanks so that teams could get through and drive past these goldfields. I can refer to some of those. They were not the people who came from the other colonies, but were the young men who grew up under hardships in this colony, and they did their duty. They were doing all they could, but now these other people have come here and they boast that they found everything. It is very unfortunate that the early settlers did not pick out some of this gold. Still the gold has been found, and it has had the effect

of pushing everything forward. We must not forget, however, that our own colonists first discovered this gold and brought it under notice. I see a gentleman here—not a member of the House—who put some money into the venture and lost it before the arrival of these wonderful people from the other colonies, who turned the earth up and think “Sandgroppers” can find nothing. We are very glad to receive the fresh population, and we want three or four times the number. That is one of the reasons why we do not want to sell our birthright and be governed by people 2,000 miles away. We have only had the benefit of that a few years, and now they want us to sacrifice all our interests. They want us to sacrifice the £10,000,000 that we have borrowed principally to help on these goldfields. We may say that we have mortgaged everything in the country. We know very well, as I have already stated, the great difficulty experienced by the Government in keeping up the enormous revenue, and we have to consider not only what has been spent but what is being spent now. What are we spending now? We know very well there is one work undertaken, which must I suppose be carried through, that will add another £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 to our public debt. And is not that principally for the goldfields? Of course it is to our interest to develop the goldfields so as to enable those upon the fields to work these low-grade ores in a lot of the districts which cannot be worked without this water, but the goldfields population and those who represent them should not forget that this House has never begrudged them anything. Even now, as far as representation goes, there was a movement made in this House yesterday by the progressive party to give them increased representation in this House. That was passed by the popular Assembly. Now I come to a most extraordinary thing. What was done by a liberal-minded member who would like to send everything to the people? The other night he even compared us to the Boers and Uitlanders and yesterday when the Constitution Bill was before the House what did he do? He must have had plenty of time to think, for the question was considered nearly all the evening, but the hon. member walked over to this side of the House in every

division; so you can see that the hon. member's liberal views cannot have much weight in this Chamber. As regards federation, this colony is not situated the same as the others which have only an imaginary boundary between them, and to which the border duties are for ever a continual annoyance. We have met people in the last two or three years who have come from Victoria and New South Wales, and who say “we do not want federation, but if we were in New South Wales or Victoria we would certainly vote for it.” I would do the same. Where there are two colonies that have the same interests, people take sheep, pigs, and all sorts of things across the border at night in order to avoid border duties, and that causes people to be deceitful and even worse than that. Here we are with our great territory bordering on South Australia and reaching right through the continent, and we have no border duties at all except in the North-West, where a few thousand cattle are near the border. We are, I say, in a position altogether different from that occupied by the other colonies. We are separated from them by more than 1,000 miles by sea and we have that great stretch of dry country from the present known goldfields right to the border, to get through which would almost want a man with camels. One of the great features in relation to the question of federation is the idea that an inter-colonial railway connecting this colony with the others should be built, but we know that according to the Commonwealth Bill a State will not allow a railway to go through its own territory to its own detriment. We know from the opinions that have been expressed by the other colonies, the telegrams published in our own papers, and what has appeared in the leading papers outside this colony, that South Australia will not agree to this railway going right through to Sydney. I think it was said that if South Australia consented to an intercolonial railway line, it must run *via* Adelaide.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That would suit this colony just as well.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How could a railway going all round the continent in order to get to Queensland, suit this part of Australia, and how could such a railway pay?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It never will pay.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There are people willing to build it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I do not know where these people are, and I do not believe Mr. Matheson would take shares in the enterprise.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Yes; and I will get the money for the railway, if you will give me the concession.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Mr. Matheson now wants to say he can get the money with which to build the railway.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do say so.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I very much doubt it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is not very civil.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I doubt whether the hon. member could get the money when it came to the point, although he might get promises as has been done in other cases. We have before us the example of the Great Southern Railway, which was promoted by one of the best companies ever formed in Western Australia, and by some of the strongest men in England. But they made mistakes, and had to hand the railway over to the Government again; and then there is also the example of the Midland Railway, which runs through even better country than the Great Southern. Where is the population which will travel by the proposed intercolonial railway? The only way in which such a railway can be made to pay is by passenger traffic, and it is extremely unlikely that people would journey through this dry and dusty country from Fremantle to the Eastern colonies; but perhaps the hon. member only desires the intercolonial railway in order that his constituents may have means of deserting this colony altogether.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Ah! now you have said it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Government have already spent £10,000,000 on public works to develop the goldfields, and intend to spend four or five millions more; and it would be very ill advised to support the construction of a railway which could only be detrimental to the community generally. If this railway were constructed, Fremantle and Perth would be pretty well deserted, after a million of money has been

spent on harbour works; and such a policy would be suicidal. If we had a population of half a million it would be a different matter; because we could then bear further burdens, and there would be a possibility of an intercolonial railway giving a return on the outlay; but at present it would be a financial failure. The intercolonial railway is only a scheme of faddists, who have some idea of carrying the mails overland instead of by sea as at present; but we shall no doubt hear from hon. members who were on the Select Committee, and ascertain from them all the strong and weak points, and their addresses will enlighten the few federationists in the House. I hope the next time Mr. Matheson, who is a great advocate for federation and a business man of great ability, brings a matter of this kind before the House, he will show both sides of the measure, for in this hand-bill, while he shows a loss of £600,000, he does not show how that loss is to be made up.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not show a loss of £600,000.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Perhaps the hon. member will explain later on, but as I read the hand-bill, it only gives one side.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Both receipts and expenditure are given.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Perhaps the hand-bill is something like the balance sheets of other schemes heard of in this colony, and shows no losses, and that is a plan which must end in ruin. I am not imputing motives to the hon. member, but it is evident he thought the question not worth going into, but only issued this information to satisfy his constituents; and the House may take the document for what it is worth.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It has the imprimatur of the Government Actuary, who says the figures are all correct.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Government Actuary has since issued figures to show the position federation would place this colony in, and on these figures the Premier has changed his views altogether. The Premier, who is well-known in the political life of Australia and throughout the United Kingdom, is a man of great experience, whom everyone respects, and no one can deny that he has changed his mind on the question of federation. No

man is infallible, as is shown in the history of modern English statesmen; and the Premier, when he finds the colony he loves, and which he has done so much for, and which has made more progress under him than could have been made under any other man, will be in danger, is not ashamed to acknowledge that he has made a mistake; and all honour to him. Perhaps another mistake the Premier made was in appointing Mr. Matheson a member of the Federal Convention, because this gave the hon. member a start; but no doubt the Premier thought he was doing the country a good turn in placing part of the control in such able hands.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That was the mistake, was it?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But the Premier did not anticipate that the appointment would result in such harm to the country. We never heard much of federation from the hon. member before that. The hon. member went over to the Convention and got amongst able men, who flattered him and his ability, and the hon. member thought he could see something good looming in the distance, some aggrandisement for himself. If this colony is foolish enough to join federation, the hon. member may be one of the Ministers in the Federal Parliament: no doubt he would do credit to the position, but we do not want to see the hon. member there yet. I hope he will remain in this colony longer: he will find plenty of scope for his ability here, and he can do good. He need not go out of this colony, and I hope he will make this his adopted country, for I am sure his ability will come to the front and he will become a leader in public matters in this colony yet. I hope the hon. member will become wise and see the error of his ways. I think he is beginning to see the error of his ways now, because he is getting insincere. The hon. member may throw away all chances of gaining any support in this House. I believe I am going to be attacked pretty strongly by one member, perhaps we are going to have the angriest part of the debate yet, but I do not mind. I have only quoted statements from memory, and I believe those quotations are going to be taken up; still I am going to fight the matter out to the best of my ability. I

believed what I stated was correct; I did not say that I was positive about it, but it is all down in print, and if I have made any mistakes in quoting the hon. member I apologise. I said at the time that I could not give the exact words; that I was simply relying on my memory, but I am prepared to take the matter up if the hon. member thinks it is worth while. This is the most important question ever brought before the Parliament and people of Western Australia; no one can deny that. Learned members in another place, who have all kinds of information at their fingers' ends, who can speak on every subject which comes forward most learnedly, some of the greatest leaders in this country have acknowledged that this is the most important matter that has ever come before the Parliament and the people of the country. Do not let hon. members be afraid. Let them follow the words of that great English commander, Nelson, who said, "England expects every man this day will do his duty." Every man has his own idea of duty, but do not let hon. members be afraid. Let every West Australian do his duty to Western Australia. Every man in this House is a West Australian.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: All ought to be.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: All ought to be, and I am sure every member will do his duty.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: People have different ideas of what duty is.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Never mind; let every man do his duty and not forget that this is our own country. Do not let us get people into a state of excitement over this question, but let us do what is best for the people, what is best for their interests and the interest of their families, and the interest of the country generally. Let us consider these matters well, and let people consider this question well before they throw themselves away, before they sell their country. The people of sentiment say that we ought to be one nation, one people, one destiny. That is all very well, but can we consider such things in human life always? Is not self-preservation the first of all laws? Let us consider what we are doing for the people of this country. Shall we be doing justice to this country? We have settled some thousands of people on the lands during

the last few years; we have induced people to come here and spend their capital in taking up land, and now with one fell swoop a large proportion of the people would wipe out our existence altogether. No one can deny that federation will make a serious difference to all those in this country who are establishing new industries, especially to agriculturists, viticulturists and all the other new industries. It may be said that our industries are not large, but our population is not large at present. The population of our country a few years ago was only 40,000, it sprang suddenly to 170,000; lately we have been at a standstill but population will come and must come. Will federation do anything to increase our population? No; it will cause dissatisfaction and a spirit of unrest among the people. It has been acknowledged by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who is a bit of a turncoat sometimes, that federation will do no good. He sent a telegram to the Premier from Newcastle after the show the other day, in which he said that federation would knock land settlement into "smithereens"; and no one knows more about the land question than the Commissioner of Crown Lands does. The Commissioner of Crown Lands has tried to develop the country and to settle a lot of people on the land; we all know what he has done without referring to it, but he is afraid of the vote; he is afraid to go before the public, like a good many others who are afraid of public opinion. But I think that is what he is afraid of, because the people in his district would return him against any man. There may be something else, because we all have some ends in life, therefore we should not judge others. This House was brought into existence to stop hasty measures and to represent minorities; we may have to support a minority; this House has a right to protect minorities, and the minority in this case may be the real backbone of the country, therefore in supporting the minority we are only doing our duty.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: But we will not have a minority.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: If we had a minority we would be doing right in voting solidly on this question. We have the strength of the Assembly to back us up in this matter, although members of

the Assembly are afraid of public opinion, because they have to go before their electors every three years under the new redistribution of seats Bill. There are 44 members in the Assembly, and of that number 18 are against federation altogether; there are 13 more who are against federation, strongly against federation, some of them, but they have promised to let the Commonwealth Bill go to the people. There are 31 members out of 44 in the Assembly against federation, so that there is a majority of the Assembly opposed to federation. No one can deny that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: How many people do they represent?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They represent the country. I hope the hon. gentleman, who is an Englishman, will respect the Constitution. If the hon. member wants to refer the question of federation to the people in the right way let him vote that the question be submitted to the people at the next election. Surely that should satisfy the hon. member.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: With 2,000 people represented by 13 members as against 2,000 represented by one member!

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I do not think that statement can be made when we consider the redistribution of seats Bill.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It is not far out.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How can the hon. member substantiate such a statement. I want to see this matter of federation dealt with in a constitutional manner. The hon. member (Mr. Matheson) is an Englishman and I hope a West Australian, so that I am sure he will bow to the constitutional and proper method of procedure. We have as liberal a Constitution here as there is in any part of Australia, or in any part of the British dominions. What more does the hon. member want? Let the question go before the people at the next general election; then it can come before Parliament again. Does this important matter want to be hurried through like a fish drifting through the water? Does the hon. member want to see this matter shot through the House like a meteor flitting through the sky into the depth of the sea? Hon. members should not be in a hurry with federation. Once we adopt federation we accept it for good or evil;

we cannot go back; that is one of the chief arguments that can be submitted. With these few remarks I hope hon. members will not be afraid to vote and do their duty. I believe I am right in saying that there are a large number of members in this House who consider it their duty to prevent the adoption of federation. I hope that when it comes to the division, those members who have been agreed upon this matter will not change their views, but will vote solid. Let them not be afraid of their constituents. I am not afraid. I think that any man who goes into Parliament just for the honour and glory of it is not worthy of being there, and I should not have been here this session, because I cannot afford the time, but I stuck to it on account of this important question. I considered it my duty to do so. I consider it my duty to do all I can for the town or country I live in. I have always endeavoured to do that, and I could do a great deal more, if I had a little more wealth behind me. I would not be afraid to go to the goldfields to-morrow and speak to the most disaffected people there. I know I should receive a fair hearing. I have met thousands of these people going to the goldfields. In the early days I met 50 men coming out of York and going to the goldfields and spoke to them walking along, chatting about going with teams, and I never got an uncivil answer. Further than that, I remember once meeting men who were stuck up in a bog. There was about a mile of them with teams and tanks and all sorts of things. We commenced talking about things, but I did not tell them I was chairman of the Roads Board (laughter). Afterwards some one said, "Who is looking after this road?" and the reply was, "Here is the man." Notwithstanding the trouble they were in, they never said a disrespectful word. I have met hundreds of these men. The prominent position of the federation question is only the result of a state of excitement; and who is leading these people on? I am going over the same thing again, but I must, because it is so important. Who has led them on? Two or three men who want to gain their own ends. Two or three men have done the mischief, and they have done it, not because they want federation, but for another purpose. Do not forget that.

That is the whole thing. That is what has brought this matter so prominently before the public. Two or three prominent men have gone up to the goldfields and urged these men on, fanning the flame. I do not think it was advisable to do so, and I am not afraid to make that statement. If they really believed that federation would do everything for them or for this country, I should look upon it in a different light, but we must be guided by the speeches that are delivered, by the correspondence, by letters from all sides, by leading articles in the papers of this colony, and by what has appeared in leading papers of the other colonies. Some of the principal papers are abusing us and our leading men. We had an instance of that in the last day or two. Leading politicians of the neighbouring colonies have abused our public men because they have thought fit to go back on this matter, and take a different view from that which they previously entertained. But we are not going to be afraid. We are here to do our duty, and to look after the general interests of the country, and not to be led by any excited part of the community in the East. We are not to be led by a small portion of the community at another end of the country just because the mail steamers are going to be taken away from them. We know there is a disaffected people there. Of course all are for themselves. Perhaps the Government are to blame in some of these matters which have caused this disaffection, but surely that is not going to induce this House to pass a vote which would be injurious to the whole country, and put Western Australia back for years so far as regards settlement and increase of population. As I have already stated, I hope members will vote for what must be for the best interests of the country. As far as we can see at present, there is no occasion for us to join federation now. We can join it just as well a few years hence, and not be bound down as we should be now. We know that if we accept federation now, we must accept it on the terms laid down by the Commonwealth Bill. The Premiers are not likely to agree to the Bill as amended by the Select Committee, and I say it is not advisable to accept the Bill as amended either by the Premiers or by the Select Committee, because it

does not give the country what it wants. I do not think this question will be settled to-night, though it may be, but I hope hon. members will consider it and vote as they think best for the country, acting conscientiously for the general good of the community. I do not think I will take up the time of the House any longer, but I support the amendment moved by Mr. Whitcombe.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): In considering this petition it is difficult indeed to confine oneself entirely to it. For my part I would much sooner have seen the same procedure adopted here as was adopted in another place, where I think the Commonwealth Bill was first discussed, and afterwards this petition. I know the feeling of the House was properly gauged as far as the petition was concerned, and little discussion took place on the petition itself. It is difficult for members to refrain from going into the whole matter when discussing the question whether we shall accede to this petition or not. I may state at the outset that I am against acceding to the petition, and that I intend to support Mr. Whitcombe's amendment. It is only right that I should give my reasons for being against granting the petition. Outside the House it has been repeatedly stated—and much capital has been made out of the assertion—that we have no right to prevent the Bill and the petition referring to the Bill from going to the people. My memory travels back to 1896, when a little duckling of an Enabling Bill was brought in here under pretences that are not fully covered by the word "misleading." It was stated that it was only a harmless little measure.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Which one do you mean?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The Enabling Act. That is the one we are working under.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is out of existence.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is not. It is the measure under which we sent 10 representatives from this colony. I repeat that it is not out of existence, but is the very Act we are working under. It is the Act that guides our present movement, and I have never heard of its being out of existence in any way. It is, I assert, the Act under which we sent 10 representa-

tives. Ten representatives of what? Not the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You helped the vote.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Yes, foolish fellow as I was, because I was assured the measure was introduced to enable representatives from Western Australia to take part in the framing of a constitution we might some day be glad to enter into. Everyone understood that it was not to commit the colony in any way to federation, and we voted for that Enabling Bill on those grounds. To show that it was intended that those representatives should not go too far, I may say we find that under Clause 28 of the Enabling Act, any Commonwealth Bill or Bill approved of by the Convention was afterwards to be submitted to this Parliament by the Governor, and then, if this Parliament thought fit, to the people. I maintain that we have now reached a stage at which we have a right to say whether the Commonwealth Bill shall go to the people or not. That right is fixed for us by the Enabling Act passed in this House in 1896, which I again say is the measure we are working under. That being so, what force is there in the statement that we have no right to prevent the Bill from going to the people? We have a perfect right by law. Again, we have to face the fact that at that time there was no clamour for the colony to be represented at that Convention, what was done being purely the outcome of one or two efforts made by gentlemen interested in the question. I do not remember being asked the question at the hustings. The subject of federation was not brought up in any way. I dare say that when we approved of that Bill we were playing with fire, and we did not know the extent to which the matter would go. The principal leader of the movement in this colony—the right hon. gentleman who has been referred to many times this evening—assured me that he had no more idea of Western Australia joining with South Australia or any of the other colonies than he had of flying.

A MEMBER: Who was that?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The right hon. the Premier. He assured me when the Enabling Bill was passed that he could not possibly advocate federation, but he would like to take part in framing a

constitution which would be suitable to us some day if we joined. I repeat that we were induced to pass the Enabling Bill under pretences which are not fully covered by the word "misleading." I do not wish to labour this matter, but I want to draw attention to it, because there seems to be an impression abroad that we have no right to prevent the Bill from going to the people. Clause 28 of the Enabling Act provides that if Parliament approve of it, then and then only shall the people be permitted to give their decision. As this amendment deals with the Commonwealth Bill in the form I desire, namely, that the Bill should not go to the people, I shall support it. As far as my constituents are concerned, I am not afraid. I have thought the matter out deeply, but I am not going to repeat the arguments, because members have heard them, and I do not want to tire the House. I take it that every hon. member has made up his mind, and I hope he will not fail to have the necessary courage to vote in accordance with his own ideas. I cannot believe in a man who says, "I do not believe one bit in federation, but I am not going to insult the people by taking the question from them." I believe in a man who says, "I do not believe in federation. I have the right to prevent the Bill from going to the people, and I am going to exercise that right." I intend to exercise that right as far as I am able, and if I never enter this House any more I reckon I shall have done my duty to the country by supporting this amendment.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON (North): After the able and exhaustive manner in which the question had been dealt with, I shall not say much, beyond that I intend to support the amendment, because I do not believe in federation for this colony at the present time. There are two questions which we should ask ourselves: first, will federation do this colony any good; and, secondly, will any harm happen to the colony if we do not federate immediately? To each of these questions, I think the reply must be in the negative. I oppose federation especially in the interests of the North, because it is evident that if the Southern districts of the colony will suffer through federation, the North will suffer to a much greater degree. What will become of the Northern industries, including that of pearling,

if the control of the colony be given over to the Federal Parliament? The North will be wiped out completely; because, difficult as it is now to get anything done for that part of the colony, it will be much more difficult under a Federal Parliament. It is said that under intercolonial free-trade we may possibly get a few commodities cheaper, but it must not be forgotten that there will probably be a prohibitive tariff against all English and foreign goods, a great number of which are used in the Northern districts.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There will be a duty of £5 per ton on sugar, for the benefit of Queensland.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: After carefully considering the question, I can see no occasion to federate just now, and I vote for the amendment.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): I desire to say a few words on the motion and on the amendment, but I do not intend to enter into a dissertation as to whether federation be a good or bad thing, because that question is not before the House, and, moreover, it has been thrashed out pretty fully not only in this chamber and throughout the length and breadth of the colony, but also in five other colonies. I have listened very carefully to-night to the lengthy speeches by hon. members, some of whom have touched on almost every conceivable aspect on the question; and the general tenor of these speeches seems to be that we do not trust the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We will trust the people at an election.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Then the hon. member should vote for granting the prayer of the petition.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No; an election is a different thing altogether.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Who signed the petition? That is the chief question.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The petition asks that federation shall be referred to the electors, and it was Mr. Whitecombe, I think, who said that the signatures should have been verified by some kind of affidavit or declaration, while innuendoes or statements were made that certain dishonourable persons had signed several times.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not this petition we are speaking of now, but the petition signed by 23,000 people.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: At any rate, the petition before the House is in order, and has to be received.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That does not make it any more valuable.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: As to the original petition, I should be very sorry to think men would descend to the dishonourable trick mentioned.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: How about the goldfields? What about the alluvial men?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: There are men amongst the miners who are equally as honourable as the hon. member.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Then they have never shown up.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: There are good and bad in all classes of the community, and it is no use, because of a few black sheep, condemning the 23,000 signatures to the petition. If it be allowed that 3,000 dishonourable people have signed the petition more than once—and it is said that a member of another place admitted having signed the petition twice, we will assume by mistake—that leaves 20,000 genuine signatures to a respectfully worded petition that the question of federation be referred to the people. We are told that if the people vote for federation the leaders in the Eastern colonies, who will be in the Federal Parliament, will stoop to dishonourable practices, and that this colony will be ruined because the other colonies are going to plunder us.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: This colony will have no power in the Federal Parliament.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: We will have just the same power as 4,000,000 other people have.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes, in the Senate.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: In the Senate.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Ah, that is it!

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Our representation in the House of Representatives under the present Bill, is as strong as possible.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is as five to 75.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The four small States of South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, and this colony could by a combined vote, surely preponderate, or, at any rate, preserve the balance.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not against the interests of individual colonies.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Certain hon. members do not give credit to the Federal Parliament for acting in one instance in an honourable manner; but surely men will not prostitute their office and vote dead against the interests of Western Australia.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: They do not know this colony.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I do not wish to go into a dissertation on federation, but I do not mind telling the House my opinion. I believe as conscientiously as any member in the House, that federation is the best thing that could happen to the colony, and that the sooner we get it the better. I do not trim, nor do I wish to influence the country by bringing in amendments as, in my opinion, has been done in another place simply in order to cause delay.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: You are trimming.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I am not, and I never have trimmed.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: I refer you to your speech on the Address-in-reply.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I thank the hon. member for mentioning that, because it has been referred to by Mr. Burgess, who made an absolute statement that I was against federation, against referring the Bill to the people, and in favour of delay. I then interjected as strongly as I could that the statement was absolutely false, and I ask the indulgence of the House to read what I did say on the Address-in-reply.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That would not be according to rule.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I know Rule 126 is against me.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We will take your word for it.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I am not appealing to Mr. Hackett, but to the President.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot read a speech made this session.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Then may I be permitted to indicate what I did say.

THE PRESIDENT: That would not be out of order.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: On that occasion I drew attention to the fact—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Do not read.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The hon. member ought not to laugh, seeing he has made a gross mistake, which he ought to be honourable enough to admit.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I did not make a mistake.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: You did, sir.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member says I made a gross mistake; but, though I did not give his exact words—

THE PRESIDENT: It is only a difference of opinion between you.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: On that occasion, in drawing attention to a speech made in the House as to referring the Bill to the people, I said the speech seemed to portend that the question would be put off for an indefinite period. I said I was not in favour of that delay, but in favour of referring the Bill to the people and of introducing an enabling Bill this session, so long as the electors had a reasonable opportunity of understanding clearly and intelligently what they were voting on. I pointed out that we might have to wait indefinitely, if we waited for all the other colonies to join, but I clearly and emphatically stated I was in favour of introducing an enabling Bill this session.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: You advocated delay.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I advocated delay in the manner I suggested, namely, that after the enabling Bill had passed, the people should be —

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Bill is not passed yet.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: It is not, but had I had my way there would have been no delay in introducing the Bill, and giving the electors every opportunity of considering it; at any rate, on that occasion my opinion clearly was that the Enabling Bill should be introduced this session. That was in July, and practically five months have now gone over, in which time the people have gleaned a good deal of knowledge with regard to federation. A select committee has investigated the question, and an object lesson has been afforded in Queensland, which I fancy some hon. members, who were anti-federalists, were hoping would not have been afforded. The contention then was that we should wait until Queensland had joined, but now that Queensland has

joined, other delays are mentioned; and the petition simply asks what is the right of every British elector, namely, the right to express his opinion on a very important matter.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: This is not a British matter.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: It has been said the referendum is not an ordinary constitutional procedure, but the referendum has been adopted by Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland, and the people of those colonies are equally clear-headed, as law-abiding, and as constitutional as we are.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: And those colonies are ten times more developed.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The hon. member is talking of the country. But it is not a question of the country. It is a question of trusting the people. If hon. members will not trust the people, will not trust the vote of the electors who have the franchise at the present time, I think they must be afraid. Members of this House desired to usurp the rights of the people. The people ask, under the petition, in a very strong manner that they shall have a similar opportunity to what the other colonies have had.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The people never asked us to pass the Enabling Bill.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: That does not matter. We have a petition which has been presented to this House, and are we to flout the people over that?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Was it presented to this House?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I understand the petition is practically before the House, and it is signed by 23,000 persons. But I go beyond that, and it is greater than a petition of 23,000 persons, in my opinion—and every person has the right to his opinion—a majority of the people strongly demand that this Bill should be referred to the people.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Subject to their constitutional rights.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: They demand the right of saying "yes," or "no," on this question. A majority may be against federation or in favour of it, as I think a majority will be. I urge upon the House not to play with the people like that, but to give them the opportunity which they demand, of saying "yes" or "no," the same as the people of the other colonies have had.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Who gave it to them—not the Convention.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Parliaments, the members of which have had as much experience as those in the Parliament of this country, and the people of the other colonies have decided by large majorities in favour of federation. I am not discussing federation now; I do not want to discuss it. The hon. member (Mr. Burgess) discussed everything, and if I followed him through his speech we should have a very long evening. I urge on the House to pause before they refuse the prayer of the petition. It has been said that the 23,000 persons who signed the petition are not West Australians—that they are 'tothersiders.

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

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The hon. member has said so on many occasions, and the hon. member has also said that a number of these persons would levant as quickly as they came.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: These people have no status to ask that the question be submitted to them.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I know that a large number of the electors in the province which I represent signed the petition. Seventy-five per cent. of the people in the Southern Province demand that the Bill should go to the people, but the members of this House seem to think that the people of this colony are not fit to decide this question.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Do not bark up that tree.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The hon. member should bark a little better when money Bills come before the House. It comes to this: that members will not trust the people. It is said that the people are clearly against federation. If that is so, what is there to fear? Why distrust the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is a waste of time.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I feel strongly that we are distrusting the people. The speeches which have been made seem to indicate that anyone in favour of federation is a vagabond.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That is your opinion, not ours.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: That the people are incompetent to vote on this question.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: You are the only one who has expressed that opinion.

HON. J. S. HAYNES: If the hon. member had watched public opinion he would not have spoken in the strain 'he did to-night. In my district at the present time 75 per cent.—I do not wish to exaggerate, but I know there are more—have asked that the Bill should go to the people. I do not say the people are in favour of federation, but they desire the same opportunity that the people of four of the other colonies have had, that is that they shall have the right of saying "yes" or "no" on the question of federation.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What is the good of Parliament then?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Parliament should recognise the feelings and desires of the people.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Show the constitutional right to have a referendum.

HON. F. J. HAYNES: It cannot be found within the four corners of the British constitution I admit, but the other colonies have adopted the referendum.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: What have they to do with this colony. They are federating, we are not if we can help it.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: So far as the other colonies are concerned they have had this privilege. We call ourselves West Australians, people in the other colonies designate themselves by other names, but I look upon myself as an Australian. I have lived in four of the colonies, and after hearing the expressions of members to-night with reference to their fellow colonists on the other side I consider the remarks uncalled for.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The people in the other colonies have been insulting us all their lives, and are insulting us still.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: In the other colonies there are as considerate and generous-hearted men as ever came to this country.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I do not acknowledge that.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The goldfields people who have been referred to from time to time have come over here to better themselves no doubt. I suppose we all desire to do that. It has been said that these people have no true stake in the country; and no doubt a propor-

tion of these men, when the gold is exhausted, will levant. A great many people have come over to settle in this colony, and they have settled both on the goldfields and elsewhere; why should these people be prevented from having a voice on this question of federation?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The people settled on the land do not want federation.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: If that is so why not give them an opportunity of voting?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Do not dodge.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Do it constitutionally.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I am not dodging, and this is the first time I have been accused of such a thing. I am urging that the prayer of the petition should be acceded to, and I think reasonable men will admit that the people's demands should be granted. The public demand, or the electors demand, that they should have an opportunity of exercising their vote on the question of federation. And I feel satisfied they will exercise that vote earnestly, intelligently, and for the good of the country. I cannot be a party in this House to anything except giving the electors an opportunity of saying "yes" or "no." We do not want "yes" or "no" with certain qualifications, because we all know we cannot get the amendments at the present time. As far as I am personally concerned my desire is that this matter shall be referred to the people, and if the people vote for federation and we join the Commonwealth I have that confidence in those who will be elected to the Federal Parliament to feel that they will mete out justice not only to Western Australia, but to every part of federated Australia. I should be sorry to think it will be otherwise. I cannot imagine that it will.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But justice would ruin us.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I do not think so. If we federate and become one of the five States we would all practically be on the same footing. We would be under the same law and have the same taxes and there would be uniformity throughout Australia. And not only that but there will be a combination, and combination means strength. If I thought that this colony would be ruined by federation I

would not advocate federation as I do to-night.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It will put the colony back, anyhow.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I think federation will be the best thing that can happen to this colony. I give every other hon. member credit for thinking as conscientiously as I do. I do not want to descend to abuse and inuendo, but there have been abuse and inuendo against members of this House and the people of the colony. We should believe everybody is acting conscientiously. Some people may think federation a bad thing, but I think it will be a good thing. I desire as a legislator to exercise my right, and I urge the House to grant the prayer of the petition of the electors of the colony, so that they shall have an opportunity of saying yes or no on this important question. I do not propose to discuss the question further at the present time, but I earnestly urge that the prayer of the petition be acceded to.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (in reply): As no other hon. member desires to address the House, I shall deal shortly with a few of the remarks. A great point seems to be made that the referendum is not constitutional, and that the only way we can get a constitutional vote on the question is by submitting this matter of federation to the people at an election of members for another place.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: A dissolution.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: By means of a dissolution. The object members have in making the suggestion is as apparent as noonday.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not in my case.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In the case of Mr. Burgess, it is more apparent than in the case of anyone else.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member is aware, and no one is more aware, that if this matter is settled or attempted to be settled by reference to the electors at an ordinary election of Parliament, a minority of the voters in the colony have the power of returning a majority of legislators.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not under the new Electoral Bill.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No one knows it better than the hon. member.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I deny it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I say it is a fact. The majority of the voters of this colony are absolutely disfranchised under that measure which is absurdly called a Reform Bill. It is very clever to say under these circumstances that the matter should be referred to a general election, and a very safe thing too, because those gentlemen know that the voters in the country who have a constitutional right to be heard on this question of adopting a constitution will be absolutely muzzled. The result will be that some two or three thousand people will return a majority of the members for the colony, and the balance will return two or three members.

A MEMBER: The goldfields have a third of the representation in the Lower House.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: And what proportion have they of voters? Has the hon. member ever formed any estimate of the number? I have the latest returns up to July, and the people on the goldfields are practically the same. The goldfields in July contained, within a fraction, half the voters in the country, and what is their representation going to be? A beggarly seven or eight members. That is what the hon. member wishes to secure. He wishes to secure a vote which would be absolutely misleading from beginning to end, and he comes before us and pretends he is animated by his generosity and desire for constitutional procedure. That is the object in view.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Nothing of the kind. I positively deny it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Dempster has asked what is the referendum. I can tell him what the referendum is. It is a survival of the very oldest form of voting known.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Fallen into disuse.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Truly; because owing to the impossibility of travelling over large areas of ground it was impossible to obtain a vote of the people by voice on any question, and the system of representation by Parliament grew up in consequence.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: And it is a better method.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Now this distance has been swept away. You are dealing with a period in which we have

the electric telegraph, railways, and the postal system, which places the whole of the colony within a few days' journey of Perth. It is now possible in every civilised country to go back to the old, and in many ways desirable, principle of the referendum. It enables a vote of the people to be taken, and overrides any little clique in a capital which might muzzle the electors of the country simply owing to accidental circumstances. I will take this colony as an example. When this colony was founded the people on the coast could control the country, and the people on the coast are now taking care that in this so-called Reform Bill they shall control the country. Those who have brought prosperity to the country are the people on the goldfields. This is not a goldfields question, but I want to bring that fact prominently before the House. This is a question in which the whole of the colony is concerned, and the voters of the goldfields are not the only people who are calling for this referendum. A majority of the voters throughout the whole of the colony are calling for it, and that is why hon. members have been heard to get up one by one and express their personal opinion against federation in the first place, and against referring the Bill to the people in the second place. They have been perfectly candid, and have not concealed from our intelligence the fact that they recognise that the majority are against them.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We do not admit that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If so, why take advantage of the power accident has given us to prevent the people from voting on the question, and to prevent the voice of the majority from being heard?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We do not admit that the majority are against us, but the procedure is unconstitutional.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Why do they object?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Because it is unconstitutional.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Does the hon. member think the country will be misled by a statement that he has the greatest desire for constitutional procedure?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That is it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Does anyone in this House believe it to be a fact?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: One does. I do. I can carry belief enough for the whole House in that respect.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The referendum is particularly suitable to a case such as that which exists at present. This is a case of adopting a constitution. It is not a case of dealing with ordinary legislation which may be repealed or amended next session, or dealt with in any way that Parliament likes. As some hon. member pointed out to-night, it is a question of dealing with a constitution which is going to be the constitution of Australia for all time, except so far as the Australian nation choose to alter it in referendum hereafter. For that reason the process of reference to the people by referendum is the only process by which the matter can be satisfactorily dealt with. Look at the result of our experiences in the past, where Parliament attempted to control these matters, taking even discussion out of the hands of the people. Every member of this House, whether opposed to federation or not, must be prepared to admit that the country has been betrayed by its representatives at the Federal Convention. It is freely said all over Perth and all over the colony that, if proper attention had been given to federation by our representatives at the Convention, we should not be in the position we are to-day.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What an admission.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It is stated in the Press and everywhere that had our representatives held out for the terms which they now say are essential, those terms would have been granted.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: There would have been no delegates sent out of the colony, because the thing was not desirable.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The House sent delegates, arrogating to itself in this matter the rights of the people. Do you think that, if the people had dealt with this question, the representatives would have neglected their duties? Do you think the representatives of the people would have sat down day by day and allowed one man to do all the talking? Do you suppose that when the representatives got back here they would have

risen in their places and boasted, as some hon. gentleman boasted, that the representatives of this colony had only spoken twice? One hon. gentleman said, "Needless to say, I did not speak." Were those who treated the people like that, representatives of the people? No. For those reasons, if for no others, this matter should be referred to the people, and not left to be dealt with by the electors at a general election in which two or three thousand have an opportunity of returning 13, whilst another body of two or three thousand return only one.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: One wrong will not justify an irregularity.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: They only represent a small portion of the colony, although they boast of more population.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will deal with reasons hon. members have given why the petition should not be granted, and nothing could be more ridiculous than one of the reasons submitted by Mr. Burgess. That hon. member said he would not consent to grant the petition, because it had been signed by clergy of every denomination.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It is no use for the hon. member to assert he did not say it, because I wrote it down as he said it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I deny it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have no doubt it will be found in *Hansard*.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I said those reverend gentlemen had assisted in inducing people at street corners to sign the petition.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: He proceeded to paint the picture of the position the agriculturists and viticulturists would be in, if this petition were granted. No evidence of any sort or kind has been adduced in this House to prove that would be the case.

HON. H. LUKIN: What about the evidence before the Select Committee?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I say the evidence before the Select Committee did not bear out any assumption that the agriculturists or viticulturists would be ruined. On the contrary, the evidence before the Select Committee was, to my mind, to this effect, that federation would not change the climate; and I suppose the hon. gentleman would admit that this

colony occupies an exceptional position for agricultural produce owing to the climate. Evidence was brought out at length that the people who came here from the other colonies came more or less for the very reason that they were able to depend year after year upon an absolutely certain rainfall. Evidence was produced that this certainty of rainfall was the prime factor in agricultural success.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Had the price of produce anything to do with it?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The price of produce will, within a year or two, be governed by the markets of the world, and no one knows it better than the hon. member. It will not be governed by the duties put upon wheat. The hon. member will have to compete with the world. Very likely even this year there will be a surplus.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I cannot speak with authority, but I have seen it stated in the paper that there is every probability of it.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Which paper?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I cannot say.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Was it a good authority?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I take it to be as good as any newspaper authority is. Under these circumstances the prices will not help the hon. member. Reference has been made to new-comers. Mr. Burgess spoke of them, saying that the new-comers from New South Wales were opposed to federation for this colony, though in favour of it in their own. Mr. Foster, from Albany, explained that, saying that these people came to him and said, "With federation this colony will become known; the advantages of the climate and soil will become known, and we shall have to compete not with the produce of the other colonies, but with our own friends coming over here and producing." That was Mr. Foster's evidence. The hon. member will find it is so.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Absurd.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member says it is absurd. It does not suit his book. He does not agree with it. The hon. member then went on to say that federation would lead eventually to a railway to Adelaide, and that Fremantle

would be deserted, and he could not support such a suicidal policy. Those are the reasons that actuated the hon. member in opposing a reference of the Bill to the people.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Those are not all my reasons.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: He said the railway from Fremantle to Adelaide would ruin Fremantle. I leave that to the House as a remarkable illustration of the hon. member's capacity. He said that a population of half a million would be required in this country before a railway was justified.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Before it will pay for the axle grease.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Dempster, in an exceedingly temperate speech, advocated an appeal to the reason of the voters. He said, "Make an appeal to their reason; go up and talk to them." But what on earth is the good of the hon. member making a suggestion of that sort, when with the very same breath he denies them the right to vote when he has convinced them, because that is practically the position the hon. member takes up? That is so, unless he means to say, "appeal to their reason to ask them not to vote." That would be a most remarkable proposition. He is going to these enlightened gentlemen on the fields to appeal to them not to ask to vote on the question, because it will be prejudicial to the colony for them to vote. The question before the House is whether the people shall be allowed to vote.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Whether federation will do them good or not.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: People are asking to vote, and it is for that he is going to appeal to their reason. In addition, he objects to federation because the markets will be flooded. But what does that amount to? That amounts to the old story of the producer and the consumer. Nothing can be more welcome to every consumer in this colony than to have the products cheapened, and the result of federation will be to cheapen them, which the hon. member clearly recognises, as shown by his own utterances.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It would ruin farming.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is the reason he refuses to submit the Bill to the

people. He is afraid that produce will be cheapened. He says that the market will be flooded and that prices will come down.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: So will wages.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There is nothing whatever to prove that wages will come down. Witness after witness, even on the hon member's own side, were obliged to admit that wages would not materially come down; and in support of my statement I can refer hon. members to the report of the Joint Committee. A number of witnesses, it is true, said that wages would be reduced; but an equal number of anti-federalists said wages would not, though these latter witnesses would have willingly given other testimony if they could, in honour, have done so.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It is the experience of the world that wages come down, under the circumstances.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The experience of the world is that wages are going up, and Mr. Crowder, with his world-wide knowledge, is a bit astray.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: Wages go down where living is cheap.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If that be so, then I suppose living has a tendency to get dearer; but I am not prepared to argue that point. All I can say is that throughout the world, wages have a tendency to rise.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: I am glad to hear it, because I may want a billet soon.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member may have some difficulty in getting one. Mr. Lukin, like all the other gentlemen who have spoken, was straightforward when he said he was opposed to the Bill being submitted to the people because the people were disaffected and the measure would probably be carried. Fancy how wrong things must be in the colony, when an hon. member can get up and say, "We must not refer this matter to the people because they are disaffected." Disaffected to whom? Disaffected to Parliament? Is that what the hon. member means? Because that is the only reason he gives to justify his action. If the people are disaffected to Parliament it shows that Parliament no longer enjoy the confidence of the people; and rightly so. Even Mr. Burges was obliged to

admit that injustice is being done to a very large body of people in the colony, through the new Electoral Bill, and he twitted hon. members, federalists amongst them, for having negatived a proposal to increase the number of representatives in this House. Is it surprising that people are disaffected in such a case?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Federation will not alter that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Federation is not going to alter that, but Mr. Lukin gave the disaffection of the people as a reason why he was inclined to vote against the motion. He suggested that the people would vote in favour of the Bill in order to revenge themselves; but he did not use those exact words, and I am open to correction.

HON. H. LUKIN: My argument was that the disaffection of a section of the community was a reason why we should not abrogate our functions, as an Upper House, of deciding this matter.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is practically what I said.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No; what you said was quite different.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Mr. Lukin said that the disaffection was a good reason why the Bill should not be remitted to the people.

HON. H. LUKIN: I said that was a reason why we should not abrogate our function.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Our function of stopping the majority from expressing their views? That is a function Mr. Lukin and other gentlemen take on themselves, with the object of muzzling the majority of the people of the colony.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It is the function of acting constitutionally, and not otherwise. Give us a reason why we should depart from constitutional practice.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Exception has been taken to the people who signed the petition with 23,000 signatures.

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

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Of course Mr. Crowder says "quite right too." We understand him, and are prepared for that opinion; but it is well recognised by everybody, except Mr. Crowder, that every citizen of any British colony has a right to petition Parliament. Nobody limits the right to petition Parliament to the few favoured people whom the small

clique at the coast have entrusted with votes, because that would be reducing to a farce the right of petitioning Parliament. The right of petitioning Parliament is open to every British citizen in every British colony, and more than that, the right of petitioning the Imperial Parliament belongs to every British citizen. Do not let any hon. member suppose that a person who comes to this colony and becomes a Western Australian, as I have done, loses his right to petition the Imperial Parliament, because that right remains open to every man so long as he lives and remains a British citizen. I have no doubt that Mr. Crowder will say that because I am not living in England I have no right to petition the British Parliament; the argument is the same.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not after federation.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will withdraw the expression if it be Parliamentary, but really it is too ludicrous for Mr. Burgess to say that after federation a British subject in the colony will lose his right to petition the Imperial Parliament, and it only shows how utterly ignorant that member is of the axioms of federation.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The hon. member has no right to sign the petition three times.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I did not sign the petition three times.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Some people did.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I have only heard of one member of another place who signed the petition more than once. But, taking Mr. Haynes's suggestion, suppose we knock off 3,000 names, or, say, 10 per cent., for duplicate signatures, that leaves 20,000 genuine signatures, and nobody is prepared to assert that in a petition of this sort it is possible to prevent duplication. People sign more than once for fun, or for mischief, or friends of hon. members, who are anti-federalists, may do it for spite.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No hon. member would do that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not suggest any hon. member would, but I say their friends may do so, simply to be able to go to, say, Mr. Dempster and point out that a person has signed four or five times. The fact remains that by

this petition 23,000 citizens, more or less, of this State desire to express their views in the same way as have the people in the rest of Australia. If the process of voting by referendum has been found acceptable to the older colonies, I absolutely fail to see why the constitutional practice of Great Britain should be raised as an argument against the process in this colony. Mr. Richardson objects to federation because the people in the North would not approve of it; but I do not propose to dwell on that aspect of the case.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: Federation would wipe the North out.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If so, it would wipe out 171 electors.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: I do not mean the electors: I say federation would wipe out the north country.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I fail to see how federation is going to wipe out the north country. I fail to see why anybody should leave the Northern district because of federation throughout Australia. These are rash statements people make, who wish to prejudice the case, but they do not adduce one single word of evidence in support. Is it to be supposed the pearl fisheries will dwindle, the pearl oyster cease to form, or people desist gathering the oyster, because of federation?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Pearl fisheries confer no votes.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: But pearl fishing is the industry of the North.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No, no.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: There are the goldfields.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Sandalwood gathering is another industry of the North, but will that product cease to be exported on account of federation? The long and short of the matter is that every member who has spoken to-night has been actuated by self-interest in one direction or another.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: What about the other side?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I refer to every member who has spoken, and I do not wish to except myself.

HON. H. LUKIN: Give us credit for a little more than self-interest.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not think I can refer the attitude of hon.

members to more than self-interest, because, after all, hon members have simply expressed individual opinions, and I express mine in exactly the same way. I believe federation is going to benefit Perth, benefit Fremantle, benefit the gold-fields, and benefit the whole colony. That is my belief, and for that reason I advocate this Bill being referred to the people, and I further believe that there will be a majority, indeed that there is a majority of the electors in the colony who desire federation.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: You are wrong.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Gentlemen on the other side equally believe that federation is going to kill the colony. They are all interested in the colony, and very naturally take what steps they can to prevent what is, from their point of view, an undesirable termination to their existence. Under federation they all expect to die in the workhouse, if their utterances are to be believed, or that they will have to quit the country.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They will ship at a shilling a month and get out.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is the view which the hon. member takes of federation, and other hon. members who have spoken on the subject are tarred with the same brush, only some believe federation will be to their advantage, while others believe it will be to their loss. I can only say I hope the House will not be so foolish as to give any support, or at least the support of the majority, to Mr. Whitcombe.

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

Ayes	4
Noes	13

Majority against	9
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AYES.
Hon. F. T. Crowder
Hon. S. J. Haynes
Hon. A. P. Matheson
Hon. A. Briggs (Teller).

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

Second question—that the words of the amendment be inserted, namely, "That at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of the colony"—stated by the PRESIDENT:

On motion by Hon. J. W. HACKETT, debate adjourned until the next Wednesday.

BANK HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from previous sitting.

New Clause:

HON. S. J. HAYNES (in charge of the Bill) moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 2: "The words 'Whit Monday,' contained in the schedule of The Bank Holidays Act, 1884, are hereby repealed."

Clause put and passed.

Schedule—agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-40 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

First question thus negatived, and the words struck out.