

those emoluments of office. I again draw the attention of the public to the fact that up to the time I opposed the Midland Railway purchase I was held up by this journal as being rather an important public man who had sought to do his duty. The editor of that journal sought me privately and asked me to support the purchase of the railway. I refused; hence these persecutions.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

NINTH DAY OF DEBATE.

THE AMENDMENTS.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): Contrary to the usual practice adopted by speakers in the House during the debate on a no-confidence motion to attempt to put up a record for the length of their speeches, I am desirous of making a record for having taken up less time than any other speaker in this debate. Let me show first the position of parties in this House. When we met last session we had 22 Labour members and four Independents on one side of the House, and 23 on the opposite side. The Independents having decided to support the Government during that session, the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House were reluctantly compelled to retain their present position. I am at a loss why they are so anxious to come to this side and turn us out; for they certainly adorn the benches opposite far better than they could the benches on this side of the House. Prior to the meeting of Parliament this session, certain public statements were made by the leader of the Opposition that the Government would be challenged at the earliest opportunity. What does this no-confidence motion mean? It appears to me nothing more nor less than an invitation to the four gentlemen who hold the balance of power in this House and who are responsible for keeping the Labour party where they are now, to leave this side of the House and go over to the party on the other side of the House. If the Independents are willing to follow the leader of the Opposition, then he wins. If they are feeling more at home with the party on this side of the Chamber, then the hon. gentleman

loses nothing, but will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has kept faith with his public utterances that he would challenge the House, and that he has put the question to the test in this Chamber. Just here I should like to refer to a report in last Monday's *Morning Herald* which was referred to by the member for Dundas. I wish to reiterate that statement. It was as follows:—

Referring to the Independents, he said they should have either thrown in their lot with the Government or joined the Opposition, and thereby have secured for the country a stable Government for at least the life of the present Parliament. He expected that if a dissolution took place the Labour party would be blamed for it, which would be very unfair. If he thought the Labour party would not be blamed for a dissolution, he would say, "Let one come"; but if the party were to be charged with bringing one about, he would say, "Avoid it at almost any cost." It was a crying shame and a degradation to politics that 50 men could not carry on the business of the country for at least three years. They should have a stable Government to carry on until the end of the present Parliament at least.

That statement was taken up by the member for Dundas the other evening.

MR. MORAN: I think he was wrong.

MR. BOLTON: I thought so, and I think it is due to me to read it to the House and ask what there is to take exception to. The member for Dundas considers that the Premier should shoulder these remarks. I do not see what there is to shoulder; but I object to the Premier shouldering them. I am quite prepared to take the responsibility, and I go farther and say that these remarks will be indorsed by the public of the State, and that had these gentlemen who hold the balance of power in this House early in this debate said whom they were prepared to support, the debate need not have gone on to such a length. I readily admit that I should be sorry to see the Government turned out of power; but if the Government are to be superseded by the gentlemen on the opposite side of the Chamber it will not hurt me personally. If I have to sit in Opposition I shall endeavour to do my duty just as well as when I was supporting this Government. During the debate there has been a large amount of repetition and reiteration. For that reason I do not propose to mention at all the indictments against the Government. I

take it that the members of the Government are well able to answer these charges, and if not they should be. There are items in the proposals of the Government with which I am not in accord; but I claim, as every member of this House claims, that I have my freedom of voice and vote against these proposals just as freely as any member in this House. For one thing I am entirely opposed to the construction or the suggestion of a floating dock at Fremantle. I do not intend to go into the question fully, but I refer to it because it was referred to by the member for East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). That gentleman has no more right to assume that the dock cannot be constructed at less than double the estimated cost than I have to assume it cannot be constructed for one half the estimated cost; and the figures given by the Government are more reliable than those given by the member for East Fremantle. I prefer to take those of the Premier. It is suggested that £150,000 be spent on a floating dock. I suggest that the money could be well spent in connection with the preliminary expenses towards the building of a graving dock. The member for East Fremantle told us a few of the preliminary expenses; but I think the money could be spent in one direction well, in removing the unsightly and dangerous bridges across the Swan River connecting North Fremantle with Fremantle; and in their place to erect one steel swing bridge to carry all the traffic—vehicular, passenger, and railway. That would be one step towards the construction of a graving dock at Fremantle. I will not deal with that question farther. When the matter comes before the House, if it ever does, I shall go fully into the question. I commenced my remarks by saying that I intended to put up a record by not speaking long. I may say my vote will be declared in favour of the Government in the interests of the party to which I belong; but should the party be defeated, I shall cheerfully cross the floor of the House, and whilst sitting there I shall earnestly long for the day when the State will return an absolute majority of Labour members to the House, which it assuredly will do some day.

Mr. E. NEEDHAM (on amendments): In moving the Address-in-reply,

I expressed a desire that the debate on the question would not be unnecessarily prolonged; and I determined not to speak again to prolong the debate. But from recent observations which have fallen from members sitting in this corner, I deem it desirable to say a few words. I very much regret the member for Dundas is not in his place. I was going to speak last night when he was in his chair, and I hope that before I am far advanced the member for Dundas will be here. Before dealing with that member's observations I will refer to a remark made by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) in the course of his eloquent address the other night. He said he was not one of those members who went round on Saturday nights making statements which they would not make on the floor of the House. I am one of those members of the House who made a speech last Saturday night, and I made that speech with the full knowledge that it would be published to the country, that members of the House would be cognisant of it. I knew full well the Press were there, and everything I said on that occasion I am prepared to say again here. I was not afraid to make those utterances, because when making them I knew I was speaking my political convictions and what I considered to be true. And I will say in making that statement I was speaking entirely in a political sense. The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) in the course of his speech, which I read yesterday morning, said I made a statement that night that members sitting on this side of the House would not touch the Independents with a 40ft. pole. If that is a correct record of his statement, it is not right. I made a statement that so far as I was concerned I would not touch either the Opposition or the Independents with a 40ft. pole.

MR. THOMAS: I congratulate myself on the statement.

MR. NEEDHAM: I was determined all along that my vote would never go for a coalition to put members of the Opposition on the Government side; and up to Wednesday night of last week I was quite prepared to go on working with those gentlemen who so loyally supported us during last session. But when the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran)