

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 26 MAY 1899

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FRIDAY, 26 MAY, 1899.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. JOSHUA THOMAS BELL, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat for the electoral district of Dalby.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION
ENABLING BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON
MAIN QUESTION.

MR. CURTIS: Addressing myself to the question now before the House, I would like in the first instance to vindicate myself from the charge which has been brought against me that I am not in favour of federation, that I am not in favour of the union of the colonies or of the people of Australia. I affirm distinctly that I am, although, of course, as I have already indicated, I am not in favour of some of the clauses of this Bill. The realisation of the conception of a united Australia, the blending together in a harmonious bond of union, based upon just and equitable principles of the colonies and the people of the colonies—not only the colonies as they exist at the present time, however, but as concerns the offshoots of the colonies—those which have already come into existence, and those that may come into existence in the future—is worthy of all our zeal, all our intelligence, and all our efforts. It was, no doubt, a strong sense of the value and blessings of union which induced the people of America, and the people of Canada, and of other countries to institute a national Government as the best means of preserving and perpetuating their liberties. No doubt it is desirable that the people of Australia should do the same thing, avoiding, however, in the preparation of the Constitution any defects and blemishes that may have proved by experience to exist in the Constitutions of those countries. The people of Australia in the past have not exhibited much interest in this matter. They have not hitherto conceived the importance or the necessity for the union of the colonies. No doubt they have been kept back to a certain extent by reason of their mutual jealousies and rivalries, and they have felt secure from external danger by reason of the fact that they are under the protecting ægis of the British flag. Many of them were content, no doubt, to think that the virtual federation which now exists by reason of our common origin, language, and institutions was sufficient for the present, and perhaps for many years to come. I however, think that a virtual federation of the colonies is not sufficient; that it is desirable that there should be a federal union based on just and equitable principles. Now the Bill we have before us for consideration is no doubt an admirably drawn document. It exhibits a very large amount of labour and skill in drafting, and has, I think, been considerably liberalised and

improved by the amendments adopted by the Premiers who were recently called together at the instance of New South Wales. Some people think the Bill has been made worse and I observe that Mr. Want, the late Attorney-General of New South Wales, in a letter which has reached Sydney, expresses the opinion that the Bill is considerably worse than it was before. I am one of those who hold the opinion that the Bill has been improved and liberalised by the amendments embodied by the Premiers, at the instigation of New South Wales. At the same time, while I say that, I say that there are some serious defects in the Bill.

MR. JACKSON: Do you think the alteration requiring the consent of the people as well as the Parliament to the alteration of the boundaries of a State, or the creation of new States, is beneficial?

MR. CURTIS: That is one of the defects I will speak of. In that respect it has been made much worse.

MR. JACKSON: That was done by the Conference of Premiers.

MR. CURTIS: In other respects, however, the Bill has been improved. For instance, in the matter of substituting a simple majority for a two-thirds majority when the two Houses are sitting together—it is far easier to secure a simple majority than a two-thirds majority, as provided for when the Bill left the Convention. Then, the Bill has been improved in the matter of amendments to the Constitution, and also in two or three other matters; but in reference to the question of the creation of new States it has certainly been made much worse, and less acceptable to the people of Central Queensland. Now, it appears to me that the framers at this Constitution based their whole efforts on the assumption that these colonies are sovereign States, and claim by virtue of the clause which the hon. member for Kennedy has cited a territorial sovereignty which they are not entitled to claim, and which is distinctly inimical to the welfare of the whole of the colonies. It professes to be a federation under the Crown, but, at the same time, virtually supersedes the Crown. The Constitution appears as if it were framed with a view of ultimately making a complete severance from the Crown and the assertion of the independence of the colonies. I notice that the Premier formed that opinion with respect to the Bill of 1891, which was of a much less radical nature than the present measure. He thought it was leading in the direction of ultimate republicanism; and if he entertained that objection, and was justified in forming that opinion in reference to the measure of 1891, it is rather astonishing to find the hon. gentleman advocating this measure, which is very much more radical, very much more liberal, and proceeds to a greater extent in the direction of ultimate independence than the Bill of 1891. The Constitution is in a large measure a copy of the Constitution of the United States, but the circumstances are entirely different. The thirteen States when they federated were sovereign States. Each of them were absolutely complete in itself; it did not owe allegiance to any authority outside of its own boundary. Here, however, the case of the Australian colonies is entirely different. Each colony is a dependency of the Empire and not entitled to claim the territorial sovereignty which they claim by virtue of this Constitution, and which I submit, is not to the advantage of Australia as a whole. In my opinion, federation should trend much more in the direction of a union of the people than a union of the States. It would be far better if the Constitution had been framed for men and not for States. It should have been dealt with by men for men and not by States for States.

Too much has been conceded to provincialism disguised under the doctrine of "State rights," and that doctrine, as enunciated by the representatives of the colonies, is nothing more than the rights of the provincial Parliaments as they exist at the present time. There were many representatives of the colonies on the floor of the Convention, but few of them could have been deemed the representatives of Australia. To a great extent provincialism was rampant, more especially at the first meeting in Adelaide, and the representatives were thinking very much less of the interests of the whole of Australia than of the interests of their own particular States. I do not think that any States have rights that conflict with the interests of the community as a whole, and I say that some of the State rights which are set up in this Constitution conflict with the interests of the people. It appears to me that they are to an extent inconsistent and incompatible with our position as dependent portions of the Empire, and inconsistent with the doctrine of "one people one destiny." The United States in federating strictly limited the functions of the General Government. So we do here; but in the Canadian Constitution, although the powers of both the Dominion Government and the provincial Governments are enumerated, the residuary power is reserved to the Dominion Government. I think it would be far more in the interests of the people of Australia if we followed more on the lines of the Dominion Constitution than on the lines of that of the United States, and reserved all residuary power to the Federal Parliament of the country. I now desire to speak more especially with regard to clauses 123 and 127. I contend that the principle of territorial sovereignty set out by the representatives of the colonies, and embodied in those clauses, is anything but conducive to the interests of Queensland more especially, or of Australia as a whole. It is absurd to my mind, and prejudicial to the interests of the country. Clause 123 has been servilely copied from the American Constitution where the circumstances were entirely different. At the time they federated the thirteen colonies had only about 312,000 square miles of territory between them—about the size of New South Wales—and previous to that they had conceded to Congress all the unsettled territory lying within their chartered limits, but outside the limits of location or settlement at that time. So that when they were asked to accept the Constitution of the present day it was a reasonable claim to make that no further division should take place without their own consent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They had very little territory outside those limits.

Mr. CURTIS: I was reading about it only the other day, and there was a considerable area out of which new States were subsequently carved.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not one-fifth of that of Australia.

Mr. CURTIS: I know. I will come to that later on. They were working under articles of confederation before they adopted the Federal Constitution. Several of the States conceded to Congress a considerable area of country within their chartered limits but outside the location of settlement. When they federated under the present Constitution and entered into the present bond it was reasonable that they should stipulate that no further division should take place without the consent of the respective Parliaments, seeing that the area of the whole only amounted to about 312,000 square miles. The point I want to enforce is this: Seeing that this provision in the Commonwealth Bill has been copied from the American Constitution, I want to show that the circumstances

are entirely different, and that what might be deemed reasonable in the case of the United States is not reasonable in the case of Australia, because these colonies claim territorial sovereignty over the whole continent of Australia, and it will not be possible for the national Government to exercise any jurisdiction over a single acre of that territory without the consent of the provincial legislatures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They only claim that which they possess now.

Mr. CURTIS: I maintain that when these various colonies were brought into existence they were simply divided for administrative convenience. It was felt that it would be impossible to administer properly the affairs of such a huge country from a seat of government at a tremendous distance from the extremities of the territory. When these divisions were made it was never intended that they should divide the people of Australia; it was intended that they should be one people all the time. It was never intended, for instance, when Queensland was created a separate colony, that the people of Moreton Bay were to acquire sovereign rights over the whole territory embraced within the boundaries of the colony. And I maintain that if the power at present possessed by the Imperial Parliament is going to be virtually abandoned—if she is going to relinquish it by the ratification of this Constitution with these two clauses—it will certainly be far better that the power should be transferred to the National Parliament of Australasia to exercise those functions which have hitherto been exercised by the Imperial authorities. Now the provision in respect to alterations of the Constitution—clause 127—was made at the instigation of New South Wales. When the Commonwealth Bill left the Convention, the 123rd clause was capable of amendment if a majority of the people of the colonies had desired, but Mr. Reid, Mr. Want, and others in New South Wales saw that, and they thought it was not good enough for them; that New South Wales was in danger, perhaps, of losing eventually some of its territory which it improperly holds—the Riverina district on the one side and the Clarence and Richmond districts on the other. So, at the instigation of New South Wales, the 127th clause was altered so that now it will be impossible; if the majority of the colonies desire, for instance, to separate any portion of Queensland it cannot be done without the consent of the Parliament of Queensland first, and afterwards the vote of the people of Queensland constituted as one electorate.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear! A very proper thing.

Mr. CURTIS: I do not think so, and that is why I intend to vote against the second reading. Those clauses, so far as the people of Central Queensland are concerned, extinguish all hope of self-government for generations to come, and that being the case, how can I reasonably be expected to vote for the second reading of a Bill containing those clauses? New South Wales unfairly and improperly holds the Riverina district, which belongs to Victoria, and the Clarence and Richmond River districts on this side, in defiance of the terms of an Act of Parliament.

The PREMIER: We will annex it commercially under this Bill.

Mr. CURTIS: I do not know about that. Possibly you may not be able to do it. As the 127th clause was inserted at the instigation of New South Wales, she can hold those territories for ever if she likes; and the clause will have the effect of tying up Queensland in the same way. Central and Northern Queensland can be held by Queensland for ever. I maintain that it is not to the interest even of Southern Queensland that Queensland should be incorporated as one

State in the federation under this Constitution. If she is, she will remain so, perhaps, for all time. If it was found that Queensland had not adequate voting power in the Federal Parliament, and desired to split up in order to obtain more voting power and influence in the Federal Parliament, the jealousy of the southern colonies would be excited and there would be great difficulty in effecting it; and it is far better that Queensland should stand out in the meantime. She will be able to make far better terms if she stands out now and enters the federation afterwards as three States.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You may not have another opportunity.

Mr. CURTIS: If Tasmania with 29,000 square miles is entitled to six representatives in the Senate, surely to goodness Central and North Queensland, with their vast area and tremendous potentialities, are entitled to something like fair representation! I do not say we should insist on eighteen; but I believe the southern colonies would concede the three Queensland twelve representatives in the Senate. Central and North Queensland would be entitled to five each and South Queensland to eight or nine in the House of Representatives. That would be twelve in the Senate and eighteen in the House of Representatives; and surely Queensland with thirty representatives would exercise more influence and power in the Federal Parliament than if she goes in as one State! New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania are going in as three separate States, with eighteen representatives. The total area of those three colonies is only about 400,000 square miles, while Queensland contains nearly 700,000 square miles. And though our population is not as large as the united population of those three States, still the potentialities of Queensland are very great, and she would have a right to demand admission to the union as three States on equitable terms.

Mr. LEAHY: How many representatives would Western Australia have on that basis?

Mr. CURTIS: Oh, well, we are not talking about Western Australia now—that would all depend on circumstances. I said the other night, when speaking about the question of representation in the Senate, that it was entirely a question of compromise. It was so in the case of the United States of America and it is so in this case. And so far as I am concerned, as one of the representatives of Central Queensland, I would be quite prepared to consent to Central Queensland coming in with less than the stipulated number which an original State would be entitled to in the Senate—namely, six. We would be very glad indeed, if we could secure self-government, to take less than the full quota of six to which, under the Constitution, original States would be entitled. It would not be absolutely essential that Central and North Queensland should stand out for representation in the Senate equal to that accorded to original States. There is no doubt at all that if we leave that to the Federal Parliament they would deal equitably in the matter of the representation of the three Queensland, and they would be in a far better position than they will be if this colony goes in as one State. Should that happen, and in years to come it was found that there was a wish to break up, in Central Queensland especially—because we would not have sufficient influence and voting power—we would find a great difficulty with the other colonies, and I say we can make better terms before than we could afterwards. Southern members may think us unreasonable in objecting to these clauses, but let me remind hon. members that the people of Moreton Bay made a very strong protest against the very same

thing when a proposition of the same kind was embodied in the original draft of the Constitution of New South Wales, drafted by William Charles Wentworth. He introduced a clause which led to a very great commotion here when the people of Moreton Bay heard of it. In the draft of the Constitution Bill brought up by Wentworth from the Select Committee appointed by the Legislative Council of New South Wales on the 20th May, 1853, there was this clause 52—

No alteration shall take place in the boundaries of the respective colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, or South Australia, unless the assent of the colony losing any portion of its territory by such alienation shall be expressed in some legislative provision of such colony.

Then there arose a commotion at Brisbane, and strong protest was sent down by the representatives of the colony, and a communication on the subject was addressed to Earl Grey, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. In the meantime, however, this objectionable clause was eliminated from the Constitution; but I point out that Earl Grey, in the concluding paragraph of his reply to the communication addressed to him, said—

I have only to add that the clause which you state to have been introduced into the Constitution Bill now before the Legislature of New South Wales, and which purports to prohibit the formation of a new colony south of the 26th parallel of south latitude, would, I apprehend, be of no force even if it should be passed. No Colonial Legislature can possess power to control the Imperial Parliament, or to limit the authority to determine the boundaries of the several British colonies, which belongs to the Crown and Parliament.

You see, then, that when a similar thing was proposed to be done on that occasion, the people of Moreton Bay were justly indignant, and took the action to which I have referred; and yet there are Southern representatives who think we are very unreasonable in making the protest we do at the present time against the very same thing proposed now to be done by the Parliaments of the other colonies. If this is enacted, as I said before, all hope of self-government for Central Queensland will be extinguished for generations to come. Are we not just as entitled to enter a protest against this as the people of Moreton Bay were at that time to protest against a proposal that would rob them of their political birthright?

Mr. LEAHY: You know the cases are not analogous.

Mr. CURTIS: I say they are analogous; and I say that in every respect the people of Central and Northern Queensland are far more advanced, in a better position, and far better qualified to undertake the responsibilities of self-government now than Moreton Bay was at that time. Brisbane was only a miserable village at that time; there were hardly 5,000 persons in the place, and the total population of the colony was only about 20,000 when separation took place. The people of Moreton Bay were justly indignant at the attempt made at that time, and it is now proposed to impose the very same restriction upon the people of Central and Northern Queensland.

Mr. O'CONNELL: The restriction exists at the present moment.

Mr. CURTIS: In what way?

Mr. O'CONNELL: You cannot get separation without the consent of Parliament.

Mr. CURTIS: The Imperial Parliament is there, and we have our right of appeal to the Imperial Parliament, and it would have eventuated long ago if the Northern members had worked unitedly with the Central members.

Mr. LEAHY: They have better sense.

Mr. CURTIS: I am dealing at considerable length, and with some force I hope, in speaking of these two clauses, because they are the greatest blots in the Bill. Mr. Higgins, of Victoria, said so the other day in speaking about

these very clauses as one of the worst features of the whole Bill. He does not approve of the whole Bill, and he does not desire the people of Victoria to accept the Bill as it stands, because he believes it can be further amended with great benefit to the people of Australia as a whole. We know that in the past great benefit has resulted from the exercise of this power by the Imperial authorities, and if they are going to part with that power it should be vested in the National Parliament of Australia; it should not be left to the discretion of any provincial Parliament to deal with such a matter. If there had been any such clause in the New South Wales Constitution Queensland would not have a separate existence to-day, or Victoria either.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We would all be federated then.

Mr. CURTIS: Do you think it would have been in the interest of Queensland or of Victoria that they should have remained a part of New South Wales? Why there would have been no Parliament sitting here to-day in Brisbane if there had been such a clause in the Constitution of New South Wales? Sir Thomas McLlwraith, speaking at the Convention which sat in Sydney in 1891, said that if Queensland came into the federation provision would have to be made for her coming in as three colonies. He was a farseeing statesman; he evidently grasped the position, and saw that it would be a great mistake in the interests of Queensland if she was to be incorporated in the union as one State, hence his expression of opinion that if Queensland came in she would require to come in as three colonies. It is not clear from clause 3 as to how the vote is to be taken on the Bill—as to whether the votes for the separate electorates shall be taken separately, so that eventually we shall be able to tell how the people voted in the different electorates of the colony. I presume that a record will be taken of the voting in each electorate, as in New South Wales; but if, on the contrary, it is intended that the ballot-boxes shall not be opened until their contents are turned into one great receptacle and mixed up together, that is a proposition I should decidedly object to, as we should then be unable to tell how the voting went in any particular part of the colony. It does not seem clear in clause 3 as to how it is to be done, but I suppose we shall decide that in committee.

Mr. JACKSON: Is it provided that the votes shall be counted openly?

Mr. CURTIS: I do not think it is. I maintain that when the vote is taken the three great divisions of the colony should be permitted to vote separately—that the colony should not vote as one electorate. If this happens, Central and Northern Queensland will be submerged by the South. At any rate, it is desirable that the three divisions should vote separately. Southern Queensland should not be permitted to speak for the Northern or Central divisions, and *vice versa*. All should be permitted to speak separately on the subject. Another reason why I object to the Bill is because it does not contain provisions for the peculiar circumstances of Queensland. In addition to these clauses I have objected to, it is exceedingly desirable that the manufacturing and producing industries should have a special provision by which the duties could be reduced gradually over a period of years, as is proposed to be done in the case of Western Australia. That is another good reason why we should delay—in order to secure better terms.

The PREMIER: Why did you prevent Queensland being represented at the last Convention?

Mr. CURTIS: The Government of the country is responsible for the fact that we were not represented at the Convention.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. CURTIS: I say yes. In this respect it is very desirable that some provision should be inserted for the protection of the manufacturing and producing industries of the colony, at all events for some little time. Another important matter is the question of the railways. I am of opinion that it would be far better to have an arrangement made for taking over the whole of the railways of the colonies. Notwithstanding the appointment of an interstate commission, I question whether the interstate commission will give satisfaction to all parties. There appears to me a likelihood of differential rates, which will give considerable trouble—be a fruitful source of trouble; and I say the railways should be worked for the benefit of all Australia. If we have a war of railway tariffs it will nullify to a great extent the provisions of freetrade.

Mr. JACKSON: There would be too much centralization if you take over the railways.

Mr. CURTIS: I don't think so; I don't think federation will mean more centralisation. If the railways and debts were taken over and consolidated there will be no occasion for the "Braddon blot" or the book-keeping system. One thing is certain: if we federate more direct taxation will be necessary. It is not likely that the uniform tariff will be levelled up to the Queensland rate of £2 14s. 7d. per head. It is not likely that the Federation Parliament will level up taxation to render it unnecessary that we should levy direct taxation. The Federal Parliament is not responsible for the solvency of the States in any way, and one thing is certain: that there will be a deficiency, which will have to be made good by means of direct taxation.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Land taxation.

Mr. CURTIS: Or by an income tax. I dare say there will be a deficiency of £300,000 or £400,000, which will have to be made good from some source or another. I think it would be a very good thing if there was some provision for the reduction of the number of members of the provincial Parliaments. It is rather unfortunate that there is no provision for that. It is very certain that eventually the people will insist upon it being done in the public interest. If there are seventy members in the House of Representatives to carry on the business of all Australia, it will not be necessary to have seventy-two members in this House. That is certain. As for the Upper House, the question is whether there will be any necessity for it at all. The Legislative Assemblies of the State will be simply divisional boards writ large, and very properly so. People will take more interest in their national legislature than in their provincial legislature. That has been the experience in the United States at all events.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: All the better.

Mr. CURTIS: All the better. I say it is a pity that there is no provision in the Constitution giving the Federal Parliament power to reduce the number of members in the provincial legislature. An attempt was made in the New South Wales Upper House to enable this to be done, but it came to nothing. A uniform tariff will practically be settled by New South Wales and Victoria, who will have a preponderating representation in the House of Representatives, and who will also probably have a majority in the joint sitting to decide a deadlock. It is not likely that these colonies will level up taxation to give Queensland a return of £2 14s. 7d. *per capita*. The federation tariff will be something like £8,000,000, and if levelled up to £2 14s. 7d. it would mean £9,000,000. I am satisfied the

Federation Parliament is not going to tax the people to any such extent. I wish to impress upon hon. members the absolute certainty that there will be a deficiency which will have to be made good by Queensland in some other way. Now the hon. member for Townsville made some observations with regard to myself last night, but he is unable to appreciate the position I have occupied with regard to separation in this House and in the colony. He does not appreciate my loyalty. If I have changed my seat, I have shown my independence. In 1893 and 1896 I was sent here without any party ties. I was absolutely free and independent to do what I thought best in regard to what I considered to be the paramount questions.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: They returned you by a large majority.

Mr. CURTIS: Yes, they returned me by a large majority over the Ministerial candidate, a majority of something like 600. If the hon. member is sincere—and I do not doubt his sincerity—he should be the last one to cast a stone at me with regard to federation or separation. In my opinion our difficulties have been caused by the policy adopted by that hon. member and other Northern members. I maintain that instead of taking office in a Southern Administration, if he had been as loyal to the movement as we have been, the whole question would have been settled long ago. The fact of the matter is that the curse of the separation movement has been the taking of office in a Southern Administration by professed supporters of the movement. That was the experience of the people of Ireland in connection with the home rule movement; the taking of office by the professed supporters of that movement resulted in Ireland being unable to exercise any influence in the Imperial Parliament, and no good was done in the direction they wished to go until an independent party was formed under the late Mr. Parnell. And so long as Northern members sit on the Treasury benches in this Parliament, Northern and Central separation will languish. In conclusion, I question whether it is competent for us to send the proposed Constitution to be voted upon by the people of Queensland until we have thoroughly discussed and approved of it ourselves. I should like later on to have an assurance from the Government that in the matter of voting the votes will be taken in such a way that we shall afterwards be able to tell how many votes were cast for or against the measure in the different electorates throughout the colony. If it is intended that all the ballot-papers shall be thrown into one vast receptacle before they are counted, that will be exceedingly unsatisfactory. For the reasons I have already stated, and more especially for the reason that if the Commonwealth Bill is enacted in its present form all hope of self-government for the people of Central Queensland will be dead for generations to come, I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BOLES (who was indistinctly heard in the gallery) was understood to say: I think we must admit that the question before the House is an exceedingly important one, and that if this Bill is carried it will exercise a considerable influence on the political and commercial interests of the colony. The different clauses of the Bill which have been referred to by my friend the hon. member for Rockhampton are sufficient in themselves to show that the framers of the measure never intended that we should have the same opportunities for progress and prosperity as we now possess in Queensland. When we come to review the whole question I cannot help being struck with the peculiar vacillating policy of the Govern-

ment with reference to it for some years past. The jerry-mandering of the Government on this question is perfectly surprising, and it is really remarkable to see the number of persons who a short time ago were totally against federation expressing themselves in favour of it. The indecent haste with which this measure has been sought to be put before the electors is an indication to me that there is something behind it, because I feel that the submission of the matter to the electors without their having fully considered it is done with the view of bull-dozing the majority of the people of Queensland. And looking further along the line I find that for some considerable time past this federation movement has been kept alive by a number of southern lawyers, who are not employers of labour, and who, so far as can be judged from the claptrap they have uttered on the question, are quite unable to form an opinion as to the commercial status of the different parts of the colony. I regret to have to speak so strongly of that particular profession, but it seems to me a peculiar anomaly that this particular profession should take such a particular interest in this matter, and go so far as to come to Queensland and tell the farmers here what is a good thing for them. It is perfectly ridiculous that lawyers from the southern colonies should have to come up here to tell the farmers whether it is going to be a good thing for them for Queensland to enter the federation. We have heard a good deal from the other side in this House about trusting the people—about the *vox populi vox Dei*; and we had an instance last night of how certain members on the other side are prepared to trust the people in the vote they gave on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston. I think the electors had a very fair test in that vote as to which side of the House is prepared to trust the people. The hon. member for Cunningham, Mr. Kates, announced that his watchword was "Trust the people"; but when it was found that it was the desire of a large number of members in this House to give certain persons in the colony—something like 40,000—an opportunity of saying "Yea" or "Nay" on this question, hon. members opposite voted against the proposition.

Mr. BROWN: The security is perhaps not good enough for the trust.

Mr. BOLES: Perhaps not; but the action of hon. members last night shows how much they really trust the people. There are only one or two other matters that I need refer to on the present occasion. We are told that in any case we ought to federate for the purposes of defence, and no doubt we are all anxious to see federation introduced to that extent if it can be done in a reasonable way. But I hold that that could have been effectively carried out by an elective Federal Council, and that was, I noticed, the opinion expressed at Sydney by Sir Julian Salomons. Under this Bill federation, even for defence purposes, can only result in additional taxation, of which Queensland will have to bear a very large proportion. And even then I fear we should not be in a much better position than we are in now, for if ever the services of the army were called into request it would be massed much further south than the Queensland seaboard. With regard to the separation question, I contend that at the recent Conference of Premiers at Melbourne, our Premier should have submitted an amendment insisting on Queensland entering the federation as three States. That would at all events have had the result of giving Queensland additional voting power in the Senate and the House of Representatives. It is a perfect anomaly that Queensland, with her vast territory and large resources,

should have no more voting power than a small, insignificant country like Tasmania. There are to be 109 members, out of which the Queensland representatives will number fifteen. It is a very poor undertaking for Queensland. If we had entered as three States, although the separation might not take place for some time to come, and no benefit might immediately accrue in that respect, still, from the increased voting power, Queensland would at any rate be pretty well able to hold its own. With regard to intercolonial freetrade, although that may not come about for two years, or five years, or even longer, it cannot fail to be injurious to the young industries of the colony. As to the local Parliament, we shall be in a far worse position than at present, when it is curtailed of so much of its powers. The outside districts especially will suffer. In the past, before payment of members, the outside districts were, as a rule, represented by Brisbane men, who knew next to nothing about their wants. Since payment of members, those districts have always been represented by local men, who have been able to place the wants of their constituents properly before the Government. When federation takes place I very much fear the system of former years will be reverted to, and the evil results will be especially felt by the outside districts. There is no doubt that federation will come, but I hold that at present we are going into it too hastily. We have had nothing to do with the framing of this Bill. I agree with those who contend that it should have been discussed in this House clause by clause. Even if we postpone the whole matter for twelve months or two years we may be able to come in on perhaps much better terms than are now offered. Such being my opinions, I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The two hon. members who have just spoken, have spoken principally from a Northern point of view. I wish to speak from a Southern point of view. We are asked to federate in the interests of New South Wales. Indeed this session has been specially summoned in behalf that the Enabling Bill will be accepted by the people of New South Wales. Right or wrong, I am opposed to the Bill all through, and for that I have many reasons. I am opposed to it not only in the interests of the district in which I live, but of those of Queensland as a whole. It is a great argument in favour of the Bill that federation will be good for the cattle-men, that the owners of large herds will get a much better market and a much higher price for their stock in Victoria and South Australia. But are all the other industries of Queensland to suffer to enable cattle-men to reap larger profits? I say no. We must look after all our other industries, and I maintain that if we allow this Bill to pass, and if intercolonial freetrade comes about at any time within two years, great loss will accrue to the people of Queensland. Many existing avenues of employment for working men will be closed, workshops will be closed all over the colony, and large numbers of people will be walking about among the unemployed. If the Bill passes, some provision ought to be made for those who are unemployed in consequence of it. I have never yet heard any valid reason assigned why Queensland should federate, in the way proposed, with the other colonies. I heard the proposal compared the other day to gold reefs. Queensland pans out, say, 7 oz. to the ton; New South Wales, 5 oz.; Victoria, 3 oz.; South Australia, 2 oz.; and Tasmania nothing. We are asked to join our assets and everything else, and pool them for the benefit of people who have not the same amount of assets. That would be very unwise. I would ask any newspaper company whether it would like to pool its assets with five or six other newspaper

companies with no assets, and allow them to have a preponderating voting power, and to say how its business should be conducted? Any man or company with a large estate would very soon tell anyone making such a proposal to mind their own business. For the same reason we should be in no hurry to enter into this federation. It is extraordinary the amount of sentiment that is introduced into the question—in fact, it is nearly all sentiment. I do not see how anyone is going to be benefited, except perhaps a few wealthy men; but I would like to know what is to become of all the industries which we have at the present time. Western Australia is not to have intercolonial freetrade for five years, but with us it will take place here within two years after federation, and Queensland as a whole will be a heavy loser. The hon. member for Rockhampton said that a much less amount of representation would be necessary in this Chamber. As I said the other night, we would not require any Parliament at all. The municipal council of Brisbane could manage all the business that will be left to the colony. I cannot see what will be left for us to do. Everything we have will be taken away and managed by the Federal Parliament. Clause 88 of the Commonwealth Bill says—

Uniform duties of Customs shall be imposed within two years after the establishment of the Commonwealth.

That clause does not say that we shall not have uniform duties for two years, but that they shall be imposed within that period. Then again the Federal Parliament is to have exclusive power to impose excise duties and grant bounties on the production or export of goods. Western Australia is not to come under these uniform duties for five years, but we have no concession like that for Queensland.

The PREMIER: Because we were not represented at the Convention.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Well if anyone is to be blamed for that, it is the hon. gentleman's Government.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. PLUNKETT: There is not the slightest doubt about it. The Government has never been sincere in the matter. It has been made a burlesque of all the time. And seeing we were not represented at the Convention, we are now told that we have to take the Bill as it is—we must swallow it whole. That is a very unfair position to be placed in. Education and railways are to be left to the management of the States—the two most losing departments in the State. They have left us railways; but they take the control of railways. They also take among other things the control of marriage. Well, I really do not know how that is going to work out. I do not know whether I am right or not; but I suppose that before a couple can get married they will have to wait until they obtain the consent of the Federal Parliament. Then old-age pensions are to be in the hands of the Federal Parliament. I cannot see what we have to do. Again, one of their functions is "railway construction and extension in any State with the consent of that State." I have asked the question over and over again, What will Queensland gain in the event of federation? The strongest supporter of federation that I have met said that we would be able to borrow cheaper, and that, by the amalgamation of offices, we could do away with a lot of men whom we at present employ. The question I asked him was, "And what about the Civil servants?" The answer was, "They can find some other employment." Now it cannot be a good thing for Queensland to have another Black Thursday, and the Civil servants and working

men of Queensland who vote for federation with the rest of Australia will only regret it once, and that will be all their lives. As I said before, the only men who will reap any benefit will be the cattle-owners. I am glad to say that I am one of those who breed and fatten cattle, so that I will participate in any benefit which Queensland may derive from federation; but I say, "Perish all that before I sell the independence of myself, and my children, and the prosperity of Queensland!" I was surprised at some hon. members who represent electorates which are mainly composed of working men voting against the amendment and in favour of federation. If those men vote for federation they will close the industries by which they make their living, and will be kicking the stool from under their own feet. In Sydney and New South Wales, with all their wealth and influence, there are something between 5,000 and 8,000 unemployed. In Queensland there is nothing like that now. I do not say it for the purpose of changing one vote here, but I wish it to go forth to the people who will have to decide the question, that if they are unwise enough to vote "Yes" for Queensland federating with New South Wales, it will be the worst day in their lives. I intend to vote against the Bill. I have been opposed to federation for eleven years, because I saw that Queensland's interests would be sacrificed for the purpose of benefiting other people. We have been told that while we lose something we will gain in other directions, and that we will not be allowed to go insolvent if the Federal Parliament can prevent it. They are going to take our money from us, and tell us that we will not be allowed to go insolvent; but we have no right to give them that money. We have a right to spend our own money, and work out our own salvation, as we have done in the past—and done very well, too. It has been said that if we do not join the federation at first we will have to join afterwards on their terms, but that is all bunkum—the worst sort of bunkum. It is only a cry. At present they do not buy anything from us except cattle, and if after federation they can buy cattle from Queensland cheaper than anywhere else, they will come here for them. It is all a question of supply and demand. There is nothing in that argument at all. Taking it all round, I am opposed to federation. I am a protectionist, and I believe that if we were federated our industries would be hampered, and hundreds of people who have invested money in them will be ruined. They will rue the day that federation is brought about, and will curse those who advocated it. I do not see one thing in its favour. Any person who is in Brisbane for a short time will notice the great number of young people who are employed in our factories. They are earning good wages, I am pleased to hear, and there is no doubt that their labour is of great assistance to their parents; their earnings help to make the conditions of life easier all round. In my opinion the man who would vote for federation and thus abolish the means of those persons obtaining regular employment would be doing something very unwise and absolutely cruel. It is said to the working people of this colony that if they vote "Yes" on the question of federation they will be able to get the necessaries of life much cheaper than they do at present. I say that is a fallacy.

Mr. KEOGH: Wages must go down.

Mr. PLUNKETT: There will be no wages. I do not say that Brisbane will be ruined altogether, but without employment wages must go down. What is the use of having cheap commodities if you have no money wherewith to purchase them? The people of Brisbane spend

now as much per head of the population as they do in Sydney and Melbourne, and they are just as prosperous and well-to-do. We have everything that we want, as far as I know, to make the people contented, and we would do well to leave things as they are. We are asked to take a leap in the dark, and no one, as far as I know, is able to foretell the result. For the sake of a sentiment we are asked to take part in the formation of a united Australia, and while the leaders of the movement tell us we must suffer to a certain extent, they give us the advice to bear our burden manfully. "You will suffer," they say, "but look at the grand thing it will be." What does it matter to us if those in the southern colonies are rich and well to do, if the people here cannot get employment? I was very much pleased to hear some of the anti-federal speeches made the other night, and I was particularly pleased to hear the reference made by the hon. member for Toowong, lately, to the iniquity of giving away our contract for the Central Station to a southern firm.

Mr. FINNEY: That has nothing to do with federation.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I think it has. It was anti-federalism.

Mr. FINNEY: It was simply self-protection.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Well, I say that anti-federation is self-protection, and there was no doubt that the hon. member was right in that case. We have a perfect right to keep our own money in our own colony when we are spending it on buildings, and we have a perfect right to keep our own money for our own purposes instead of pouring it into the coffers of a federal government. Consequently I am prepared to vote against this Bill. My ideas may be wrong, but I have thought over this matter for a long time, and I come to the conclusion that we have nothing to gain by federating with the other colonies. We cannot possibly tell with certainty whether Queensland will be a gainer or a loser under federation, but I am strongly impressed with the belief that it will be a very great loser. For these reasons I think it would be wise to postpone the Bill, and I shall therefore vote against it.

Mr. KEOGH: I have listened patiently to the remarks which have fallen from both sides of the House, and from what I can learn it seems to me that the great bulk of members here are federalists, but only in the sense that they want as many concessions as they can get for their own particular districts. I am one of those who have entered this House as an anti-federalist, and intend to oppose the movement in every shape and form. Nothing that I have heard from hon. members who are in favour of the Bill has convinced me that federation would be a good thing for this colony. We have had a stirring speech from the hon. member for Barcoo, and the hon. member at times makes some very good hits, but he after all is a Western representative, and only represents one particular class in the community—the class which would benefit most by federation being an accomplished fact. I speak from my own point of view as an agriculturist whom federation would wipe out altogether. We are not in a position to compete with the other colonies. When I said the other night that we were not old enough, there was a laugh at my expense; but I say we have not had the experience to compete with other people. I have heard it said by some people that the reason why they were prepared to vote for federation was because the factories would be closed, and they would be in a position to get labour which they are not able to get now. I think it will be far better for this colony to stand out for another ten years, and I have no doubt that we shall get better terms than

now. Another thing, the people of this colony were not represented when this Commonwealth Bill was framed; they have had no say in the matter, and I do not see why we, at all events, should accept the Bill. Speeches have been made on all sides in favour of the measure, but nothing has been said to convince me that we shall benefit by its adoption; and the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, has shown, at all events from his standpoint, that it would not be beneficial to the Central part of the colony. Of course those hon. members look at it from a different point of view from how we Southerners look at it. They say they require separation before federation, and I think they are perfectly right in saying so, because, in the event of federation taking place, it will be a block to separation. Though I am a Southerner I say those hon. members should carefully weigh what they are going to do on this matter, and if it was the last vote they had they should vote against this federation, because there is no possibility of them getting separation from the larger colony of Queensland after federation takes place. There is another thing to which I object—namely, that all the money we collect through the Customs and other sources of revenue is to be taken by the Federal Parliament—all that has to go to the federal city, which I suppose is going to be Melbourne for some time to come. Then they do what they like with our money; it is all pooled, and we get back what they think proper to return to us after deducting the cost of collection. I am afraid that very little that is collected in this colony will come back to us again. On those grounds alone, if on no other, I think I am right in opposing this Bill, because we have no right whatever to pass all our moneys to Melbourne to be manipulated as it is thought proper. Many things have been said and can be said by hon. members in favour of federation from their own standpoint, but from the standpoint of an agriculturist it will be most injurious to us in South Queensland. As I said before, we shall not be able to compete with the southern colonies in the way of cereals at all events. It has been stated by hon. members that we have been sending corn to New South Wales. I am not aware of any corn having been sent there from this colony, and I do not think it has. Therefore, on the ground, at all events, that we are not in a position to compete with New South Wales, I will certainly vote against this Bill, until, at all events, I can see clearly that we are going to have some benefit from it. Up till now no hon. gentleman who has spoken has convinced me that there is any benefit to be derived from federation.

Mr. LUYA: I wish to call the attention of the House to one or two clauses in the Commonwealth Bill which I think would operate very prejudicially, at all events towards Queensland, and I should like if some light could be thrown upon the clauses by some of those hon. members who are in favour of federation at any price. In the first instance I will refer to clause 90, which is a clause giving exclusive power over Customs, excise and bounties. This is the second paragraph of that clause—

On the imposition of uniform duties of Customs all laws of the several States imposing duties of Customs or of excise, or offering bounties on the production or export of goods, shall cease to have effect; but any grant of or agreement for any such bounty lawfully made by or under the authority of the Government of any State shall be taken to be good if made before the thirtieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, and not otherwise.

I have heard it argued that the Federal Government take over the bounties, and they take over the payment of the bounties, and the whole of

the Australian colonies will be called upon to pay their share of any of the bounties then existing.

Mr. LEAHY: Who said that?

Mr. LUYA: I have heard it argued in two or three places, and I happened to take up a Melbourne *Argus*—I think hon. members will allow that the Melbourne *Argus* is a fair paper on any subject—

Mr. LEAHY: It is violently opposed to federation at all events.

Mr. LUYA: The *Argus* is almost as much in favour of federation at my price as the hon. member for Bulloo. The Melbourne *Argus* does not mind much so long as it gets federation what becomes of its neighbour, and I believe the hon. member for Bulloo is somewhat the same. In the Melbourne *Argus* of the 13th May, of the present year—not so very long ago—the following appears:—

Take, for instance, the question of the bounties. It is strange what fierce hatred "bounty fed industries" occasion outside the country where the bonus is paid. German beet sugar is one case in point: and in the feeling about our paltry and expiring Victorian bounties, and in the gross exaggerations indulged in about them, we have another instance. Day after day the assertion is made in New South Wales that the Federal Bill allows Victoria to continue her bounty system, to the alleged detriment of the sister States. Now comes the point—

The fact, as has been stated over and over again, is that the payment and the control of bounties would, under the Bill, pass to the Australian legislature.

That is to the Federal Government. I think that is plain enough.

But for all that the falsehood is dinned and dinned into men's ears with a persistent audacity. The five Premiers laugh at the story.

I can tell you it is a moot point at the present time, and though the question has been brought forward, it has never been denied by any of the five Premiers that such is not the case. If you study the clause you can come to no other conclusion than that it goes to the Federal Government; and, if that is the case, we will be taxed to pay the bounties imposed in Victoria up to a certain date.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Are there any?

Mr. LUYA: Yes, there are some. The Secretary for Railways, with his usual want of information, told us the other day that there were none; but the Secretary for Railways, I am sorry to say, is noted not for the things that he knows, but for those that he does not know. The clause says that not only bounties but grants made or promised will have to be paid. Now, there are bounties in force at the present time for the growth and cultivation of forest trees, for flax and hemp, for the export of green fruit to the extent of 2s. per case, and for the establishment of wineries. That is not up to date, as it deals with 1893, and since then we know there have been other bounties established. The amounts are not large, but they are there, and they will have to be paid.

Mr. DRAKE: We have a bounty on butter, you know.

Mr. LUYA: We know very well that there was a bounty, or rather grant, made there in connection with the coal industry, which takes the shape of a remission of all railway charges to ½d. per ton for all brown coal mined in Victoria and carried on all Victorian railways, and that abides for all time. There are a number of other little articles included, but the question is, Are we to pay our share of the cost? It seems to me very evident that we are. It does not appear in the Bill, but it is the settled policy of those who are running the federation craze in the south that to make up the deficit in the revenue there must be an excise duty upon sugar. That is the only way, without imposing an

income tax, by which they can get the deficit covered. What that means is that the people of Queensland must pay about £120,000 a year for the privilege of using their own sugar.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the excise to be?

Mr. LUYA: £5 per ton.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is not fixed.

Mr. LUYA: That is the duty that will be fixed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are thinking of the Customs duty.

Mr. LUYA: That is the excise duty that will be fixed, because the future Treasurer of the Commonwealth, Sir George Turner, has already announced the policy to guide him in the future. We can only be guided in these matters by the information that comes before us. We were not all at the secret conference and we do not know any better than what we can glean from the papers, and what our own common sense tells us is likely to be the effect. If the Queensland people are to be called upon to pay £120,000 a year for the privilege of using their own sugar—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Which is quite imaginary.

Mr. LUYA: I say that will be a very unjust taxation. That is not all that will happen, but the very fact of having an excise duty on sugar will close up an immense number of factories, such as jam factories, which have been established within the last few years in Queensland. It is only the fact that they can procure cheap sugar in Queensland that has led to the establishment of those factories. It pays them better to bring the fruit here and make the manufactured article here only, because sugar is cheap.

Mr. FORREST: No.

Mr. LUYA: I am much astonished at the interjection of the hon. member for Brisbane North, as being a sugar man himself, he should know that very well—very nearly as well as the hon. member for Bulloo.

Mr. FORREST: And so he does.

Mr. LUYA: The hon. member should know very well what the effect will be upon our industries.

Mr. FORREST: What about the colonial market?

Mr. LUYA: "What about the colonial market?" I am talking about Queensland, and the effect it is going to have upon our industries. It will shut up nearly all the factories we have and which have been fostered by the Government for the last seven or eight years. I say that the policy of the Government in fostering our industries has done a wonderful lot to bring Queensland to the fore and to put her in the position she occupies to-day. As soon as ever these things take place there is no doubt at all that a lot of our working men and women who are earning a living in these industries will be thrown out of work. There can be no other result.

Mr. LEAHY: They will have to go to New South Wales.

Mr. LUYA: They will have to go somewhere else, because the main ingredient used in these factories will then be no cheaper in Queensland than anywhere else, and they will go where they can get the other materials cheaper than they can in Queensland. It is because of matters of this kind that I object to this Bill. I notice the Victorians are making a great song about the expiring industry of beet sugar—that it has come to the end of its days, is insolvent or is going into liquidation. But only last week the Government of Victoria, quite independent of the Beet Sugar Company, bought 17 tons of seed beets to keep the thing going. They are sending home

for the seed and will keep the thing going for this year. This is from *The Argus* again of 16th May—

At one of their recent meetings the board of directors of the Maffra Beet Sugar Company cancelled the order of sugar-beet seed for the coming season, probably in consequence of the inability of the company to further carry on the business. The Treasurer, acting promptly, on the suggestion of Mr. Van de Velde, has authorised the company to purchase 17 tons of seed, in order to ensure the safety of the next crop. This good news should induce suppliers to commence ploughing operations at once as the condition of the land is favourable, and experience has shown the importance of deep ploughing at this season of the year. The last of the present crop of beets was put through the factory last night.

That does not look as if the beet-sugar industry was exhausted. It is not said that there is going to be an excise on beet sugar—only on cane sugar, of course.

Mr. LEAHY: It must be uniform.

Mr. LUYA: The hon. member says that, and so do all except those who know, and those who know say differently. I do not want to detain the House from coming to a vote upon this question, but I must say that I cannot conscientiously vote for the second reading of this Bill, knowing as I do the widespread desolation it will bring throughout the Southern districts of Queensland without the slightest doubt, especially to a community which you represent yourself, Mr. Speaker. I know that the wheat industry will suffer very materially the moment that federation takes place. The consequences to the farmers will be dire and of such a nature that they will wish that they had voted half-a-dozen times against the Federation Bill.

Question put and the voices given.

Mr. STEWART: Mr. Speaker,—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Too late; it's gone; no the voices have not been declared.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is late, but it is evidently the wish of the House that the debate should be continued.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: I have no desire to prolong the debate. I think this question of federation has been rushed on the people of Queensland without proper preparation. No doubt the southern colonies have had ample time and opportunity to discuss the question. It has been before them for years; most of their public men have made numberless speeches upon it, and the newspapers have been discussing it day by day, week by week, in season and out of season, but up to the present, as far as I can discover, no interest has been taken in the question in Queensland. I venture to make this assertion: that nine-tenths of the people of Queensland at the present moment have very little conception of the results on entering into this federation compact.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEWART: I think they ought to get time. It is better to put off for a year or two or five years the consideration of the terms of an obligation such as is now to be imposed on us, rather than to rush into anything precipitately, and then find that we have done something that we very much regret. Now while this is the case with regard to the people of Queensland, it also appears to me that the public men in southern Australia are merely puppets being pulled from London. Mr. Chamberlain, that arch anti-home ruler, is evidently at the bottom of the federation movement. That is evident.

Mr. O'CONNELL: It was begun before his time altogether.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, I know that; there was a sort of feeble light before Mr. Chamberlain took it up. I think the evidence of Mr. Chamberlain's pulling the strings is very noticeable. What does Mr. Chamberlain want?

What is his object? In my opinion Mr. Chamberlain is an Imperial federationist. He wants freetrade within the British Empire, and protection against the outside world.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite a novel reading.

Mr. STEWART: Just as our federationists here want intercolonial freetrade and protection against the outside world. Are we going to be dragged into Mr. Chamberlain's imperialistic schemes? Are we going to be tacked on to the tail of Great Britain, as is evidently Mr. Chamberlain's idea or object? Is popular opinion here to emanate from the people themselves, or is it to be manufactured for them by some outside influence? That is the question? I would like to ask our federationists to consider, in all sincerity: Is this an Australian movement, or is it a British imperialistic movement? For my part, I believe the latter is the case. I believe that southern politicians are being moved by imperialistic influence, and I believe that Queensland, at the last moment, is being caught up in the stream and her people are now sought to be hurried into this thing, whether they will or not. Other federations have been painted here in glowing colours. Hon. gentlemen tell us what federation has done for Canada, for the United States, for Germany, for Switzerland, and other places. Now, what has federation done for any of these people—for Canada, for instance? Would not Canada be as rich and prosperous if it had not federation?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I don't think so.

Mr. STEWART: Has federation made the grass grow any better in Canada; has it made the cows any fatter, or the wheat harvest more profitable?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A lot more.

Mr. STEWART: Has the hon. member ever heard of the railroad swindles in Canada? Has he ever heard of Sir John Macdonald, the continuous Premier of the Federation of Canada? Like the continuous Government there in Queensland, it was impossible to turn them out. Has he ever heard of "Old to-morrow," who, when any reform was brought before his notice, said, "Put it off till to-morrow." That gentleman was looked upon as the very pink of public morality; but when he died it was discovered that he had been robbing Canada for years, and his Government along with him. That was a thing which happened under federation in our own day, in a country of our own language, and under our own eyes. Now, take the United States. Hon. gentlemen get up and tell us what a glorious country the United States is. Why! there is more poverty in the United States than in almost any other country, side by side with more wealth. They have no hereditary aristocracy there, but they have something very much worse: they have unscrupulous plutocracy.

Mr. LEAHY: They have liberty.

Mr. STEWART: Yes; that sort of liberty that the gentlemen for whom the hon. member is agent want to impose on the people of Australia. That is the kind of liberty they have. There are no greater slaves under heaven than the working men of the United States of America. Has the hon. member ever heard of Carnegie, who gives hundreds of thousands of pounds to found libraries with his right hand, and with his left hires police to shoot down his working men? Has the hon. gentleman ever read any history? Does he know anything that is going on in the world? Or is his vision confined to that remote little speck on the Australian

continent which is mostly inhabited by sheep and cattle, which send him down to this Assembly?

Mr. LEAHY: You are advocating similar trusts in corner blocks in Rockhampton.

Mr. STEWART: Very likely. There will be a great many more trusts in Australia if we federate under this Constitution. The question I ask in connection with any public matter is this: How are the people living in the country going to be affected by their laws and by their Government? Has the federation of the United States made the working men and women of America any better off than if they had not federation? Has federation done any good to the people of Canada? I say they would be just as well off to-day, in fact better off, I believe, than if they had no federation. I will tell hon. gentlemen why.

Mr. FINNEY: There might be no one at all there.

Mr. STEWART: The hon. member knows a great deal better than that; he knows that the federation of the United States had simply nothing whatever to do with the people from Europe emigrating to that country. But I desire to point attention to this fact, which has a great deal of force with me, whatever force it may have with other hon. members—namely, that the very fact of the United States of America being federated has operated injuriously against the working classes in those States. And why?

Mr. FINNEY: How can you prove that?

Mr. STEWART: Why, everybody knows that the Federal legislature of the United States is the most corrupt legislature on the face of the earth.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have one man one vote.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, I know they have one man one vote, but it avails them very little owing to their political system. What have we got there? We have two opposing political machines, contributed to by capitalists of the United States, and the machine that can grind out the most money grinds out the most votes. The political system there has simply corrupted the people of the United States until there is no such thing as political honesty to be found in the country.

Mr. ANNEAR: What nonsense!

Mr. STEWART: I know there have been a few honest men in the public life of the United States of America, but not very many. Of course we have Abraham Lincoln and a number of other men, just as we have John Thomas Annear in Queensland; but those honest, high-minded public men are like angel visits in the United States of America—very few and far between. If any man appears in the political arena of the United States who desires to act honestly and honourably for the people, what is the result? He is immediately crushed by one of their great political machines. If he cannot be bought he is bullied, and if he cannot be bullied some other measures are taken to deprive him of his influence and silence him. That is the state of affairs in the United States. It is perfectly well known that the huge financial syndicates that govern the United States have almost every legislator in that country in their pockets; every man has his price. The amount of robbery, bribery, corruption, and bare-faced iniquities that are daily perpetrated there are the scorn of the civilised world, and that has all been done within a federation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why charge it to federation?

Mr. STEWART: I do not charge the whole thing to federation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What has it to do with federation?

Mr. STEWART: It has something to do with federation. I do not say that federation is solely to blame for it, but I say that the syndicates who desire to rob the United States of America find it much easier to deal with one Central Parliament than with fifteen or twenty small local Parliaments; they find it much more convenient to buy up and bribe one set of politicians than fifteen or twenty sets of politicians. So long as people are corrupt the easier it will be for rings and trusts, and all that sort of thing, to acquire power.

Mr. ANNEAR: Changes of Government are more frequent in America than they are in Australia.

Mr. STEWART: Well, they do very little good, for a very large number of the people are in a very disgraceful condition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have manhood suffrage and a Republic.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, they have manhood suffrage and a Republic under federation. We are also told about Switzerland. I believe the Swiss federation is perhaps the most successful in the world; but what is the reason? The reason is that the whole Federal Government there is immediately under the eye of every citizen. The country is so small, and is divided into so many cantons, that the whole federal machinery is as much under the eye of each citizen as the local government is, or ought to be, under the eyes of the Brisbane ratepayers. That is the reason why the Swiss federation has been so successful.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is not New York under the eyes of the ratepayers?

Mr. STEWART: Yes, it is, and in the hands of Boss Croker and men of that stamp, which is the kind of men we are going to grow up in Australia under this proposed federation, unless we look very sharply after them. I say this, not for the purpose of getting any person to believe that federation in itself is a bad thing, but to show that even under federation countries and peoples are not necessarily very much better off than they would be if there was no federation at all. I am one of those who believe in the desirability of Australia federating. I believe that for some purposes, as for the purposes of defence and quarantine, and several other matters, it is very desirable that we should have common laws, and a common administration throughout the Australian continent. But I say this scheme of federation is altogether too expensive, and is being forced upon us prematurely. We are told that the Constitution is one of the very best Federal Constitutions in the world. I admit that at once, but that is saying very little. Look at the other Federal Constitutions; look at the Federal Constitution of Canada, under which members of the Senate are nominees; look at the Federal Constitution of the United States, how ineffective it is as a representation of public opinion. When you look at those Constitutions, you must admit that the proposed Constitution for Australia is an immense improvement on them, but that is not the question. The question is not whether this Constitution is better than the other Federal Constitutions, but whether it is as good a Constitution as we can and ought to have here. If any gentleman in business wanted to buy a machine and he could get a better one than that which was offered him, one that would be more effective for his purposes—an engine, say, that would use less fuel, and that could be worked less expensively than some other engine—would he not buy the engine that would suit his purpose best? I

should say so. Then, I say if we are going into federation let us have the very best scheme of federation that it is possible for us to devise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is the best the people of Australia can devise, apparently.

Mr. STEWART: I am not so sure of that. It is the best up to date. But in 1891, as has been said here before, we had a scheme of federation propounded which was said by a number of people to be, not only better than any other Federal Constitution, but the best that could be propounded. But everyone admits now, I think, that the Constitution of 1898 is a vast improvement on the Constitution of 1891. Very well, then, I say ten years are not much in the life of any country; let us wait ten years more, and then have another try if we cannot frame a better Constitution than that which is now before us. I believe that good as this Constitution is, with its one man one vote for members of both Chambers, with its dissolution of both Houses, and all the rest of it—I say, I believe that notwithstanding all these advantages, the power under it will drift into the hands of the moneyed classes, and that is the great difficulty I see in this Constitution. Now, I say we are getting on very well in Australia if we only knew it. We are more advanced in domestic legislation than any other community on the face of the earth. In Victoria they have a minimum wage established; they have a very stringent examination of shops and factories.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And the people are leaving in thousands for Western Australia.

Mr. STEWART: But that is not owing to the establishment of the minimum wage or to the strict supervision over shops and factories. Young, strong men are always attracted to new countries, and it is well that it should be so. As I have said, we are getting on remarkably well in Australia. We have very democratic legislation in almost every colony with the exception of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And yet we are getting on the best of them all.

Mr. STEWART: Yes, we are getting on very well, notwithstanding the bad legislation of the Government, and notwithstanding that we have got the continuous Government always sitting on our shoulders like the old man of the sea. Our natural resources are so great that we cannot help, with good seasons and fair opportunities, but go ahead. And we are getting along so well that we ought to be extremely careful about making such a rash experiment as entering into this federation under existing conditions will inevitably be. There is, to my mind, one great blot on this Constitution, and it is this: that instead of giving facilities for subdividing the various colonies, it puts every possible obstacle in the way of the creation of new States. And the worst of it is that this has been done deliberately; it was placed in the Bill at the express desire of New South Wales. And not only has this been done deliberately, but it has been done in the face of the experience of the past. The past experience of Australia must teach any reasonable man that the progress of Australia up to date has been the result of subdivision. Does anyone imagine, for instance, that if Victoria and Queensland had not separated from New South Wales, the colony of Victoria would contain so many people as it does at present, that her fields would have been tilled in the way they are, or that the mining industry would have been in the position in which it is? Coming to Queensland, can anyone, by the greatest stretch of imagination, believe that if Queensland had not been separated from New

South Wales in 1859 we should have had the city of Brisbane here to-day, that we should have had all that land on the Darling Downs under cultivation, that Ipswich would be where it is, that Toowoomba would be the populous inland town it is, that we should have such places as Gympie, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Charters Towers, and all the Western country covered with millions and millions of sheep and cattle? I think the answer is plain—that we should not. If Queensland had still continued a portion of New South Wales, Queensland would not have been a bit more developed now than is the north-eastern portion of New South Wales. That must be evident to anyone who has given the subject the slightest consideration. And yet, in the face of these incontestable facts, those who are responsible for the framing of this Constitution, instead of making the subdivision of the colonies easier and easier, deliberately and of set purpose place an almost insurmountable barrier against any more colonies being created. That is a thing which will operate most injuriously against the future progress and prosperity of Australia. If those people had been more desirous of the welfare of the continent than the supremacy of their own States, they would have been careful that the process of subdivision would have been provided for. If there were no other objection to this Constitution, then—speaking as a Central Queenslander in the first place, as a Queenslander in the second place, and as an Australian in the third place—I would say it is a Constitution which the people of Queensland ought not to adopt. We are told that a large number of people in Northern, Central, and Western Queensland are in favour of federation, for this reason and this one reason only, that it will give them intercolonial freetrade. I do not know whether the people of Northern Queensland are alive to their own position or not, but if they had not neglected their opportunities they might have had intercolonial freetrade long ago. They might have had separation, and established themselves as an independent State. But for some reason or other they abandoned that idea. They allowed themselves to be hypnotised under the Townsville influence, and now they are going to pay the penalty by being caught up and swirled into this federation. But I would like to ask the people of Northern Queensland whether they are not “paying too much for their whistle.” Even if they do get onions 1d. a lb. cheaper, and flour £1 a ton cheaper, and potatoes 15s. a ton cheaper, and one or two other articles a little cheaper than they are getting them now, does it not occur to them that, like Esau, they are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage? Even if they get these things a little cheaper, what will it avail them, if they have to barter away for them their political liberties? They must not imagine that the southern colonies are federating for the pure love of the thing. Victoria wants an extended market; New South Wales wants an extended market; and if the people of Northern and Western Queensland have not to pay in one way, they most assuredly will have to pay in some other way. If they do not get it out of the people of Northern Queensland in one way they will get it out of them in another, so that there need be no doubt on that score. The people of Northern Queensland ought to think very seriously whether it is in their best interests to barter away their political rights and liberties for the sake of getting a few articles of necessary consumption a little cheaper. The temptation is, perhaps, very great, just as I suppose the temptation was great with Esau. He was hungry, and he saw a mess of pottage ready for him if he would sell his birthright, and, like the

foolish man he was, he sold it. I hope the people of Northern Queensland will not be so foolish as that, and that they will look twice before they leap. It is possible for us to have all the benefits of intercolonial freetrade without putting our heads into the federation noose. Has not the cry from this side of the House always been, ever since the Labour party had an existence in Queensland, “Knock the duties off the necessaries of life?” If the people of Northern Queensland, of the West of Queensland, and of some other districts, had been so desirous for cheap food as they seem to be, I believe they might have had all those concessions long ago simply by sending a sufficient number of Labour men—democrats—into this House. As a matter of fact, this question of cheap food has really no connection whatever with federation. If, under federation, it will pay the people of Southern Queensland to give up the duties which they at present levy on imported food, it will pay them to give up those duties now. So far as I can see, the people of the North have very little to gain and a great deal to lose by jumping headlong into this proposed scheme of federation. There is another grave objection that I have to this proposed Constitution, and it is this: that it will inevitably result in still more centralisation than we have at the present moment. What is the complaint down in New South Wales? The complaint there is that Sydney draws everything to itself—that the railways are built, not to suit the colony, but to suit Sydney—that everything is done—it does not matter whether it is the building of a post office on the Darling, or a railroad here, a bridge there, a courthouse in some other place, or some other convenience elsewhere—everything that is done in New South Wales is done with a single eye to the advantage of Sydney. We find the same complaint arises in Victoria—the colony of Victoria is subservient entirely to Melbourne. I believe in South Australia the same thing happens; and we have all had unpleasant experience of how everything in Queensland is made subordinate to the interests of Brisbane. I am afraid that in handing over our political rights and liberties to the people of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, the evil of centralisation from which we now suffer to such a great degree, instead of being lessened, will be very much intensified. That is my opinion; and I am sorry to say I am fortified in that opinion by the various clauses of the Bill. I do not know the exact number of the clause now, but I find that, until the Parliament of the federation legislates otherwise, each State is to be one electorate for the purpose of electing senators, and also for the purpose of electing representatives. Well, now, just imagine what that means! It means that in Victoria, Melbourne, Ballarat, and two or three other large towns will rule the roost. It means that in New South Wales the same thing will occur. In South Australia again the same thing will happen, and in Queensland we will have a repetition of the same old evil. This is another most serious blot on the Bill, so far as I am concerned. If we have large electorates, what does it mean? It means that only men who are very rich can run for the Federal Parliament. And that is not the worst feature of it. There is a still greater danger behind, and it is this—that only the nominees of the huge political machines which will grow out of this federation will be able to run as candidates for the Senate.

Mr. McDONALD: That will be the Labour party.

Mr. STEWART: The Labour party? Why, it will require money to run this federal machine. The Labour party has found very great difficulty

n getting a few men into Parliament as it is ; but, with the federal machine to fight against, with the candidates of the federal machine backed by thousands and tens of thousands of pounds, and with huge electorates to deal with, what chance will Labour men have ?

Mr. BROWNE : Why, we will have charge of the Treasury then and we will use it the same as the other side does now.

Mr. STEWART : I am afraid the hon. member will not come within 500 miles of the Treasury, and I can assure him that, however much he may complain of Brisbane neglecting the Gulf of Carpentaria, when we get federation, Sydney or Melbourne—or wherever the capital will be—will pay very much less attention to it. This is a most important point. We find that in our present electorates—small as they are compared with what the federal electorates will be—it takes some money to run an election. About as cheaply as an election can be run is somewhere between £50 and £100. There are sixty-one electorates in Queensland. Suppose that for federal purposes Queensland is divided into six electorates, the electorates will be ten times the size they are now. If £100 is a fair average for running our present elections, it is not going beyond the bounds of possibility to say that £1,000—or more, perhaps—would require to be spent in contesting an electorate after federation. I ask democrats all over Queensland to consider seriously what their chances of representation are in the Federal Parliament under such conditions. I think their chance is—to put it in vulgar phrase—Buckley's—which, being interpreted, means none at all. The same thing applies to the House of Representatives. No doubt we are told that the Parliaments of the different States can cut their States up into electorates for the purpose of federal elections, but is it likely that anything of the kind will be done? When large and populous centres in the south discover what a grand thing they have got on—how much political power has been placed in their hands by the present Constitution—is it in human nature to expect that they are going to divest themselves of it? Is it in human nature to expect that they are going to cut up their different colonies into electorates, and so allow the power to drift out of their own hands? I do not think so. I do not expect so, and if the people of Queensland or the people of the other colonies have any such idea, then my impression is that they will be rudely undeceived when federation is brought about. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House much longer, but before sitting down I would just ask hon. members to consider that Queensland is a very young country; that we have a number of small and growing industries which are gradually establishing themselves within our borders, and that the result, if we federate now, most probably will be that those industries will be speedily swept away, and that the colony will be reduced to the position of a mere producer of raw material, such as wool, cattle, and a certain quantity of agricultural produce. I think there cannot be the slightest doubt that the object of Victoria and New South Wales, especially, in desiring to federate is that they may have larger markets. Well, that is quite a reasonable desire so far as they are concerned, but I think we have our duty to our own people to consider. We are desirous of seeing our lands settled; we are looking out for fields of employment for the rising generation; we desire to see the population of Queensland increased and multiplied, as I have no doubt under proper conditions it will, and I think we ought to be extremely careful in taking no step which will tend, as undoubtedly entering federa-

tion at the present moment will, to throw a large number of people out of employment. Take Brisbane itself, for instance. I certainly cannot be accused of any desire to bolster up Brisbane at the expense of the rest of the colony, but there is not the slightest doubt that we have a number of young industries growing up around here under our limited system of protection, which will be very seriously damaged if federation is brought about now. And not only is that true of Brisbane, but I think it may be said almost of every town and township in the colony. There is not a township in the colony, however remote, in which some little industry is not endeavouring to plant itself and grow into something large and profitable to the community in which it exists, and to its promoters.

The PREMIER : The Queensland protective tariff is not likely to be much reduced.

Mr. STEWART : I am quite aware that the protective tariff against the outside world is not likely to be much reduced, but we will have intercolonial freetrade.

The PREMIER : That is all for the benefit of Queensland.

Mr. STEWART : I am not so sure about that. Of course I was brought up in a freetrade country and under a freetrade flag, but I have never bowed down to the fetish of freetrade. It no doubt suits Great Britain because the British Isles are practically a town. The whole place is a workshop. From end to end the clang of the hammer is going on year after year. There is very little production of raw material, and what they want more than anything else is cheap food and cheap raw material; so that freetrade undoubtedly suits them. But Great Britain was not always a freetrade country. The very industries that are now the joy and pride of Britain were built up under a protective tariff. Look at the United States of America! Whatever may be said of the social condition of its people, it is perfectly true that if the United States threw its doors open to-morrow, hardly any industry would be injured, so completely has that country acquired ascendancy in almost every department of commerce. And I believe that in new countries like Queensland a reasonable amount of protection is the safest and best policy. I am quite well aware that the people who produce wool for export are freetraders. The people who produce gold for export are also freetraders, but we cannot settle a large number of people on the soil of any country by growing wool or by exporting gold. The gold becomes exhausted in time. There is another aspect of the question that I would like hon. members to address their attention to for a moment. Absolute freetrade in a country like Queensland operates altogether to the advantage of the absentee. It just means cheap food and cheap labour for the absentee. He gets more out of the country than he would do under protection, and the only way in which we can get at the absentee is by a system of protection. Now I would like hon. members to be very careful as to what they do to injure the small, growing industries of this colony at the present moment. I would ask them to remember that we have a large number of young men and women who are now leaving, or who have left school, and for whom the avenues of employment are none too numerous. Let them be careful how they sweep away those avenues. I have no doubt hon. members will say, "Let them settle on the land," or "Cast them overboard and they will surely swim." It is quite easy to talk in that way, but they will find the process very much more difficult than it appears to be. Now we are told that federation will largely benefit the cattle industry. That

may be. I have not the slightest doubt that if the duty on cattle of 30s. a head in Victoria and £1 a head in New South Wales is abolished our cattle will have free entrance into the southern colonies, but I would like to point out to hon. gentlemen that it is only a question of time when the people of Victoria will be compelled on their own account to abolish those duties. They have to pay more for their beef simply on account of this protection. Why, I believe down in Melbourne you cannot get a pound of good butcher's meat under 9d.; whereas in Brisbane you can get it for 2d. or 3d.; and when the people down there cast their eyes on Queensland, and see that the finest butcher's meat can be obtained for 3d. a lb., it is not likely they are going to pay 9d. very long for the sake of the Victorian farmers.

Mr. LEAHY: Would not the same argument apply to us with regard to the protected articles from the south?

Mr. STEWART: That is what I wish to point out. The question of intercolonial free-trade has not necessarily anything to do with federation. We can have intercolonial free-trade to-morrow if the colonies are so minded, without binding ourselves under an indissoluble federation. The one thing has no necessary relation to the other. The southern colonies may say: "Unless you federate we won't give you free entrance to our markets." They want a *quid pro quo*. If they allow us to get our products into their markets they want something in return. Our best market, so far as I can discover, for our cattle is not Victoria or New South Wales, but Great Britain; and I believe that if the frozen meat trade were put on a proper basis, and some means found of circumventing the rings in Great Britain which buy up and control the distribution and sale of our meat, the industry would be in a much better position. So much for the cattle men. Of course, the farmers on the Downs tell us that they will be very much injured if federation is brought about, but I do not think federation will injure them so much. They have splendid soil on the Downs, and I believe that in a few years, instead of importing wheat into Queensland or into Australia, we shall be looking all round the world for markets. But we have the sugar industry. We are told that federation will greatly benefit the sugar growers. I have not the slightest doubt that if federation were brought about to-morrow, the result would very likely be a boom in sugar. But keeping in view the past experience, not only of Queensland, but as has so often been pointed out, and pointed out eloquently by the hon. member for Knoggera, sugar is a crop that has inevitably landed the community that has grown it to any great extent in serious social, political, and economic difficulties. I ask, therefore, is it desirable that the sugar industry under existing conditions should expand and grow to any great extent? If we have an extension of the sugar industry, what does it mean under existing conditions? It means that the alien question grows bigger and bigger and more difficult to settle. If we have an open market for our sugar more land will be placed under sugar, more labour will be required, and the sugar-growers, whether they be rich companies or poor men cultivating only a few acres, all desire the cheapest labour they can possibly get; and instead of the alien question getting closer to a settlement, we shall be drifting further away, until some day we shall be dashed upon the rocks of that question. I know that some federationists use it is an argument that if we federate we shall have the assistance of the people in the southern colonies to deal with this alien question. I must say I am very doubtful on that point.

What do we find in Queensland? We find that the people side by side with the aliens are the only people who recognise the gravity of this question. We find that the most strongly pronounced anti-alien men come from the very centres where aliens are largely employed.

Mr. STORRY: They howl about them in the West, where they never see one.

Mr. STEWART: If Northern Queensland were polled to-morrow—and there are more aliens employed there than in any other portion of Australia—there would be an immense majority against the employment of aliens; if you come to the Central district, where there are a few aliens, the same result would be the case; if you come to Bundaberg—the presence of the hon. member for Bundaberg here testifies what they think of the alien question there. But it is the people of South Queensland, who never see aliens, who do not associate with aliens, who are not living side by side with aliens, who know nothing of the difficulties and evils connected with the presence of these aliens—those are the people who impose the aliens upon the unwilling residents of the North.

Mr. KEOGH: Not all of them.

Mr. STEWART: Not all, but the majority. I think it is a very fair inference to draw that the people of the southern colonies, living far away from the alien, not brought into contact with the alien, knowing nothing of the difficulties which surround his employment and his living side by side with the white man—I think it is more than probable, notwithstanding all the protests we have heard, that the people of the southern colonies would give us very little assistance indeed to deal with this alien question. It has been rumoured that some tacit understanding has been arrived at between prominent politicians in the south and the black labour party in Queensland. I do not know whether there is anything in it or not, but it appears to me as if there might be. We find that until recently the most pronounced opponents of federation were the people who bolster up the black labour traffic. Now suddenly they have turned their coats; they are quite prepared to enter the federation, and trust to the federation dealing with the alien question. I am very much afraid that what has been rumoured is, perhaps, truer than a great many people imagine. So, even on this question—the most important question that has ever arisen in the history of Australia—even on this question, I say, it is very doubtful whether union with the south will be of the slightest assistance to us; and I will ask hon. gentlemen who pin their faith to the southern colonies to help us in this matter to see whether, having their own salvation in their own hands, it would be wise of them to give it away. I do not desire to keep the House at any great length, but before sitting down I would just like again to point out what federation means under this proposed Constitution. It just means this, and nothing more—that the whole continent of Australia will be under the commercial and political domination of Sydney and Melbourne, just as France is under the domination of Paris. Just as Paris can make and unmake Governments, can create revolutions, or any other thing they desire, so, if we federate, and this proposed Constitution becomes law, Sydney and Melbourne will dominate the entire length and breadth of this continent. I, for one, do not believe that it is for the best that that should occur. I believe that the more widely you can distribute political power, the nearer you can bring the Government to the people, the more interest you can get the people to take in that Government; and you can never get them to interest themselves in what is

500, or 1,000, or 2,000 miles away—I say the nearer you can bring the Government to the people the better it will be for the people. The Premier when he was speaking said the day of small autonomous States had gone past. We are living now in the day of large empires so to speak, and I gather from that that the hon. gentleman is a bit of a jingo, and that he is imperialistic in his tendencies. But I would remind the hon. gentleman that some of the greatest States the world has ever seen, some of the freest, and some of the most prosperous have been small autonomous States. Wherever you find a large aggregation of people, or of peoples, with the Government situated at remote distances from them, there you find tyranny. I believe this to be true: That the more you can cut up Australia into small autonomous States, the more you will promote her political, social, and industrial prosperity, the quicker Australia will advance along the true lines of progress, and the more fitted will she be to take the position which she ought amongst the nations of the world. I would ask hon. gentlemen to remember that a great responsibility devolves upon us when we remember that we are the heirs of all the ages, that for us all the lawgivers have lived, for us all the nations of the world have made laws and rules and regulations, that for us every nation that has been is an experience and an injunction to keep us in the right way, and if we do not do the right thing I say we have only ourselves to blame, and we will deserve the fate which inevitably follows those who have not done what they ought to do, and that is we will become the slaves of a despotic Government, and the freedom we now possess will pass away from us for ever.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWNE: I was in hope that we would have heard some of the gentlemen on the Ministerial benches reply to some of the speeches that have been made. Since this question has been before us nearly every speech that has been made has been in opposition to the federation movement, or to the acceptance of this Bill. We have a Government who say they are very anxious on the subject, and we have some very ardent and enthusiastic federalists in this Chamber who are asking that this Bill shall be passed to the people that they may give a vote upon it, and yet we find none of those gentlemen getting up to explain the advantages and benefits to be derived from federation, or to let the people of the country know what the objects of the Bill are. It speaks very badly for the leading federationists in this House that they should let this debate drag on in the way it is going at present.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have got a good many on your side.

Mr. DRAKE: We don't want it to drag on.

Mr. BROWNE: I am quite aware that the Secretary for Public Lands is not a federationist.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are not aware of anything of the kind. I am a federationist.

Mr. BROWNE: So long as he hears hon. members talking against the Bill he is quite satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why don't your federationists talk? They are not talking either.

Mr. BROWNE: Hon. members were brought together for a special session, for a special purpose, and one would think that the men who fetched us from the far ends of the colony would at least tell us what we are here for, and what their ideas are on this subject. Those who are prepared to follow them on this question should

hear what the ideas of the leaders in this colony on federation are. Although I am a supporter of the Government in this matter of federation, there is one thing that I am going to deal with. It is said that it is and it is not a party question. But there is one thing which has been distinctly made a party question, and on that some members on this side, and I as one of the oldest members on this side now reply to the statement made by the Premier in his opening speech on this Bill, as to who was to blame for the blocking of Enabling Bills in times past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Look in *Hansard*, and you will see.

Mr. BROWNE: I have looked in *Hansard*, and I know the hon. gentleman will not like it. I happen to be a student of *Hansard*. In the long and interesting speech he delivered, in introducing this Bill, the Premier started by giving a history of the question; he stated that he wanted to get it into *Hansard*, so that the true statement of what took place in regard to federation, from its inception to the present time, might go forth to the country. In reply to interjections from this side, that the Government were to blame for preventing the intention of Queensland to be represented at the Federal Conventions, the hon. gentleman said that was not so; that he was going "to saddle the right horse"; that it was the members on this side who are to blame. The hon. gentleman made that statement that it might go forth in *Hansard*, and it having been circulated through *Hansard* I think it is only right that the previous statements of the hon. gentleman himself as to his views and the views of members on the front Government bench should be given as reported in *Hansard* on the question as to who was to blame, and whom the Premier and some of his colleagues did blame for it. It is right also to show what their opinions were upon federation at that time. So far it has been made a party question, and speaking as a party man I propose to refute those statements and show that they are not borne out by the history of the question as recorded in the records of this House. Starting with 1896, when the first Federal Enabling Bill was introduced—the one to which the hon. gentleman referred expressly when he said he was going to "saddle the right horse"—the second reading of that Bill took place on the 30th June, 1896. We know that on that occasion the hon. gentleman then at the head of the Government, Sir Hugh Nelson, treated the matter with perfect indifference. Then what did the Colonial Secretary, Sir Horace Tozer, tell us? He told us that federation had not come into practical politics—that there was "no business in it." And when the then Premier talked about it not being a party question, his colleague, Sir Horace Tozer, openly derided the idea; he said it was all humbug for anyone to talk about its not being a party question, because it was a party question, and everyone knew it. That is borne out by *Hansard*.

The TREASURER: You won't find your last remark—that Sir Horace Tozer said it was all humbug to say it was not a party question—in *Hansard*.

Mr. BROWNE: I have looked up particularly the speeches of members who are still here, and I did not purposely hunt up what Sir Horace Tozer said because he is not here, but I have given his words as far as I can remember, and I am sure other hon. members will remember them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can read the division lists—that is the most important part.

Mr. BROWNE: I can read the divisions, and the Premier will see where he was in some of those divisions. I will read just this extract from *Hansard*. Sir Horace Tozer said—

Is there any use in attempting to deceive one another on the subject? When a division is taken, will there not be a party division? If there is not, it will be the first time it has happened in the history of this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That referred to your side.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not saying which side it referred to. I am dealing with it being made a party question at that time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You were charged with making it a party question then.

Mr. BROWNE: The Hon. the Secretary for Lands, who was then Secretary for Public Instruction, has not learned sufficient English to make himself understood. I will try to enlighten him. I said the Chief Secretary said it was made a party question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: By your side. That was what he said.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not dealing with what the present Minister for Lands said, but with what Mr. Tozer said.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Why do you disfigure the corpse you dig up from *Hansard*?

Mr. BROWNE: Why? Because the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government set the example in his speech. He said he wanted it to go forth to the public who was to blame. I am following a most excellent example. The Hon. the Chief Secretary will probably recognise his own words. On page 155 of *Hansard*, 30th June, 1896, he is reported to have said—

In a debate such as this I think we should address to ourselves mentally the interrogatory which was sometimes used in this Assembly to a gentleman who is no longer with us, but who I hope we may see again in this legislature. That query was, "Are you serious?" We should all ask ourselves, are we serious in considering the question of federation? The hon. gentleman started by saying that it was not a serious question.

The PREMIER: No. I said it had not been treated seriously.

Mr. BROWNE: I may here point out a remarkable discrepancy between that speech of the hon. member and his speech the other day. In speaking on this Bill, the Chief Secretary claimed, and rightly claimed, that credit was due to some of the leading men in Queensland for being present at the Conference in 1891, when the draft Commonwealth Bill was drafted, on which this Bill is practically built. The other day the hon. gentleman, in saying what a good Bill it was, gave as one reason, that it was drafted on the lines of the Commonwealth Bill of 1891, which was practically drafted by Sir Samuel Griffith. Here is what the hon. gentleman said when it came before the House in 1896—

I am doubtful whether we are at present ripe for federation in the manner contemplated by the Constitution framed by the Convention of 1891, which would have been the greatest disaster that could have befallen Queensland and the other federated colonies—if that hard-and-fast drastic Bill had passed into law. We have seen recently that the creator of the Bill has discovered flaws in it which would render it unworkable and would have rendered it a financial curse to any colony which adopted it. We are now well rid of that measure; but what I now fear is that the delegates that will be sent to the Convention under this Bill will adopt that measure as a basis on which to frame another Bill, and that any Bill drawn upon those lines will fail of acceptance with all who desire to see that our conditions of development are not unduly interfered with. That is one reason why I view the present Bill with considerable apprehension.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman was consumed with fear that the delegates would go down and do precisely the thing that he claims

credit for at the present time. That is a little bit of discrepancy. I will not go any further through that speech. He wound up by refusing to say how he would vote on the measure. He admitted that he did not believe in the sincerity of the Government.

The PREMIER: I voted, however.

Mr. BROWNE: Here was another expression of his opinion—

The advocacy of the Bill even by the Premier and the Colonial Secretary being in the direction that they do not themselves see that any immediate good is likely to come out of it, I cannot see that it is worth while continuing a farce of this sort.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. BROWNE: That was the hon. gentleman's opinion at that time.

Mr. McDONALD: He has been converted.

Mr. BROWNE: There were several other speakers on that occasion who are not now in the Chamber, to whom I will not refer. That Bill passed through this House and went to the Council, and was sent back again on different occasions with amendments. What was the attitude of the present Chief Secretary as to the conduct of the Government on that occasion? When the measure came from the Council, it was sent back, as the Assembly refused to accept their amendments—the Council wanted to have members of that body amongst the delegates. The hon. member is reported to have defended the Council's action on that occasion, and threw the whole blame on the Government. He voted against the Government.

The TREASURER: That does not show it was a party question.

Mr. STORY: Tell us something about this Bill.

Mr. BROWNE: Hon. members don't like it, I know. When the Premier was making his splendid retrospective speech on this Bill and manufacturing facts, showing that, of course, this side was to blame, that was alright; but now when I am giving actual history it is terribly objectionable. I cannot help that. On the second occasion, the hon. gentleman took a great deal of trouble to show the people of Queensland that it was not the fault of the Government that they had not been represented at the last Conference. Here we have the hon. gentleman telling the people that—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was not a member of the Government at that time.

Mr. BROWNE: Of course not. That emphasises my argument. I would not like to have told him so myself, but as the Secretary for Lands has given us the information, of course it is alright, and I am perfectly satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was not the fault of the Government; it was the fault of your side.

Mr. BROWNE: To show that it was the fault of the Government, I will just quote from *Hansard*, 1st October, 1896. This was on the second occasion, when the Bill was sent back to the Council.

Mr. ANNEAR: That was a different Bill from this.

Mr. BROWNE: I am not to be put off the track by these interjections. On that occasion the present Premier, who then sat on the front cross bench, and was not a member of the Ministry, said—

Without going back to what took place at Hobart, he would say that the Government themselves were largely to blame for the present predicament by departing from the principles laid down in the other federation Bills, without providing that the election of delegates should proceed from Parliament as a whole.

There the hon. gentleman distinctly put the blame on the Government, and on that occasion he showed

his disapprobation of the action of the Government by voting against them. I am very happy to say that I voted against them also. When the Bill came back again the hon. gentleman was even more pronounced in his expression of opinion. On the 27th of October, when the then leader of the Government moved that the amendments of the Council be disagreed to, the hon. gentleman again spoke in opposition to the Government, and cast the blame on them. He said—

That was the plain, straightforward issue, if there was any sincerity in the matter; and if the thing fell through he said the blame would rest distinctly with the Government for their procedure at the present time. If they could not meet the Upper House by a conference, let them start on the true course of getting the delegates to the Convention elected by the electors of the colony, and if that were done their representatives would carry more weight in the Convention than if they were merely elected by one branch of the legislature. The one dignified position which the Government could take up was to let the Bill drop and introduce another based upon popular election. That would have his support. He would vote against the proposal of the Government if a division was called, as he thought it would be wholly ineffective for the purpose desired, and it was the duty of the Premier, if he really wanted the Convention to take place, to introduce an effective measure for the representation of the colony.

Those are the utterances of the hon. gentleman.

The PREMIER: That was on a different Bill; the Bill of 1896.

Mr. BROWNE: Yes, it was on the Bill of 1896; but the other day the hon. gentleman distinctly said that the fault for the failure of the Bill of 1896 rested with this side of the House, though in 1896 he cast the whole blame on the Government. We all know that that Bill was afterwards withdrawn. In 1897 we had two or three Bills introduced, and it has been stated here this session, by the Premier, that the members on this side of the House were to blame for the loss of those Bills, and that the Government were not at all to blame in the matter. In the debates of 1897 the hon. gentleman kept very quiet. Whether it was due to the fact that he had merged the position of candid critic in that of member of the Ministry I cannot say, but he was very quiet, and his mantle of "candid critic" fell on the shoulders of a gentleman who very well upheld the position—the Hon. John Murray, present Secretary for Railways. The debate on one of the Bills introduced in 1897 was adjourned a little earlier than usual in order to allow the hon. gentleman to get down from the Central district and give his views on the subject, and I was delighted to hear him when he did speak, though I do not know whether the House did right in adjourning the matter for his benefit. The hon. gentleman started his speech by proclaiming himself a strong federalist who had "a firm conviction that union is the unavoidable destiny of the Australian colonies." He then blamed the Government right through his remarks, and pursued the same line as I am following now, quoting from the speeches of the Acting Premier, the Attorney-General, the Premier, Sir Hugh Nelson, and the Hon. A. H. Barlow to show how those members of the Government were blocking federation in every way they could. He said—

The Government, instead of falling into line with the other colonies, and bringing forward such a measure as would have been acceptable to the House and to the country—such as the other Governments had introduced, and which they succeeded in passing without any opposition whatever—brought forward a measure which was unpopular, complicated, and unique in its character, asking this House to form itself into an electoral college to return members to the Convention. Further on he said—

I hold that when this change of opinion took place, the Government should have summoned Parliament and given us ample time to pass an Enabling Bill; but

instead of taking immediate action, the Government delayed until now, and we are told that unless we consent to pass this Bill in sufficient time to allow Parliament to consider the Commonwealth Bill, and enable delegates to represent the colony at the Convention when it re-assembles on the 2nd September, there will be no federation. If that is so, it is the fault of the Government, and not of this House or of the country. To my mind, the Government cannot be sincere in its desire for Australian unity, or it never would have acted in this way. I have no confidence in its sincerity on the question of Australian federation, and therefore cannot trust its nominees to represent Queensland at the Convention.

Towards the end of his speech he waxed even warmer, and used these words—

This is one of the greatest national movements that has ever taken place in any of the British dependencies; but the Government have been trifling; playing and fooling with it as if there were no business in it. I hold that there is business in it, and the Government have never risen to the occasion and dealt with it as statesmen should do, and as we expected them to do. That is the position I take up, and I hope I have made myself perfectly clear that I reserve the right, if this amendment is carried, which I hope it will be, to amend the measure when it comes before us in the direction I have indicated.

Those are the remarks then made by the present Secretary for Railways, who was at that time "the candid friend" of the Government. But I am not going to dwell any longer on that point. I thought it nothing but right, however, that some member on this side of the House should reply to the remarks made by the Premier when moving the second reading of the Bill, seeing that he occupied nearly an hour in trying to saddle the blame for the loss of the Bills of 1896 and 1897 on members on this side of the House, and I think I have refuted his statements out of his own mouth and the mouth of one of his present colleagues. I am not going to detain the House much longer. I may say I intend to support the Enabling Bill, although I am not going into any lengthy reasons for doing so. With all due deference to those who have spoken against the Bill, I must say that if I had approached the question with a thoroughly open mind; if I had had no idea on federation at all, and looked at it merely from the point of view of a North Queenslander, and living in a far off district, the opinions expressed by those who have been opposing the Bill would have made me a federationist right off the reel. I do not know whether those hon. gentlemen recognise the way they have been giving themselves away over the matter. I have listened very attentively to the speech of my hon. friend, the member for Rockhampton North, a speech remarkably good in some respects, and remarkably weak in others. Like others, he has been very kind in telling the poor benighted people of the North what they ought to do. I am sure they will value such advice tendered to them for their good. At the same time, I have an idea that the people of the North have ways of their own, and think they can carry on their own business on their own lines if they are allowed to do so. There was one argument used which would have made a federationist of me if I had not been one before. It was pressed very strongly by the hon. member for Rockhampton North, and still more strongly by some of the Southern representatives. That was with regard to freetrade. The first-named hon. gentleman waxed very warm about the North selling their birchright for 1d. a lb. on onions and 15s. a ton on potatoes. The hon. member for Albert went so far as to say that without the £1 a ton on flour and the 15s. a ton on "spuds" the Southern farmers would be absolutely landed. If the men in the far North and West who are anxious to go into federation have freetrade as one of their objects, and if they are selling their birchright—I do not know what

their birthright is, but I suppose it is something valuable—if they are doing that to get the necessaries of life cheaper, what about the men who will sacrifice a bigger birthright, who will refuse to go in with their brother Australians because they will get a trifle less for their onions their potatoes, and their flour? The argument cuts both ways. There is another thing, too. Even without studying the literature of federation, but as a rank outsider and a democrat, when I compare the men who are in favour of the movement with those against it, I should not have the slightest hesitation in voting for the Bill. Who are the men in this colony who are most strenuously opposing it? I am only speaking of their political opinions, and not disrespectfully of them personally. They are men like the Hon. A. H. Barlow and the Hon. G. W. Gray in the Upper House, and Mr. Unmack, who reads a cable from Sir Thomas McLlwraith as a forlorn hope. From my point of view it is evident that there must be something in the movement obnoxious to those who have always represented the principles of conservatism, or they would not so bitterly oppose it as they are doing. The hon. member, Mr. Kidston, reminds me that there are some beauties on the other side. There is not the slightest doubt of it, and I doubt very much whether there are any purely honest men in favour of federation, unless it be the junior member for Rockhampton and myself. I do not intend to go deeply into this matter. There are men in the Chamber who have studied it for years, and I think they should give the House and the people through the medium of *Hansard* the benefit of their opinions on the question before we take a vote upon it. I do not think it is fair to ask the people to blindly accept the Bill unless members who really understand it give their opinions both for and against.

Mr. LEAHY: We will do that in committee.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not think that will attain the object. The hon. member for Bulloo must admit that the other colonies have had a great advantage over the people of Queensland. They have had the election for the Convention, which was a sort of education to the people, and every little township in New South Wales and Victoria has been visited by leading men giving their opinions for or against the Bill. We have had nothing of that in Queensland.

Mr. LEAHY: You will have all next month.

Mr. BROWNE: Taking the size of Queensland and the difficulties of getting about, I don't see how we are going to do very much in the next month. If it has taken three years to educate the people of the other colonies, it is hardly likely the same result can be brought about in Queensland in three weeks. While voting for the Bill I need hardly say that there are some things in both the Enabling Bill and the Commonwealth Bill that I should like to see amended if it can possibly be done. I do not believe in the 123rd clause. It is very harsh and restrictive. At the same time it is a question with me as with most other Northern men, "Is there a possibility at the present time of altering it? Should we, as separationists, be likely to gain anything by standing out of federation? After considering the matter out I feel, as a Northern separationist, that we are not going to benefit by standing out of federation. In fact from one point of view I fancy we are more likely, as far as the North is concerned, to get separation after we are federated than before it.

Mr. CURTIS: What about the Centre?

Mr. BROWNE: I am speaking simply as a Northern man. The Central men are here and can speak for themselves. The entire opposition of the South seems to be on the question of free-trade. They want to keep their industries pro-

TECTED by high duties. But with federation comes intercolonial free-trade, and that selfish obstacle will be removed, and we in the North shall get on better with federation than we are doing at the present time. At any rate, I say at once that I cannot see how we can be any worse off. If anyone can show any way in which the Bill can be improved in that respect, I am ready to work with him heart and soul; but I certainly decline to drop federation when I cannot see how it is going to benefit separation—speaking as a separationist. There is another matter that was alluded to by the hon. member for Rockhampton North—that was with regard to alien labour. The hon. member seems to think that the position will not be improved by federation. Well, I most decidedly believe it will. If we get into a federation with the other colonies, I believe that with the whole of the colonies working together as one we shall have far greater power to prevent the influx of aliens than we have now—even if the Government and the people of Queensland were sincere in their desire to exclude aliens.

Mr. LESINA: The Imperial authorities will still stand in the way.

Mr. BROWNE: I do not think so. When restrictive legislation was introduced in any of the colonies in times past with regard to Chinese we know that that difficulty was met with; but at last, led by New South Wales, the whole of the colonies formed a sort of temporary federation for that particular purpose, and all of them, at the same time, passed Bills to the same effect and sent them home together. The voice of united Australia then spoke, and we got anti-Chinese legislation which we never would have got if each colony had acted alone. In regard to the future, we must be guided largely by the experience of the past. I know that numbers of members in this House are interested in the sugar plantations of the North, but plenty of men in the South of Queensland and in Brisbane are also interested in them, and with federation we have a far larger constituency to appeal to—and a far larger number of white men who are opposed to this alien labour—and who will help us in the battle. For that reason I believe there is a better chance of dealing with the question if the colonies federate than there is at present. I hope and believe that on this occasion the Government is really serious, but taking into consideration the utterances day after day in another place it makes it very doubtful as to what is to be the outcome of it all.

Mr. LEAHY: We will deal with that place when the time comes.

Mr. BROWNE: That place is always a good place to deal with, both in this and the other colonies, and one of the things that I approve of in the Commonwealth Bill is, that it fixes the status of that place very clearly. Although I do not believe the Bill is perfect, I admit I do not profess to understand the whole of it, especially the financial part of the Bill. Taking it as a whole, and comparing it with other Constitutions, I believe it is the most democratic Constitution that has ever been laid before the people of any country for their acceptance or rejection. At the same time, it might be improved. As it is, I intend to vote for the second reading, hoping that the Bill will pass, and hoping at the same time that the Federal Enabling Bill itself will be amended in committee.

Mr. JACKSON: When I look round this Chamber and see the apathy of hon. members in regard to this debate—for there seems to be a sort of tired feeling over hon. members—and when I look up and see the sparse attendance in the galleries of the general public, I am inclined to ask myself whether there is any business in this Federal Bill that is now before the House.

Mr. LESTNA : It is as dead as Julius Cæsar.

Mr. JACKSON : We are proposing to send the Commonwealth Bill—an important Bill like this—to the people of Queensland, and yet we see so little interest taken in this important question.

Mr. LEAHY : They have made up their minds.

Mr. JACKSON : I do not know whether they have. They may have made up their minds, but so far as I can judge from public opinion about Brisbane, it is to reject the Bill.

The PREMIER : No.

Mr. JACKSON : So far as I am able to judge. We shall see by-and-by. Of course we had a very great demonstration—a remarkable demonstration—not very long ago in the Exhibition Building, which seemed to imply that there was a large amount of enthusiasm in connection with federation; but, judging by the talk of the “man in the street,” I should be inclined to gauge public opinion differently from what might be implied by the demonstration at that meeting. I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill—not by any means; but at the same time good reasons might be given in opposition to the second reading. It might be argued—as was argued the other night—that the Bill does not propose to submit the question for the approval of the women of Queensland. It might be argued that the electors have not had time to consider this matter. That would be a very fair argument to urge against the Bill being sent to the people of Queensland. Of course I fully admit that they have had time to read the Bill; but reading the Bill is not sufficient. I would like to ask—as has been asked before in this House—how many hon. members could get up in this Chamber and explain the provisions of the Bill? It is quite possible that the electors of Queensland have had time to read the Bill, but reading the Bill is not understanding it. How is it possible to understand the Bill, although it has been so ably drafted that there is not a clause in it that is not to be understood, so far as the English of it is concerned. At the same time we cannot see the far-reaching effects that some of its clauses may have on Queensland, and on Queensland industries, and also on the democracy of Queensland, and the democracy of Australia. Then again it might be urged that there is little interest taken in the question. Another important objection that might be urged against the second reading is that Queensland had no voice in framing the Bill. Of course it may be said that we had a voice in framing the Bill of 1891. But this is not the Bill of 1891—it is quite a different Bill—a far better Bill, I am quite willing to admit—but practically we have had no voice in framing this Bill which we are going to send to the people of Queensland, and ask for their approval or disapproval. I am aware that the Premier was down at the Conference of Premiers in Melbourne in February or March last, but I take it for granted that the whole Bill was not reviewed on that occasion. Even if it were reviewed, I do not suppose the Premier claims, or claimed—in fact, I think he said in this House that he did not claim to represent the people of Queensland at that Conference. My own opinion is—as I interjected this afternoon when the hon. member for Rockhampton was speaking—the Bill was not improved at the Premiers’ Conference, even as regards the abolition of the three-fifth majority and the substitution of the bare majority. I am not quite sure—although I claim to be a democrat—looking at it from the point of view of the small States, that that is an improvement; and I am quite certain that the provision which requires the consent of the people of a State before that State can be divided is a most conservative addition to the Bill.

Mr. BROWNE : Hear, hear !

Mr. JACKSON : That addition alone, which was made at the Premiers’ Conference, is almost enough to induce me to vote—not against the second reading of the Bill, but to vote against the Commonwealth Bill when it goes before the people for their approval.

The PREMIER : These were the conditions that New South Wales insisted upon.

Mr. JACKSON : Let me ask what was the object of the Chief Secretary going to the Conference if he was going to give in to everything New South Wales asked for? Where was the Northern influence in the Cabinet? This and the previous Government have been supposed to be ruled by Northern influence.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Who supposed it?

Mr. JACKSON : The Southern newspapers were continually saying it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : The Northern members said they were governed by Southern influence.

Mr. JACKSON : Where was the Northern influence in this matter when the Premier was at the Conference? I am quite sure there is not a single individual in Northern or Central Queensland who will approve of that amendment. Now we have heard to-night from the hon. member for Croydon a different version to that of the Premier, as to what was the cause of the three Federal Enabling Bills of 1896 and 1897 being lost. I have no hesitation in saying that the past and present Government—because after all it is the same old continuous Government—were to blame for the loss of those three Federal Bills.

The PREMIER : No; not the last.

Mr. JACKSON : Well, the first Federal Enabling Bill went through this Chamber. It was a most grotesque proposal that was made, even to this Chamber, before it was sent to the Council. The idea of dividing members of this House into three divisions, and allowing those members to elect the delegates to the Convention! It was a most absurd proposition. When I say “absurd” of course it might not have been so absurd for the Government, because the result of the elections would have been that they would have been able to get eight of the ten members from their own side. The Labour party happened to have a majority in the Central district, and they could have elected two representatives, but the Government could have elected three for the North, and five for the South. When that Bill went to the other Chamber the Council wanted to have a finger in the pie, and made the Bill still more grotesque by proposing that they should divide themselves into three divisions and have a vote on the election of delegates. That was not entertained by this Chamber, so the Bill came to grief. Apparently the Legislative Council was responsible for the defeat of the Bill. The second Bill was defeated, I admit, by the Labour party, combined with the anti-federalists, but the Labour party were perfectly consistent all through, because on the first Bill of 1896 they took up the attitude that the delegates should be elected by the people, and they adopted a similar attitude in 1897. If the anti-federalists on the Government side chose to come over and vote with us that was their lookout. The second Bill, of 1897, was lost by the combination of the separationists and the anti-federationists on the Government side. Those were ostensibly the reasons why the Bills were lost, but the real reason was that the Government were not sincere on the question. I will read extracts from two papers that support the Government, and I think they will show conclusively who was to blame for the loss of

those Bills. Here is an extract from the *Brisbane Observer* of 17th August, 1898, and the *Observer* is a Government paper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You might as well read articles from the Labour paper.

Mr. JACKSON: At all events I will read the article for what it is worth—

Moreover the people of Queensland will not patiently endure another six months of the course adopted by Sir Hugh Nelson. They are ready to follow a strong lead in the direction of federation, and they can see that the other colonies will be immensely strengthened in their purpose if Queensland now atones for the Government's traitorous handling of union in the past. Then, coming nearer home to the *Brisbane Courier* of February, 1899, we find this in a leading article—

What we can see clearly is the possibility of the Government playing into the hands of provincialists in this colony as Sir Hugh Nelson and his colleagues played into their hands three years ago—and on the eve of a general election. He came back from a Premiers' conference pledged as Mr. Dickson is pledged to forward the cause of federation. He kept silence when appealing to the country, and was allowed to keep silence, because the electors believed that he would do all that he promised. We know how he kept his pledges, and Australian unity has been delayed in consequence. Mr. Dickson argues, however, that there is nothing to regret. Do not the last amendments to the Bill prove it? The reply is that Queensland ought to have been represented at the Conventions of last year and the year before, and she would have been represented had Sir Hugh Nelson been true to his trust.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can get as many quotations to the contrary if you want to.

Mr. JACKSON: Then let the Minister get up and give us some.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I don't want to waste time, thank you.

Mr. JACKSON: I am not quoting from papers representing our particular opinions, but the opinions of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is only one person's opinion, I suppose.

M. JACKSON: It will be admitted, anyway, that the Government do not deserve very much credit for the statesmanlike manner in which they have handled this question. They have had a reputation as heaven-born financiers for many years, and no doubt they will now claim a reputation as heaven-born federationists, but the extracts I have read show that they have not handled the question either very sincerely or very ably. The question that ought to be asked now is, "Are we ripe for federation?" and to that I should be inclined to say "Yes;" but another question of almost equal importance is, "Is the Bill as good as it ought to be?" To that I should say "No." I do not think that it is. I do not think it is as democratic as it ought to be. That seems rather a sweeping assertion when it has been generally admitted that this Constitution is one of the most democratic that the world has ever seen. But I do not think it is democratic enough; and one of my great objections to it is that it means large constituencies, both for the House of Representatives and for the Senate. I suppose under this Bill, if it becomes law, North Queensland would not have more than, if it had so many as, two representatives in the Senate. Just fancy two representatives for an area of country 250,000 square miles in extent. I do not believe we should have more than two members in the House of Representatives either. That would be in all about four representatives for that large area. The experience of Australia is that large constituencies are inimical to democracy. We might quote South Australia and Victoria in support of that. We might quote the electorates in connection with the Upper Houses of those two colonies. The con-

stituencies are large, and only conservatives get returned. Under this Bill with the large constituencies we should have only wealthy men—and as a rule wealthy men are conservative—who would get returned to either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Of course if I were asked how it would be possible to make it more democratic, the only answer I could give would be to have smaller constituencies, which means more members, and that means more expense.

Mr. HARDACRE: Or smaller powers.

Mr. JACKSON: That would be one alternative. Perhaps we are turning over too many departments to the Federal Government. We can either have more members with more expense, or postpone the question of federation until the colonies get more population. Another provision in the Bill, which I do not think very democratic, is to give the Governor-General power to dissolve the House of Representatives. Under the colonial system and the British system of Government, the Queen and the Governors have the right to dissolve Parliament practically at any time, but it does not seem to me that that is in keeping with modern ideas. I think that when an election takes place, and members are returned to Parliament for a certain time, they ought to remain members for that time, and I do not think it should be in the power of any Premier to dissolve Parliament at his will. When we give the Governor-General power to dissolve Parliament, it simply means the Government—the Premier—for the time being is given that power. I think that power should be taken away.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That would not be responsible government.

Mr. JACKSON: It might not be according to the system to which we have been used; but if we go to Switzerland we find that the Ministers there are elected, and it is admitted by all writers on the question that the Government in Switzerland loyally carry out the wishes of Parliament even when Parliament gives them an instruction of which they may not approve. I think we should have some change in that respect in our Federal Constitution. Suppose we took that power from the Governor-General or the Premier, in the event of a deadlock between the Premier and the House, it would be easy to settle the matter by referendum. Then there is another aspect of this question—and I am sorry that there does not seem to be a more eager desire on the part of hon. members to discuss this Constitution Bill almost clause by clause, because it has scarcely ever been discussed in Parliament, and it has scarcely been discussed outside beyond the columns of the *Brisbane Courier*. When I think of this I am astonished at the apathy shown by hon. members. I do not know why they have taken up this attitude—I do not know whether it is that they do not want to express their opinions one way or the other. I would not like to impute that as a reason, but if it is the reason they ought not to be proud of it. It is for us as representatives to express our opinions, even if our opinions are not in accord with those of our constituents. I may be making a mistake in giving expression to the opinions I am now expressing. They may be contrary to the opinions of my constituents; in fact, during the election, I pointed out the amendment the Premier had allowed to be made in connection with the division of States, and I said, "In spite of all those defects, I would advise you to vote for federation." But since considering the matter more, and seeing the way it has been received by this House, I am not sure that I have not made a mistake in giving my constituents that advice. Hon. members ought to get up here and advise

their constituents; if they do not do so here, they should certainly take the first opportunity to tell them what they think about the matter.

The PREMIER: Surely hon. members are the best judges of their actions without being lectured.

Mr. JACKSON: I do not wish to lecture hon. members; I should be very sorry to do that; but surely an hon. member is allowed to express his opinion on a question like this, as to what he thinks of the conduct of hon. members. I am not speaking of any individual member; I am speaking generally; and I should be sorry if any hon. member were to take offence at what I have said. Leaving the democratic part of the Bill on one side, I will now refer to the question of over-centralisation. I heard the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, this afternoon advocate that the railways should be turned over to the federation. Those who have read the Convention debates know that that question was taken into very serious consideration by the members of the Convention, and it was decided—very wisely in my opinion—that the railways should not be taken over, though power is given in the Bill to take them over with the consent of the State. We find, however, that one important department is to be turned over to the Federal Government—that is, the post and telegraphs and telephones. I am inclined to think a mistake has been made there.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No mistake.

Mr. JACKSON: A blunder, then. I think a portion might be turned over—that is, postal and telegraphic communication between the colonies, between the federation and the outer world; but I think it is too much to turn over to the Federal Government the establishment of mail services and post offices in outlying districts, thousands of miles away from the seat of the Federal Government. We know what difficulties we have in Queensland—those who come from the Northern districts understand what centralisation means—and it is no wonder if we have a fear that under this Federal Constitution centralisation will take place in the southern colonies in a way that will be injurious to the outlying districts of Queensland. I have no sympathy with those provincialists who fear that Queensland will be affected injuriously so far as trade and production are concerned. I do not think really that our industries will be injured, but I certainly think there is some danger from the financial clauses of the Bill. I think Queensland will probably suffer so far as the Customs collection goes. It is provided in the Bill that on any goods imported into another colony and consumed in Queensland the duty will be credited to Queensland, but I am sure that it will be impossible to follow those goods up properly, and we shall not get credit for all the goods we import from Sydney and Melbourne, as was shown by Mr. Unmack some time ago in the Centennial Hall. In some cases the goods are manufactured in the other colonies from the raw material that has been imported, and it will be impossible to discriminate between goods manufactured in the other colonies and goods of foreign manufacture coming to Queensland from those colonies. So I think that for the first two years Queensland is likely to lose on that point. Then, as regards the Braddon clause, I think Queensland is likely to suffer in comparison with New South Wales, at any rate under that clause, because a quarter of the Customs revenue of Queensland at the present time is £330,000, and a quarter of the Customs revenue of New South Wales is £350,000; so that, with less than half the population of New South Wales, we will be contributing almost as much in Customs revenue. The Commonwealth Government will have

power to deduct a quarter of our net Customs and excise revenue, so that I believe we shall lose very heavily under that clause. I do not propose to go into the details of the Commonwealth Bill on the second reading of this Bill, and I understand that as it is scheduled to this Enabling Bill we shall have an opportunity in committee of discussing any details of it we think fit. I shall not offer any opposition to the second reading of this Bill, and I have no idea that there is even to be a division taken upon it. I should think not, as, though I say that arguments can be used against the second reading, I should not call for a division myself, for that would look as though we had not confidence in the people. Though the people may be in ignorance on this matter I do not think it would be right for us to say they shall not have an opportunity of voting upon the question. I think we should give them that opportunity, and then let us express our opinions for or against federation. At the present time I feel that hon. members of this House are in a very responsible position. For myself I feel the responsibility very much. I suppose members on both sides know scores and hundreds of their constituents who are not able to give the time we are able to give to the consideration of this question, and for that reason they are inclined to place reliance upon our opinions, and to be guided by them. It is for that reason I feel the responsibility. Anyway, I hope that before this vote is taken—if it is going to be taken, and there is no certainty that it is because it depends upon the action of New South Wales. I must say I do not see why it should be contingent upon the action of New South Wales, and while the Premier was introducing the Bill I asked by interjection whether he did not intend to let the vote be taken in Queensland irrespective of the action of New South Wales. I think we should have a vote now that we have gone so far, and have had a special session to discuss the question, I see no reason why we should not refer it to the people, and let them say whether they are in favour of it or not.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: In moving that the committal of the Bill stand an order of the day for Tuesday next, I wish to say to any hon. members who desire to move amendments upon the Bill that the Parliamentary Draftsman will be at their service; and if the principles of any amendments they desire to make are sent on to the Chief Secretary's department in the meantime, I will see that they are sent on to the Parliamentary Draftsman, so that they may be circulated as soon as possible.

Mr. DRAKE: I would like to ask the Premier whether he will take some steps to see that the Bill is thoroughly well circulated. The hon. gentleman is no doubt aware that there have been some complaints that some electors have not received copies. The hon. gentleman, I think, stated somewhere that anyone who had not received a copy could get one on leaving his name with a clerk of petty sessions. I do not know whether he has taken any steps of that kind, but I would suggest that some copies of the Bill could be placed somewhere where they might easily be obtained—at a post office, for instance. I think also that it is desirable that the Bill should come into the hands of those who are not electors who may be desirous of seeing it. There are no doubt many such persons who take an intelligent interest in the matter, and who

might influence others. I think it would be no loss to be even a little extravagant with paper and ink on this occasion.

The PREMIER: If I may be permitted to speak again, I may say that already I have given instructions that a circular is to be issued to clerks of petty sessions throughout the colony to publicly notify that anyone desirous of obtaining a copy of the Bill has only to leave his name and address with the clerk of petty sessions, and the Government Printer will at once forward a copy. Already nearly 100,000 copies have been circulated throughout the colony, and it would be rather a large order to instruct that a certain number of copies should be sent to every post office in the colony in anticipation of a demand which might never be made. I believe the course which has been adopted will meet all that is necessary, and should any electors or others appear to be inadequately supplied I shall take such further steps as may be necessary to meet the demand for the Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!
Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-three minutes to 9 o'clock.