

VOTE OF THANKS TO SIR F. N.  
BROOME: REPLY TO.

THE PRESIDENT: I have to report that I have received the following reply from Sir F. N. Broome to the Resolution passed by the Council on the 22nd January last, recording its sense of the services rendered by the Delegates in connection with the passing of the Constitution Bill:—

"Government House, Barbados,  
"SIR, 31st March, 1891.  
"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd of January last, communicating a Resolution and the thanks of the Legislative Council of Western Australia with reference to my action in the matter of the Constitution Bill.

"I beg, through you, to assure the Legislative Council that I feel much honored by their kind notice of my humble services, and that I greatly value the recognition conveyed to me.

"I have, &c.,  
"F. NAPIER BROOME.  
"The Hon. the President  
"of the Legislative Council,  
"Perth, Western Australia."

ERADICATION OF "STINKWORT."

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I have to ask the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, What steps the Government intend to take to stop the spread of a noxious weed called "Stinkwort," which is appearing in the Kojonup District, and which, if not dealt with at once, is likely to prove as great a pest as the Poison Plant?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): The Government are not possessed of any information on this subject, but if the hon. gentleman will furnish me with particulars the matter shall receive due consideration.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I rise, Sir Thomas Campbell, to continue the debate upon the Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which this session has been opened. I noticed in last evening's newspaper it was stated that the gentleman who moves the adjournment of the debate is considered to be the leader of the Opposition. From what source that statement was

inspired I know not; but at all events I shall not follow on such lines. I do not think in either House we are sufficiently advanced in what I may call the science of politics, or in what some call the chicanery of politics, to have sides—to have one party in power and another party prepared to oust them. In this colony we have no marked features of policy at the present time; we have only to deal with such questions as can reasonably be discussed from an impartial standpoint. The attention of hon. members has been drawn in the Speech to the question of Federation. It is not proposed, I am glad to say, to proceed further with the matter now, and certainly on the lines on which it has been suggested it is a principle I shall ever oppose. What, let me ask, would be our object in federating? How can we federate? What direction is the proposed federation to take? Even a casual glance at the state of the question at the present time shows that the two chief colonies of Australia—Victoria and New South Wales—differ from each other as much as they differ from us. The railways, which are the very arteries of circulation of the body politic, are at variance. They have a break of gauge, and both of them of different gauge to us. How, then, can we federate at a distance of 1,000 miles, in such a manner as to benefit either ourselves or the whole? One of the points urged is that we are to have a sort of common fund, into which is to be poured the whole of our Customs revenue, and that we are with it to have intercolonial free trade. Free trade I should be most glad to see; for protection is a word of art, conveying a meaning I shall always deprecate. We are to hand over, under this Bill, the whole of our revenues, and when the general expenses are paid we are to get back our share of the balance. It does not require any very great amount of talent to see how we should fare under such circumstances. I suppose the finances of this colony were never in a more healthy condition. A portion of the Loan has been raised, and not before it was wanted. Some part of it has already been judiciously expended, and there is yet a considerable sum available for different purposes. We are told that there should be an amendment to the Constitution Act; but we must

remember that it is only lately the vessel of State has been set to sail on these waters, and to at once begin to alter the course would be most disastrous. Of course if there be a defect in the present Act, it should be remedied; but to make the alterations I have heard suggested would mean a general election at a very inopportune time, and consequently disaster, and on whom would it fall? It cannot fall other than on the constituencies of the colony. Even suppose a general election were to take place, we cannot fail to see that there will be little or no change in the *personnel* of the House below; and therefore why should we bring about that which I shall be very sorry to see—the turmoil of politics amongst us at this early stage of our career, as it exists elsewhere. At present everything possible is being done to develop and open up the country. The Government intends to bring this about by the construction of railways, and what can be more beneficial to the community? We have already experienced the very beneficial effects that have resulted from the construction of the line to King George's Sound. It has virtually made the colony, and if the line from Guildford to Geraldton be soon completed, and thence taken on to Mullewa, we shall experience that which we in our wildest days could never have anticipated. This railway will lead to a perfect *el dorado*. It will assist materially in the development of the country through which it will pass, and will be a means towards opening up the rich goldfields at the Murchison. The Yilgarn railway also will tend to further progress being made in the development of some of the richest reefs in the world. We must all be well aware of what railway communication does for any country. We have only to look to our own Eastern line for an example. Before its construction the land to the east of Perth was looked upon as little better than a desert, but now we find it the site of splendid vineyards and excellent timber stations. The next matter of importance is that of harbor works. We were all somewhat astonished, when the present Parliament was first called together, to hear of the large sums of money that it was proposed should be lavished on a breakwater at Fremantle.

Since then the Ministry have found that there exists within their grasp, at a distance of four miles only from Fremantle, an almost natural harbor. This they now propose to open up by dredging across those necks of sand which are to be found between Carnac and the outer rocks, and thus allow ships of nearly any size to come into what is known as Owen's Anchorage with perfect safety. It, however, strikes me that if this anchorage is to be attacked, it should be from the sea; but so that we may properly give an opinion maps and plans should be laid before us. Any person who knows Owen's Anchorage or Cockburn Sound will state that all the rocks and impediments to be found there are of coral formation and sandstone, and not much difficulty should be incurred in removing them. For the information of the House, I think some effort should be made by the Survey Department to locate these rocks and impediments to navigation, so that hon. members may be able to judge whether the best means are to be taken to remove them, and to know which is the more suitable position. If the proper officer of the Government has not the available time, we have among us another gentleman of considerable authority on these matters (the Hon. J. A. Wright), and with such means of obtaining information it would be wrong if we were to cast them aside. As to other harbor improvements, I feel sure that as soon as any port has anything to export, ships will go there, and, if further conveniences are required, a very small sum will give it them. The report of Messrs. Richardson and Paterson on the subject of irrigation has been laid before us, and it is based on what those gentlemen saw and heard at Renmark and Mildura. Now we are far better off than either of these places. We have the Darling Range with streams issuing from it in all directions and watering good soil, and we have large areas of land capable of growing almost anything. It is true that a great deal of the land lying at the foot of the range is held in fee simple, but some means might easily be taken to bring the necessary capital and labor upon it, and thus make it productive and fit for settlement. Agricultural areas have been mentioned, but in connection with these there is one

disadvantage the immigrant labors under—he cannot go to the Survey Office except as to restricted areas, and take up the land he has seen and chosen. It would be a good thing, I think, if the Survey Department would survey land with a view to conferring knowledge to others. Something has been said about the sum of £60,000 which has been guaranteed by the Government to the Midland Railway Company. As I understand it, that advance was made to prevent some 400 or 500 men being thrown out of work—not in the form of a relief work, but for a work that will be of the greatest advantage to the colony. We have already seen the advantage of the line to Albany, and this line to Geraldton cannot be of less importance. In the Speech we are congratulated on the progress of the colony. No doubt there has been progress—enormous progress; but I am afraid it has not been marked by so great an amount of immigration as we might have expected, especially as we know that there is in the other colonies a large surplus population unable at the present time to earn a decent livelihood. This colony should be the working man's paradise, for here material comfort is within his reach if he chooses to obtain it. He can, in fact, get everything here which he needs, and everything which will tend to raise him in the social scale and in his own estimation. It has been said that he needs an extension of the franchise; but surely, sir, if he has anything in him at all he will be either a freeholder or a householder of the value of £10 a year, or a lodger somewhere to a similar value. And to indulge in that wild scheme of manhood suffrage, should we not be offering an insult to every laboring man who by thrift, decency, and honest work has gained the franchise? In conclusion, let me ask again, in answer to the suggestion which has been made that there should be some sort of an opposition, How can we possibly, at this present moment, expect to have two sides in this House? Every topic of objection is of the most flimsy and trivial character, and it is best that we should agree, as we evidently do, to carry out our duties quietly, reasonably, without passion, and without prejudice.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I will, sir, with the permission of the House, make a

few remarks on the Speech which His Excellency the Administrator read to us when he opened the session, and which not only informs us of the course pursued by the Ministry during the last twelve months, but also affords us information as to what is intended to be done in the future. The action of the Government in the past cannot fail to have given unquestionable confidence both to the public of this colony and the world generally, for they have shown to a great extent what our resources are capable of, and they have proved that it is our intention to do the business of State honestly. After the close of last session the Federal Convention met at Sydney. Our representatives were present, and were warmly welcomed by those representing the other colonies; but I cannot say that I am in favor of federating at the present time, and I agree with the Ministry that we have many things to attend to before devoting ourselves to this subject. The other colonies want to federate far more than we do; no colony need be more careless about it than this one. I am very pleased to hear that the finances are in an even better position than the Ministry anticipated, and it is a very good sign. Considering that nearly every member of the present Ministry is new to office, I think a great deal of credit is due to them for the manner in which they have conducted the affairs of the colony, and it is most satisfactory to us to hear that we have a surplus. I think, however, it would have been better had we floated the whole of the Loan at once. In my opinion small amounts asked for on the market do not attract the same amount of attention as large ones, and, considering that we have a good country and good credit, we should not have been afraid to ask for what we wanted. As to the amendment of the Constitution Act, I am quite prepared to admit that holders of seats should not be confined to owners of land; but in regard to the question of the franchise, I do think that if a man cannot get a vote under the Act as it stands he is not worth considering; for I am quite certain that any man who is industrious, or who only works for half the week, can do well enough to obtain for himself a vote. The great drawback in this colony is that everyone can live too easily. We are told that the Public Works Depart-