

9. It is, I hope, quite unnecessary for me to say that in these remarks I am and can be actuated by no feeling of indisposition towards those principles of Responsible Government which have had full play elsewhere on the Australian Continent, and have reproduced the free institutions of the Mother Country in no unworthy form. Those institutions are the proper and desirable end to which the colony tends, at which it must in time arrive, and towards which all those, whether there or at home, who are concerned in the administration of its affairs, ought to direct their measures. This question is, in my opinion, merely one of time; and as soon as it can be shown that by population, revenue, and the other conditions of self government, the colony is qualified for the change, no one will welcome that change more cordially than myself. But, on a calm review of its present circumstances and conditions, I cannot but question whether this great alteration is not somewhat premature, and I feel it my duty, though not a grateful one to me personally, to withhold any hasty consent, and to interpose at least such prudent delays as will secure a full and dispassionate consideration of a decision which is fraught with such important consequences to the Colony.

I have, &c.,
CARNARVON.

PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION.

Message from the Governor—No. 2.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

WILLIAM C.F. ROBINSON,
Governor.

The Governor recommends to the favourable consideration of The Honorable The Legislative Council a copy of a letter, with enclosures, received from the Victorian Commissioners for the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876, inviting this Colony to take part in the Exhibition which it is proposed shall be held in Melbourne in the month of August next.

Government House, Perth, 22nd January, 1875.

The Council adjourned at 7.40 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 25th January, 1875.

Swearing in of Member—Assent to Bills—Coolie Labor—Responsible Government: Despatch from Secretary of State—Philadelphia Exhibition—Committee for Coolie Immigration

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 p.m.
PRAYERS.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBER.

The SPEAKER administered the Oath of Allegiance to Mr. George Randell, the newly elected member for Perth.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor; on the twenty seventh day of November, in the year of Our Lord, 1874, and in the 38th year of Her Majesty's reign, was pleased, in the name and on behalf of the Queen, to assent to the following Acts, that is to say:—

"An Act to control Recruiting in Western Australia for the service of Foreign States."

"An Act to appropriate the sum of One Hundred and Fifty-two Thousand One Hundred and Sixteen Pounds Eight Shillings and Twopence out of the Revenue of the Colony for the Service of the year One thousand eight hundred and seventy-five."

"An Act for the Incorporation of the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod of Perth as Trustees of the Branch of the Church of England in Western Australia."

COOLIE LABOR.

Mr. MARMION, in accordance with notice, moved that the introduction of Chinese Coolies asked for by the Rockingham Jarrahdale Timber Company, Limited, be undertaken by the committee named by this Honorable Council, and that such committee regulate the terms and conditions under which such introduction shall take place, and negotiate the arrangements with the manager of the company.

Mr. BICKLEY moved, as an amendment, that the Proposition cannot be complied with.

Mr. PADBURY, one of the committee referred to, said that only 36 applications for coolies had been received from settlers, who, in each case, had deposited a sum of £2 per head, according to the conditions upon which the grant was voted by the Council. These applications had been sent to Singapore. There was fully £600 of the grant yet available, and he would support the proposition made by the company.

Amendment not agreed to.

Question put and passed.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

Despatch from the Secretary of State.

Mr. STEERE, in moving in accordance with notice that the House do then take into consideration the Despatch from the Secretary of State relating to Responsible Government, presented to the Council on the previous Friday evening, with His Excellency's Message, said:—Sir, at a recent session of this Council, it will be in the recollection of hon. members, a Bill providing for the establishment of Responsible Government in this colony was, with the exception of one dissentient, unanimously adopted by this House, and His Excellency Governor Weld intimated to the Council that he would recommend that Her Majesty's assent be given to the measure. The Bill in due time was forwarded home, and a very general opinion prevailed throughout the colony that it would be assented to by the Imperial Government, and that a system of ministerial responsibility would, with the least possible delay, be established in this as in the other Australian colonies. It must, therefore, have been with a feeling of great surprise, and certainly of regret, that hon. members of this House read the despatch of Her Majesty's Secretary of State, presented to this Council on Friday evening. The remarkable moderation of feeling preserved on the occasion, and the exercise of forbearance displayed, while it spoke favorably of the loyalty of the members of this House, was by no means to be accepted as indicative that the feeling in favor of Responsible Government had in any way moderated since the introduction and passing of the Bill to establish that system. On the contrary, I am of opinion that the conclusion then arrived at with such remarkable unanimity was the result of a full and unalterable belief that the change contemplated was one that would be beneficial to the best interests of the colony and of its inhabitants. (Cheers.) I myself still entertain that belief as firmly as ever, and I think almost every hon. member in this House is in accord with me on this point. (Hear, hear.) Sir, after a

calm, deliberate and dispassionate consideration of the noble lord's despatch, I must confess that I find nothing in it calculated to induce me to alter my opinion; nor do I think it contains any argument likely to cause any change in the minds of those hon. members who, like myself, are of opinion that the time has arrived when this colony should assume the administration of its own public affairs. (Cheers.) It has been reported that the noble lord arrived at the views set forth in the despatch before the House consequent upon representations—or, more properly speaking, misrepresentations—of persons residing in the Mother Country who style themselves friends of the colony. If so, all I have to say is, the colony has good reason to exclaim "Save me from my friends!" (Cheers.) No doubt some such misrepresentations, some extraneous influence, must have been brought to bear on the noble lord, or he would not otherwise have set at naught the unanimously-expressed wish of this House. Be that as it may, Her Majesty's Secretary of State having issued such instructions to Governor Robinson as must preclude His Excellency from taking any measures towards the establishment of Responsible Government in this colony, it becomes the duty of those hon. members who, like myself, are in favor of the immediate adoption of that system, to consider the most desirable and expedient steps to be taken to bring about the consummation of our wishes, and to carry out the expressed desire of our constituents. In my opinion, this end can be best attained by hon. members giving their adherence to the series of resolutions which I am about to move, and which have already been placed in their hands. It may be said that this Council can, if it so desires, run contrary to the wishes of the Secretary of State as embodied in the despatch under consideration, it being within its power, as the popular assembly, to introduce and pass any measure to amend or extend the present Constitution. But, sir, I should be sorry to see such a course pursued, nor do I think it at all likely that it will be, seeing that it ever has been the desire of this House to conduct its proceedings in accord with the views of Her Majesty's Government. (Cheers.) Lord Carnarvon in his despatch directs Governor Robinson to make himself acquainted with the wishes of the people of this colony relating to the proposed constitutional change. Now, I, for one, should like to know how this is to be done, by any constitutional means other than by an appeal to the country at a general election. This has already been done, and there could be no doubt that the verdict of the aggregate constituencies—and that verdict was in favor of the proposed change—was substantially the judgment of the people at large. (Cheers.)

There came no uncertain sound from the electoral bodies on that occasion, and the decision of the elections was accepted on all hands as substantially the decision of the country. What more then can be required? The noble lord goes on further to say that, granting there exists among the various constituencies a general concurrence of opinion in favor of Responsible Government, it would be very desirable to ascertain whether such concurrence of opinion has been arrived at with a full understanding of the case. I myself am not going to deny that, when the subject was first mooted, a great deal of ignorance did prevail with regard to it; but since then the question has been thoroughly ventilated; that ignorance has been entirely dispelled; and I have no hesitation in affirming that at the present moment there exists in the minds of the people of this colony a very clear apprehension of the subject. I don't mean to say that they thoroughly understand all the details of the measure upon which an appeal has been made to the country, any more than did the electors of England understand the details of the Irish Land Bill, or the Irish Church Bill; when those measures were under consideration. The main principles of Responsible Government are, however, understood by the electors of this colony, and it was with a clear apprehension of those principles that the various constituencies at the recent general election returned members pledged to support the immediate introduction of a system of self-government. The country having thus been appealed to, and unmistakeably given its verdict in favor of the constitutional change involved in the adoption of a system of ministerial responsibility, and that verdict being in fair unison with the judgment of the community, what necessity can there be for any further steps being taken to find out public feeling with regard to the question? From one of the resolutions which I am about to submit for the affirmation of the House it will be seen that exception is taken to the third paragraph in Lord Carnarvon's despatch, with reference to the course pursued by the late Governor, Mr. Weld, in relation to the introduction of Responsible Government. The adoption of that system was never urged upon this Council, or the colony, either publicly or privately, by Mr. Weld. I have often had conversations with His Excellency on the subject, but he never expressed himself in favor of its speedy or hasty introduction here. "It is a question," His Excellency always said, "which you must approach with caution, and the change should not be adopted without giving the question, in all its phases, a calm, deliberate, and dispassionate consideration." These were the sentiments entertained by Mr. Weld relating to

the introduction of a system of self-government. It was quite true that when, by a unanimous resolution of this House, His Excellency was desired to bring in a Bill to establish such a system, he did so, and further intimated by Message that, in compliance with a request of the Council, he would recommend that Her Majesty's assent be given to it. That, however, was a very different thing to urging the matter on the colony, which Mr. Weld undoubtedly never did. (Hear, hear.) When our present form of Government was introduced, it was looked upon as a stepping-stone to a system of ministerial responsibility, and viewed in no other light. It was the same in the neighboring colonies, who were not long in discarding it and embracing a system more congenial to the tastes and feelings of Englishmen. (Hear, hear.) There is one argument made use of—and I think it is the most serious question for consideration in dealing with this subject—by the opponents of the contemplated change; namely, that we have not among our limited population, people of the requisite stamp, possessed of sufficient leisure and ability, and of independent income, to enable them to perform their parliamentary duties under a system of self-government. I do not believe such to be the case, and it is a libel upon the colonists to make such an assertion. The Government of this country, in its present rudimentary condition, need not, under any constitutional system, be very complex. We do not require the cumbrous and expensive governmental machinery of our more advanced neighbors. In my opinion, any man, or body of men, of independence and honesty, endowed with ordinary capacity, would be able to conduct the administration of the affairs of this colony at present, and for some years to come. Of such men, we have no lack. Were it proved otherwise, and that there really was an absence, or a paucity, of fit men for the purpose then I would admit it was a strong argument against the proposed change. (Hear, hear.) Lord Carnarvon acknowledges that the question is only a question of time, and the opponents of the measure do the same. I should like to know when in their opinion the time will come when the steps may be taken. I cannot conceive that a more opportune time than the present will ever occur in the history of the colony. There is no greater question of public interest before the country; party feeling, if it ever existed, is allayed; the colony is prosperous; and the colonists themselves are better prepared than they have ever been before to undertake the duties and the responsibilities of self-government. (Hear, hear.) It is quite true there is not a unanimous feeling in favor of the change. There never will be. Not long ago the

opponents of Responsible Government were numerous and influential; but a change in the feelings of the colonists has taken place, and the anti-progressionists have dwindled down to not very formidable, if respectable, minority. This minority will, no doubt, become gradually less; yet we must not accept that it will ever cease to exist, for in every community, in every age, there always has been, and always will be, a section opposed to changes of any description. In England they would be the conservative party, but an English conservative would—Lord Carnarvon would—were he transferred to a colony like this, in all probability, become an advocate for progress; he would naturally desire that his new home should, as far as practicable, and as early as possible, possess institutions similar to the country from whence he emigrated. (Cheers.) It is, indeed, barely possible to conceive any genuine admirer of his country's political institutions being opposed to the inauguration of a similar system in the colony of his adoption, when that colony became qualified for such a system, as this colony undoubtedly is qualified for the adoption of the change which we desire to see brought about. (Cheers.) There is another argument which may justly be urged in favor of that change. There is no doubt whatever that the inhabitants of this colony—the only one among the Australian sisterhood not possessed of Responsible Government—are looked down upon as unfit to be trusted with those privileges which have been elsewhere accorded to their fellow-countrymen; and the consequent result is, that the working classes of more favored colonies politically, no matter what material inducement may here offer, will not settle in this colony, and be deprived of the exercise of those constitutional rights and privileges which are the heritage of every Englishman. (Cheers.) Another argument that may be adduced in favor of self-government is the delay caused in submitting matters, of grave and immediate importance, for the consideration and decision of the Secretary of State, and the time consumed in explanations necessary to enable him to arrive at a decision. Take for instance this very question of a breakwater at Fremantle, reported upon by Mr. Wardell, whose report has just been presented to the Council. Instead of our being able to dispose of the question, one way or other, without delay, months must elapse before the proposition embodied in the report can be submitted for the decision of the Secretary of State, and heaven only knows how many despatches will have to be written before that official will be prepared to direct what is right and proper to be done in the matter. Years will probably elapse before any definite conclusion will be arrived at, and a decision

made; whereas, under Responsible Government, the question might be disposed of in a few weeks. This is only an example of the existing unsatisfactory condition of affairs. (Hear, hear.) One serious evil I think must inevitably result from our remaining any longer under the present form of Government, and that is the difficulty that will arise, under this hybrid system, of finding good men and true to come forward to take a part in the proceedings of this Council. I have heard some of our best members assert that they are tired of leaving their business to take care of itself while their time is taken up in a legislative assembly where they find they are of no use whatever. That, I believe, is a feeling that permeates the breast of nearly every elected member of this House. I know, at any rate, it is my own feeling. The result is not difficult to prognosticate. It has been asserted that an effort has been made on the part of the advocates of Responsible Government to push forward the change with undue haste. I must take objection to such an assertion, which is utterly without foundation. Ever since the introduction of Representative Government, the question of the contemplated change has been in the mind of every reflective man in the community, for it was well known that the existing form of Government must inevitably, sooner or later, lead to the assumption of a system of responsibility, and that fact has never been lost sight of. It has even been said that I myself have endeavored to push forward the question now under consideration, or, at any rate, that other people behind the scenes have been influencing me to do so. I flatly deny the assertion. For some years I have been firmly convinced in my own mind that the change would be one that would be beneficial to the interests of the colony and its inhabitants; but this view was not entertained by the constituency which I have had the honor for many years to serve in this Council, and I felt myself debarred from taking any action in the matter. The views of my constituents, however, having undergone a change, and being now in accord with my own, I am now at liberty, speaking in their name, and acting on their behalf, to advocate the change which is contemplated in the resolutions I have now the honor of submitting for the affirmation of this honorable House (cheers):—That this House do take into consideration the Despatch from the Secretary of State relating to Responsible Government, presented to the Council with His Excellency's Message No. 1, and moved the following Resolutions:—

1.—That the Members of this Council have read and respectfully considered the Despatch of the Right Honorable Her

Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated No. 64, of 18th November, 1874, transmitted to this Honorable House by message from His Excellency Governor Robinson, C.M.G., dated 22nd instant.

2.—They fully recognize that the receipt of this Despatch must (irrespective of any opinions for or against the matter at issue that may personally be held by His Excellency) preclude His Excellency from proceeding with or introducing any measure for the inauguration of Responsible Government, till further reference be made to the Secretary of State.

3.—The Council are fully aware, that it is in their power to introduce and pass a measure to amend or to extend the present Constitution, subject, of course, to Her Majesty's approval; but they refrain from doing so, because it is now, as it ever has been, their desire to conduct their proceedings in accord and not at variance with the views of Her Majesty's Government.

4.—They would, however, ill fulfill the pledges they have made, and the votes they have recorded, and they would, moreover, feel how little worthy they would be to occupy their respective positions, if they, specially elected after a dissolution on the question of Responsible Government, did not fully and emphatically bring under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, their adherence to the views they have advocated, their reasons for arriving at these views, and, at the same time, representing, as they fully believe they do, the opinions of a large majority of the people, urge upon the Secretary of State to recommend Her Majesty to sanction the amended Constitution they have sought.

5.—It is only due to the late Governor, Mr. Weld, to say, that the question of Responsible Government was never urged by him on the people of this Colony, or on the members of this Council. He ever advised caution in the consideration of this momentous question, which emanated from the colonists alone, and not from the Governor or the members of the Government.

6.—At the time when the present modified form of Representative Government was introduced, His Excellency Governor Weld fairly warned the colonists that it was the first step towards a system of Ministerial Responsibility, and that, day by day, they would realise the necessity for

work, for self-reliance and self-sacrifice,—principles on which they are fully prepared to act.

7.—The Members of this Council, from the date when the present Constitution was inaugurated in 1870, have steadily looked forward to the time when the colonists would be permitted to assume full power in the regulation and management of their local transactions; they have, as it were, been educating to this end; and, fully alive to the importance of the change they seek, they have sought it with a deep sense of the responsibility devolving on them, and in the full belief that the change is one that will be beneficial to the interests of the Colony and its inhabitants.

8.—While fully aware that the opinions so ably expressed in Lord Carnarvon's Despatch are such as would naturally be formed by members of a large community looking upon the population of a small Colony as that of a country village, this Council ventures to express somewhat confidently an opinion that, small as is the population of Western Australia, there are in it, in proportion to the numbers of that population, as many men who, by education and social standing, are capable of, willing, and prepared to take an active part in public life, as can be found in any similar number of people in any one of the Australasian Colonies.

9.—It is recognized by Lord Carnarvon that the introduction of Responsible Government is the proper and desirable end to which the Colony tends, and to which it must come; and this Council submits, with respect, that it is far better that Responsible Government should be introduced at a time when the public business of the Colony is small, and requires no very great amount of talent to carry it on, when there is no difference of opinion between the Government and the people, when no spirit of disaffection exists, and when there are, notably, men of different opinions ready to assume office, than at a time when, as in all probability may shortly be the case, changes may occur which may cause the introduction of a different class of population, who may not be so easily governed, when causes of disaffection may arise, when a change of Constitution may be literally forced on the country, and power be possibly placed in unworthy hands.

10.—It may fairly be assumed that men who have made Western Australia their home, who have invested their all in the

Colony, and who have no intention to leave it, are not likely to rush into so important and momentous a change as that of Ministerial Government without due consideration of the results; and yet there are many such who are fully prepared to advocate the change, and fully sensible of its importance, its advantages, and its disadvantages.

11.—It would be folly to allow that the feeling in favor of Responsible Government is unanimous. There is undoubtedly a minority, and a strong minority, in favor of the retention, for a time only, of the present Constitution; but that minority is not, however, stronger than has been the case in other Colonies where the change of Constitution has been granted, and it is, for the most part, composed of those who objected to the change from the absolute rule of a Governor to the present form of Government, and who, as a rule, object to change of any kind.

12.—Standing alone, as this Colony does, among the Australasian Group, as the only Colony not possessing Responsible Government, its inhabitants are looked down upon as unfit to be trusted with those privileges which have been elsewhere accorded to their fellow countrymen; and the consequent result is, that the working classes of the Eastern Colonies, no matter what inducements may here offer, will not settle in Western Australia and lose those privileges which they prize and must in such case give up. No matter what public works may be undertaken, or what terms may be offered, it is found impracticable to induce laborers in any number to come to Western Australia, even temporarily; and the few who have been induced to come have left, satisfied with their prospects in regard to work and remuneration, but dissatisfied at the absence of those institutions to which they have been elsewhere accustomed.

13.—The Colony, under its present Constitution, can, in the opinion of this Council, never hope to hold its own or compete with the other Australian Colonies, whose prosperity dates from the introduction of Responsible Government; but, placed on an equal footing with its neighbors, open to the capital and enterprise of those whose attention is now turned in its direction, and freed from the trammels with which it is now bound, it will, in their opinion, progress in a far more rapid manner than it has hitherto done, and shortly become, not merely in

name but *de facto*, no unworthy Member of the Australasian Group.

14.—The delay caused in submitting matters for the consideration and decision of the Secretary of State, the time that is consumed in explanations necessary to enable him to arrive at a decision, are simply delays that are ruinous to the interests of the Colony. A question arises, let it be assumed, of some public work, in one of the Eastern Colonies: its consideration is that of a few days, and a decision is arrived at; the proposer gets his answer, and the matter is ended; he commences his work or turns his attention to something else. A similar question arises in Western Australia: some one offers to undertake a certain work on terms which he defines; the Governor or the Legislative Council, or perhaps both, advocate the acceptance of the offer; correspondence ensues with Downing Street; Her Majesty's Secretary of State wisely declines to express an opinion or to exercise responsibility till he is satisfied on all points; a year passes by before a decision is arrived at; when the decision comes, it is either too late, because he who offered could not afford to wait, or the decision is coupled with such restrictions that he declines to carry out his offer, and he leaves dissatisfied, and advises all his friends to keep away from a Colony where proceedings are conducted in so unsatisfactory a manner.

15.—It is the opinion of this Council, while fully concurring in Lord Carnarvon's views as to the limited and scattered nature of the known tracts of good land in this Colony, that there is ample scope for the alienation of large blocks of land which would be eagerly taken in payment for public works, and which would necessarily in such case be utilised, while, with the present sparse population, there is little prospect of their early occupation. A prompt and judicious exercise of local authority in the disposition of Crown Lands would, in the opinion of the Council, under an extended Constitution, greatly facilitate the progress of the Colony.

16.—The question of the supervision of Imperial convicts now serving their sentences in this Colony is gradually assuming such small proportions that it is thought there can be little difficulty in arriving at some decision, satisfactory alike to the Mother Country and the Colony. This Council is not prepared to believe, looking to the liberal treatment that the

Colony has lately received in regard to convict matters, that any difficulty will arise on this head.

17.—And in regard to the grants in aid of the expense incurred by the Colony for Police and other services, in consideration of the number of convicts who (having completed their sentences) are now at large in the Colony, this Council is aware that a proposition on this subject, made by the late Governor in accordance with instructions from the Secretary of State, and based, as this Council believes, on principles just to Her Majesty's Government and the people of this Colony, has already been forwarded for consideration. Whether this proposition be acceded to or no, this Council is quite prepared favorably to consider any amendment that may be proposed by Her Majesty's Government, in full faith that a Colony which has, at all events, been of some service to the Mother Country, and which voluntarily comes forward and expresses its loyalty to the Queen and its desire to relieve the Imperial Government from any further cost for its local purposes, is not likely to be met in any other than the same liberal spirit which has hitherto actuated the feelings of Her Majesty's Government towards it.

18.—This Council has not failed to consider the increased expense necessary to be incurred in carrying out the more complex form of Government it seeks: that question is one that has fully occupied their attention. That some expense will be needed is palpable; but, in so small a Colony, the probable changes would, at first, be such as the present revenue will be fully able to meet, without damaging the interests of any part of the public service. They are prepared to provide such funds as may be necessary for the purpose, and, at the same time, to assure to Her Majesty such a Civil List as may be necessary for the due maintenance of the public service.

19.—In requesting the Governor to transmit for the consideration of Lord Carnarvon the foregoing remarks that have with all due respect been made on His Lordship's Despatch, this Council desires to point out that, in their opinion, delay in the inauguration of the form of Government sought, is simply delay in the progress of the Colony; and that, even allowing that the views of this Council may have sufficient weight with His Lordship to induce a modification of his views and a recommendation to Her Majesty to accede to the wishes of the Colonists, it is

obvious that the delay which has occurred through the correspondence between His Lordship and the Governor of the Colony must, consequent on the formalities to be observed in England subsequent to the passing of a Bill in this Colony, retard the inauguration of any change for at least a year later than was here anticipated.

20.—In submitting these resolutions to His Excellency the Governor, with a view to their transmission to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, this Council desires to express its devotion to Her Majesty the Queen and those free institutions of the Mother Country to which it ventures to aspire.

Mr. CROWTHER, in seconding the resolutions, said he was conscious there was not one hon. member present upon whom any observations he might make would produce the slightest effect in regard to the question before the House. Hon. members had made up their minds how they would vote—at all events he had—and nothing he could say would be likely to influence them one way or the other. No doubt the sentiments entertained by the minority with reference to the question of the introduction of Responsible Government were honest sentiments, and he freely confessed his belief that they were actuated by no other desire than to promote the best interests of the colony, and for that reason alone their opinions were entitled to respect. (Hear, hear.) But, when they contended that the colony was unfit to undertake the responsibilities of self-government, he really did think they were underrating their abilities and the abilities of their friends. Allusion had been made to the action taken by His Excellency Governor Weld in relation to this question. Now, it was a well-known fact that neither Mr. Weld, nor his Ministers, either directly or indirectly, ever urged the adoption of Responsible Government upon the people of this colony, and it was not until the representatives of the people, with one accord, requested His Excellency to cause a Bill for that purpose to be introduced, and, with remarkable unanimity, affirmed the principles of that Bill, that His Excellency intimated that, in accordance with the expressed wish of the House, he would recommend that Her Majesty's assent be given to it, so that the system of ministerial responsibility might be with the least possible delay established in this as in the other Australian colonies. His Excellency could hardly have done otherwise, seeing that the conclusion of this House on the question had been arrived at with a singular unanimity, and that the proceedings which had led to it had been characterised, as His Excellency truly

remarked in his despatch, by a "marked moderation of tone, and total absence of party feeling." When, having caused the Bill to be introduced, Mr. Weld discovered that hon. members were not entirely in accord on its principles, His Excellency adopted the only course open for him:—he dissolved the Council and appealed to the country. What was the result of that appeal? The same hon. members who had expressed their intention to support the introduction of Responsible Government were again returned by the same constituencies, and returned pledged to vote in favor of the contemplated constitutional change. Ill, indeed, would they fulfil those pledges, and unworthy indeed would they be to occupy their respective positions as representatives of the people did they not, as it was intended to do by means of the resolution before the House, emphatically bring before the consideration of Her Majesty's Secretary of State their adherence to the views they had advocated, and their reasons for arriving at those conclusions. (Hear, hear.) One of the stock arguments of the opponents of the proposed change against its introduction was that the colony did not possess men of education, means, and inclination to carry on a system of ministerial government. He joined issue with them on this point. He meant to assert that we had an ample number of such men—men of ordinary ability, integrity, intelligence, and means. Men were now to be found who, under the existing form of government—which had, and not inaptly, been described as a farce,—left their business in order to attend the deliberations of the Council: how much more willingly and cheerfully would they come forward under a system which would give them a real voice in the government of the country? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BROWN said he was one of the "respectable minority" referred to by the hon. member for Wellington, as being opposed to the assumption of Responsible Government, and he did most strongly oppose its immediate adoption. In a minority though he might be, he found one crumb of comfort in what had fallen from the lips of the hon. member who had last spoken, who frankly acknowledged that those who were opposed to the change had arrived at their conclusions uninfluenced by any other than honest and patriotic motives, and for that reason their opinions were as entitled to respect as those of the majority. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the question of whether or not we had men fit to carry on a system of party government, he did not for a moment mean to say that there was an absence of such men; what he contended was that there was a paucity of such men, we had them not in suf-

ficient numbers. It must be borne in mind that,—unlike under the present form of government, when a comparatively insignificant portion of the work of legislation devolved upon the elected representatives of the people,—under a system of self-government the whole burthen of legislation would fall on their shoulders, and this would necessitate a greater command of representative men of ability and independence, of leisure and of means, than are required under the existing Constitution. Of such men he fearlessly asserted the colony had not a sufficient number to carry on, effectively, a system of self-government with ministerial responsibility. It was a well known fact that considerable difficulty had been experienced in obtaining representatives under the present form; many constituencies had reason to complain of the paucity of candidates, and, in the majority of instances, the electors had no choice offered to them, but that of Hobson's. Now, instead of Responsible Government as obtaining here being a "farce", so far as the elected members were concerned, the elected members had all the plums in the legislative pudding; they had the power in their own hands without the weight of the labor being on their shoulders. With a command of two-thirds of the votes of the House, they could place an insuperable obstacle to the passing of any measure which, in their opinion, would be detrimental to the interests of the colony, and, by their united efforts, could pass any measure which they believed would prove beneficial to the country. True, the Governor had the right to veto such a Bill, and in a rudimentary colony like this, possessing so few men of political training or official experience, it was well that we had the intervening power of the Imperial Government to prevent us rushing madly into measures which we would subsequently have cause to regret. As a proof that we cannot yet lay claim to the possession of men with the necessary ability to carry on the government of this colony, he need only point to the third of the series of resolutions before the House, where the framers of those resolutions, while alleging that the Council is fully aware that it is in their power to introduce and pass a measure to amend or extend the present Constitution, yet refrain from doing so. They contended that the salvation of the colony depended on the Constitution being amended, that they have the country in accord with them in this view of the matter, that they were returned into Council pledged to carry out that view, that they have the power to do so, and yet they shirked their duty. (Hear, hear.) The Government, in the face of the despatch of the Secretary of State, were of course precluded from taking

any active part in introducing a measure to carry out those views, and yet the elected members, pledged as the majority of them were to support such a measure, refrained from bringing it forward. He might here state, parenthetically, that he had been informed that it was the intention of the official and nominee members to support the resolutions before the House; in doing so it appeared to him they would be going directly at variance with the expressed wish of Her Majesty's Secretary of State. It was a course which he thought the Government of the colony would not be at all justified in adopting. (Hear, hear.) The resolutionists say they fully recognise that the receipt of the noble lord's despatch must,—irrespective of any opinions for or against the matter at issue that may personally be held by His Excellency Governor Robinson—preclude him from proceeding with or introducing any measure for the inauguration of Responsible Government till further reference to the Secretary of State, and capital was thus sought to be made out of that by reference to His Excellency's private views. What on earth had they to do with the Governor's personal views? They must be guided by his official views; and it was derogatory to the dignity of that honorable Council to endeavor to make capital out of His Excellency's personal views, and unfair to presume, or infer, that his personal views were in opposition to his official views, or instructions. With regard to the late Governor's action in connection with the question of Responsible Government, to which allusion had been made by previous speakers, and which was canvassed in Lord Carnarvon's despatch, he (Mr Brown) firmly believed that, up to the time the representatives of the people requested the Government to introduce a Bill to establish a system of responsibility, Mr. Weld took no part whatever in the matter. His Excellency took a thoroughly impartial stand on that question. Nor was he (Mr. Brown) aware that any member of the Government had taken any part whatever in causing the introduction of the Constitution Bill; but of this he was cognizant—from the moment that Bill was brought forward by the Government it had very evidently been perceived by the people that it had the cordial support of the Government, and this fact, of itself, had had great weight throughout the colony in bringing round some persons to vote for Responsible Government who otherwise would not have done so. He was perfectly satisfied, in his own mind, that a very large proportion of the electors of this colony were in favor of the continuance of the existing Constitution. (Cries of "No, no," and signs of disapprobation among the auditors in the strangers' gallery, which

were instantly repressed.) As stated in the counter-resolutions which he was about to propose, as an amendment, the result of elections in this colony could not be regarded as a conclusive test of the feelings of the electors upon political questions. One of the reasons which rendered people so satisfied with the existing form of government, was, that under it, during the past five years the colony had progressed and prospered at an unprecedented rate; and it was asked, and with reason, what measure calculated to prove beneficial to the colony, what public works of importance and necessity, had the Imperial Government ever refused to assent to? None! In dealing with the question of the adoption of self-government, the increased administrative expenditure resulting from the more complex Constitution must not be lost sight of. What that increase would really amount to, no one probably could at present foresee. There was a great divergence of opinion on this very point, and the sum was variously estimated from £1,000 to £25,000. It would be time enough for this colony to seek to take upon itself this additional burthen when measures within our means, and essential for the material prosperity of the colony, are refused by the Mother Country. Those who were opposed to the immediate adoption of Responsible Government had been stigmatized as men who were opposed to change of any description; this assertion was as stupid as it was unfounded. On the contrary he, for one, was actuated by a desire to see the colony keep moving on, but he wished, nevertheless, that progress should be aimed at and pursued with caution, sobriety, and wisdom, and that the future should be so approached as not to break with the past. One of the arguments adduced by the advocates of the proposed change was the assumption—he could not call it a fact—that the working classes cannot be induced to remain in the colony, where they have not that opportunity of exercising the political privileges accorded to their fellow countrymen elsewhere. Now he could not imagine for a moment that hon. members could seriously entertain such a notion as this. The Secretary of State, at all events, would not be hoodwinked by so flimsy an argument that laborers who were satisfied with their prospects in regard to work and remuneration would actually leave a colony where representative institutions already obtained, merely in order to exercise the political privileges of a more democratic Constitution. In clause 13 of the resolutions it was alleged that the colony under the present form of government could never hope to hold its own, or compete, with the other Australian colonies. How on earth, then, had it already done so, and done more, comparatively, than hold

its own during the past five years? He said comparatively, because he was sorry to think that this colony would never be able to hold its own with the sister colonies, at any rate during the present generation. It was, doubtless, a valuable dependency, possessed of rich and varied resources, affording a good opening, and capable of giving employment to thousands and thousands of people; still it could never expect to compete with the more favored colonies of the same group. It was not at all correct to infer that the progress made by those colonies was attributable to their political institutions. Nothing of the kind; they owed their advancement to their superior natural resources. The inhabitants of those provinces were by no means so enamored of the form of Government under which they lived as some people would lead hon. members to believe. He had travelled through Victoria, the hotbed of democratic institutions, and when conversing with some of the most reflective colonists with reference to self-government had been told, "Look here; you are a young fellow, and may have some little influence in your colony; if you value the future prosperity of Western Australia, for God's sake do all in your power to prevent the advent of Responsible Government. If you can but get along fairly under your present Constitution, you will do best to retain it." Now, he was not opposed to the principles of Responsible Government; as Lord Carnarvon said, it was no doubt the form of Constitution which this colony must in time adopt, and no one would more gladly than himself hail the advent of that time. Even with our present limited population, if we had a sufficient number of colonists with the means, and having the leisure necessary to devote to the work of legislation, he would not object to the proposed change, provided he were convinced that he should not have to pay too dear for our whistle. Before resuming his seat, he would remind the House of the result of the election held that very day in the largest and most important constituency of the colony. The question before the electors was Responsible Government, or not. There were two candidates, one in favor of the change, and one opposed to it and, for a second time, the metropolitan electors returned a representative pledged to oppose the immediate introduction of self-government. It was worthy of note that Perth, the largest and most influential electorate, and Geraldton, by far the richest and most progressive district in the colony, had most emphatically declared in favor of retaining the present form of government, until, at any rate, weightier reasons were forthcoming than now existed for the adoption of a more expensive, cumbrous, and complex Constitution.

After some further remarks the hon. member formally moved, as an amendment, the following Resolutions:—

1.—That the members of this Council have carefully, and respectfully, considered the Despatch of the Right Honorable Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated No. 64 of 18th November, 1874, and concur in His Lordship's view that the immediate adoption by this Colony of a system of Responsible Government is not desirable.

2.—They have not failed to observe, from His Lordship's Despatch, that "some £14,000 a-year are at present contributed by the Mother Country towards the expenses of the Colonial Government, in consideration of the number of convicts who, having completed their sentences, are now at large in Western Australia;" and that in the event of our adopting "Self-Government" this Colony "must be prepared, if not at once at least soon, to undertake" these charges. They further accept, as entitled to great weight, His Lordship's testimony as to "the greatly increased administrative expenditure inevitably resulting from the more complex form of Government" proposed for the adoption of this Council. To these sources of extra expenditure which the change to Responsible Government would involve, a large amount for retiring allowances has to be added, making the total expense which the change would necessarily incur one of grave importance to the Colony, in the present state of its revenue.

3.—The reasons expressed by His Lordship, as those upon which his conclusion is based, have been repeatedly urged throughout the Colony in the short period during which the question of a change to Responsible Government has been fairly before the country, and have been very generally recognised as sound by the thinking portions of the community; especially the fact referred to by His Lordship, of the limited number of male adults and the large portion of those belonging to the convict class.

4.—The population of this Colony is distributed in isolated groups, from Eucla on the South coast to the DeGrey River on the North, a distance by the sea board of some 2,500 miles, and the means of communication between the various centres of population and the seat of Government are infrequent, expensive, and, in many instances, irregular, and it is notorious that, unlike its sister colonies, Western

Australia possesses but few men of sufficiently independent means to enable them to devote their thoughts and personal attention to Legislative duties—a fact which has been clearly demonstrated by the difficulty experienced in obtaining representatives even under the existing Constitution.

5.—This difficulty would be increased under a system of Responsible Government, which, in its nature, to ensure its satisfactory working, necessitates a greater command of representative men of ability and of independence, not only in mind but also in means, than is requisite under any other form of Government, and which would place upon the colonists the whole labor of legislation and executive administration, instead of the comparatively insignificant portion which falls to their share under the present form.

6.—Under the existing Constitution, the colonists, being directly represented by two-thirds of the votes in the Legislative Council, have full power to prevent all measures detrimental to the interests of the Colony from becoming law, and, as far as the Constitution permits, can introduce and pass such measures as would tend to their advancement—subject, of course, to ratification by the Imperial Government, which the history of the past leads this Council to believe would never be withheld towards such as were conceived in wisdom and intelligently represented.

7.—This Council does not lose sight of the fact that it has no power to deal with the extensive and valuable land of the Colony, nor to introduce money bills; but it confidently believes that the Imperial Government, seeing how beneficial it must ever be to this Colony that reproductive public works, as they become necessary, shall be provided, will charge Her Majesty's Representative in this Colony to initiate money bills, from time to time, to provide for all works of such a nature within the means of the Colony, and will readily accede to such loans as may be necessary for the purpose. Further, this Council conceives that the Imperial Government, at the desire of the majority of the representatives of the people, supported by sound reasons, would adopt their wishes with reference to the disposal of the land of the Colony, in relation not only to its letting and sale, but also to its alienation upon such terms as might appear advisable, in consideration of the construction of Public Works.

8.—In the opinion of this Council it will be time enough for Western Australia to seek to take upon herself the large burthen which Responsible Government must of necessity impose, when measures within her means, and requisite for her material prosperity, are refused by the Mother Country; and there is notably no subject of grave import to this Colony upon which this Council and the Imperial Government are not at the present time in accord.

9.—In the opinion of this Council the question of a change to Responsible Government was not before the electors of the Colony for a sufficient period prior to the last elections to enable them to judge fairly of its merits or demerits. And up to the present time they have not been in possession of reliable data from which to judge with any degree of accuracy the cost that the change would entail upon the Colony.

10.—The result of elections in this Colony cannot be regarded as a conclusive test of the feelings of its electors upon political questions. It is notorious that in the majority of instances representatives have been returned chiefly on account of their personal popularity, or because of the difficulty of procuring others to undertake the duties, rather than in reference to their political views.

11.—It is worthy of note that a large proportion of those members who now support the proposed change but a very short time since declared their disapproval of it, and were then cordially returned as representatives by the same districts as have now returned them with their altered views.

12.—Should Responsible Government be immediately introduced, it is obvious that the scarcity of men of means to occupy the position of representatives would render the payment of members a step likely to be taken at no distant date; and this consideration should not be lost sight of, representing, as it does, a probable prospective burthen upon the revenues of the Colony.

Mr. RANDELL, in seconding the amendment, thought that in doing so he might reasonably ask the forbearance of the House while he endeavored to the best of his ability to deal with the subject in hand. A week previously he had not the remotest idea that he should be standing there as the representative of any constituency. When the vacancy, caused by the lamented death of the late Mr. Birch,

occurred, he had almost fully made up his mind that no inducement should tempt him to put himself forward as a candidate for the honor of representing the city; but he had been so convinced by friends whom he esteemed, and whose opinions he valued, that, in consideration of the principles which he held on the constitutional question at issue, it was his duty to seek the suffrages of his fellow citizens, that he ultimately consented to do so,—with what result his presence in the House that evening testified. With regard to the subject under consideration of the Council he was free to confess, at starting, that he was decidedly opposed, not to Responsible Government, but to its immediate introduction into a colony situated as this colony is, with a sporadic population numbering in all only 26,000 souls. Of that number, not more than 9,000 at the utmost could be said to be adults, and the maximum number of electors did not exceed 2,000. Not only was the population limited, but it was scattered over a vast extent of country, very unlike the sister colonies, where the inhabitants are congregated together in a compact mass, and where, consequently, even with a limited population, they are able to carry out with greater advantage to themselves a system of self-government than we are, in our widely scattered community. This was a view of the question which he had very carefully considered in his own mind, but not with the view of advocating it in that House; therefore any remarks that might fall from him must be essentially desultory. He had been struck since he had taken his seat in the House with an impression that very little light had been thrown on the subject by the hon. members who had stood up to support the resolutions first submitted for their consideration. He had certainly expected to hear from the hon. member for Wellington some very cogent reasons for adopting the change which he wished to bring about. He had carefully listened to all that had fallen from the hon. gentleman, but had not heard anything that might be considered a powerful or convincing argument in favor of the immediate adoption of Responsible Government. He had heard certain statements made by the hon. member, but he had certainly heard no arguments. These terms he would likewise take the liberty of applying to what had subsequently fallen from the hon. member for Greenough, who had referred to the disdain with which other colonies looked down upon Western Australia in consequence of our lacking their free institutions. He had heard from persons in whom he could place every confidence that many people in the neighboring colonies, although, like himself, they believed in free institutions, maintained

that those colonies had not progressed and prospered, as they had done, in consequence of those institutions, but rather in spite of them, and that their great success is due to their superior natural resources. He had been informed, and he believed it was a fact, that Tasmania had been seeking to be annexed to Victoria. That did not seem as if Tasmania, at any rate, was satisfied with Responsible Government. The hon. member for Greenough had alleged as a serious argument in favor of constitutional government that one of the reasons why working men did not settle down in this colony was, because we lacked those amusements which are to be found in more advanced colonies where free institutions obtained. He did not think the reason given, or, rather, the statement made—for he could hardly call it reasoning or argument—was valid, and he thought he would have to look farther than that to account for the exodus of our best class of working men. Years ago, they had been told that this was one of the results to be expected from the colony becoming a penal settlement, and this ought to have been thought of when that step was first taken. He would like to give another reason why, in his opinion, the laboring classes were not inclined to settle down in this country. It was one which somewhat militated against the colony, where they all wished to spend the remainder of their days, in which many of them had succeeded well in life, and of which they therefore ought to speak in terms of praise. But he believed that the reason why many of our most useful laborers, and mechanics, and others, left the colony was, because they could not find around our towns and centres of population arable land which as small capitalists they could cultivate to their advantage, and upon which they could build their own cottage. The noble lord whose despatch had given rise to the present debate had pointed out—and the statement was not to be contradicted—that the tracts of productive land, throughout the greater part of the colony, are, as at present known, so limited and scattered that there was little reason for expecting that it would, at all events at an early date, be continuously occupied by such a population as had in the other Australian colonies furnished sufficient materials for parliamentary government. Earth hunger was one of the natural instincts of all Britons. He believed that almost every emigrant who left the Mother Country contemplated acquiring, some day or other, a piece of land which he could call his own in the colony which he fixed upon as his adopted home. Now, when the emigrant came here, he found that he could not do this in this colony,—not in consequence of any

fault in our land laws, which had been described by some hon. members as being quite as liberal, if not more so, than the land regulations of any of the other colonies, but simply because the emigrant and would-be settler, with limited means, finds himself unable to obtain suitable locations near our towns, our centres of population, or a market. Would Responsible Government remedy this state of things? Would a brand-new Constitution improve the quality of our soil, or increase the area of land available for settlement? Would a system of ministerial responsibility cause a blade of grass to grow where it did not grow before? He feared not. It had been said that, if we had Responsible Government, we should be able to borrow largely and to spend money in the construction of a railroad, but, before doing that, he thought that the House and the country would first have to agree upon what route the money should be spent. They had already borrowed money to be expended upon a railroad which might not prove reproductive for many years to come, perhaps never. Money was also about to be expended on telegraph extension to Eucla, and though no one in that House regretted that expenditure, still everyone must be aware that it would not be a reproductive work, at all events at an early date, nor yet pay the interest on the money expended in its construction, although no doubt it would otherwise advance the interests of the colony. If, however, it were determined to borrow more money, he was not aware that there was any likelihood of the Home Government putting any obstacle in the way, if the matter were fairly placed before it, and the work upon which it was proposed to expend the money was of such a nature, by reason of its importance, necessity, and utility, as would entitle it to approbation. He felt sure that Lord Carnarvon's despatch would have its full weight upon every hon. member of that House; while, at the same time, he also felt how unpleasant and even difficult it must be for hon. gentlemen who had adopted certain views and pledged themselves to support those views, to renunciate them without at the same time stultifying themselves. But he recollected that when hon. members committed themselves to support those views, many of them had been returned by constituencies opposed to the introduction of Responsible Government, and when the question was introduced and a Bill brought forward to establish that Constitution, hon. members, instead of taking upon themselves to introduce a Bill and to define the nature of the Constitution they thought most suitable for the requirements of the colony, committed themselves to the tender mercies of the Government, who prepared a Bill exceedingly distasteful to some hon. members and

which resulted in the dissolution of the House. In the fifth clause of the series of resolutions proposed by the hon. member for Wellington it was stated that the question of Responsible Government had emanated from the colonists alone, and not from the Governor or the members of the Executive. He took exception to this statement, for the question undoubtedly, in the first instance, emanated from that House, and in very few cases did the general public endorse the action taken by the Council. Although it was true enough that Governor Weld had never urged the question upon the people of this colony, still,—and notwithstanding that 12 months previously His Excellency, for various reasons, did not consider the colony fit for Responsible Government—he lost no time in introducing a Bill to establish that system showing what his feelings and inclinations were in the matter; and he (Mr. Randell) had understood—though it was not publicly expressed in so many words—that it was the desire of Governor Weld and of his Executive that Responsible Government should be at once introduced. One of the arguments employed by the hon. member for Wellington in favor of the introduction of Responsible Government at that time was that it should be initiated by an administrator so thoroughly conversant with its working as Mr. Weld was known to be; but the removal of His Excellency to another sphere of action had cut away that argument from under their feet. They now had a Governor of whose opinions or proclivities they knew nothing as yet; and he thought it highly desirable, before entering upon a system of ministerial responsibility, they should first see whether with our present Governor the existing form of Government might not possibly result in greater advantage and give greater satisfaction to the members of that honorable House. What would be the result of the adoption of Responsible Government? In the first place, who would form the first Ministry under such a system? No doubt our present Colonial Secretary would be Prime Minister, probably the present Attorney General would remain in office, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands would retain his portfolio. If these gentlemen, as no doubt they would, constituted the Ministry, to whom should the House look for the formation of the Opposition? This was a question hon. members should look fairly in the face. If we adopted Responsible Government we would have to look out for others to fill offices in the Ministry should those gentlemen be turned out. He was not going to say that we had no men fit to occupy such positions, but certainly we had none possessing the experience which the officials he had alluded to had gained; and, in the absence of a well-organised and powerful

Opposition these gentlemen would be more masters of the situation than they were at present, and without the same responsibility. It might be said, there were means of turning them out by a vote of no confidence, and an appeal to the country, which in all probability would result in the very same men being returned and the same Ministry being formed. What effect would this have upon their minds? Simply that they would feel they had the whole power in their own hands, and that they might exercise it in a more despotic manner than they were accused of doing—he did not say that they did—at the present time. The House had not yet been informed what would be the increased administrative expenditure under a system of self-government. He had heard it roundly asserted that, from the initiation of the system until it got into full working order, the cost to the country would be £50,000. He did not believe it could be so much as that, but he did believe that many expenses that were not thought of now would be incurred, and that increased taxation would be necessitated. He did not think the colony could bear the burden of additional taxation. It was true that during the past 12 months or two years the country had enjoyed remarkable prosperity, and that last year the sum total of our imports and exports was £120,000 in excess of any previous year in the history of the colony. This showed at any rate that the colony was prospering under our existing form of government, and was certainly no argument in favor of a change. He did not mean to say that our present Constitution was a model one, or that it was all that we could desire, still there could be no doubt that the colony had prospered wonderfully since its inauguration five years ago, and he could not conceive that under Responsible Government it could have prospered at a greater rate. These were his sentiments, and he believed they were the sentiments of three-fourths, if not more, of the electors of Perth. He based that belief, in some measure, on his return as their representative that day. He therefore felt that in the remarks that had fallen from him he was expressing the sentiments of his constituents, the majority of whom were opposed to the change contemplated in the resolutions of the hon. member for Wellington, which he earnestly hoped the House would carefully consider, and pause before adopting.

Sir Thomas COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said:—I rise to support the resolutions proposed by the hon. member for Wellington. No one of us who in the last Legislative Council voted in favor of the introduction of Responsible Government can, in this present Council, when we are considering the despatch

of the Secretary of State on the subject, and the resolutions to which that despatch have given rise, afford to be silent, and to show in any way that indifference to the question at issue, which, if it really existed, would be the best ground on which Lord Carnarvon might base the opinion which he has given us here; and more than that, we are specially challenged—we who have been elected to this Council especially with reference to this question—to make known the views of the country as far as our constituencies are concerned; and this I am ready and willing to do. I cannot conceive any better argument in favor of Responsible Government than this despatch which has been placed before us. Such a misconception of the origin of this movement, such inaccuracy and vagueness in figures, such an utter misunderstanding of the condition of the colony and of the relations between the different classes in the colony, ought to convince the most prejudiced that government from Downing Street under our circumstances is a mistake, instead of an advantage a disadvantage; while the evident impression that in this matter we have acted in haste and without due consideration or even knowledge of what we were about, must force us to show in plain and unmistakeable language that such was not the case, that we whose interests are bound up with the welfare and progress of the colony have not taken this step without deliberate and careful consideration, and conviction that it was for the best. It would be maligning any honorable member of this House to suppose for a moment that he voted for the resolution proposed by the hon. member for Greenough last year without having fully made up his mind that he was doing what was right and for the best. It would be maligning the country which has re-elected such a large majority of these members to suppose that it did so without agreeing with them in the view which they took. And this leads me to state what the feeling in my district is on the question. I was one of those who first voted for Responsible Government without referring to my constituents; and after my return, upon the dissolution, I publicly informed them of my reasons for having done so, and announced my intention of seeking election again, taking Responsible Government as my platform. Shortly after this a number of the most influential amongst them voluntarily came forward to ask me to stand again—and this being quite a work of supererogation on their part I considered a proof that they wished to support the movement; and again immediately before the election, at a public meeting at which almost every voter of Albany was present and many representative men from the bush, when I

announced that should I be re-elected I would go in heart and soul for Responsible Government, not only was not a single voice raised in antagonism to Responsible Government but a unanimous vote of confidence was passed; and, so late as Saturday last, having telegraphed to my constituents to inform them of the nature of Lord Carnarvon's despatch, and that the hon. member for Wellington would move a set of counter-resolutions, within half-an-hour I received a reply urging me to support those resolutions, to do which I certainly required no urging. These facts clearly show the feeling of the Plantagenet district on this question. Not that there are not some few opponents, but of them I may say that they are either persons who have been known to express the view that it would be better to go back and become a mere Crown colony, or, on the other hand, persons who to use the words of Governor Weld in the last speech he made in Western Australia—"Content to stand still themselves, object to see others go on." And, while mentioning Governor Weld's name, I would say that I think it is only right that we should protest against what is evidently implied in the first paragraphs of this despatch that Governor Weld either pushed on or inaugurated this movement in favor of Responsible Government. This is, as we all know, as unjust to Governor Weld as it is uncomplimentary to ourselves and the colony, and wide of the mark as a matter of fact. I never heard that Governor Weld at any time publicly advocated Responsible Government, and I know that he never did so in private. Although I had frequent opportunities of talking with him on this question, till the Council had decided it I never was able to find out what Governor Weld's view really was. This movement is the natural and foreseen result of what five years ago was sanctioned by that Imperial Government, which now seems frightened at the result of its work—the introduction of representative institutions. This present Constitution has done its work: it has taught us much which may be of use for the future, but one thing it has taught us, to fully appreciate its own shortcomings and defaults, so much so that I fear many amongst us will no longer care to devote their valuable time upon work which is so unsatisfactory; and I would ask whether we shall be better prepared at that future time, perhaps not very far distant, contemplated in the last paragraph of this despatch, to enter upon Responsible Government under circumstances perhaps of increased difficulty, and when the best men amongst us may have retired—than now, when, as Mr. Steere's resolutions put it, the work of governing the country is comparatively simple,

and there are men amongst us, notwithstanding the assertion of the hon. member for Geraldton, ready and willing to come forward and take a lead. However, this last paragraph seems clearly to show what the meaning of this despatch really is. It appears to mean we must have Responsible Government if you insist upon it, but remember, if anything unfortunate happens in the future, it won't be our fault; we have warned and shall be able to say—what is so very aggravating to those to whom it is said—"We told you so." But on one point it may be that they do really feel some alarm,—the point worked out in the fourth paragraph of the despatch—a point I was surprised to find the hon. member for Wellington did not allude to, and was most surprised to find the hon. member for Geraldton did not make use of—the relative proportions of what are commonly called the bond and free classes amongst us. It is a point which I am very sure Lord Carnarvon will not forget. Where the noble lord had the misfortune to pick up his figures I am sure I cannot say, but they show a most surprising ignorance of those facts connected with the colony which one would think the Downing Street authorities ought to have at their fingers' ends. I have taken the trouble to ask for and obtain figures, which will show the utter fallacy of Lord Carnarvon's argument. He says, in the fourth paragraph, that there are only, he believes, 8,000 adult males in the colony, and that of these about 6,000 belong to the bond class. Now, so far back as 1870, according to the census returns, there were 10,761 adult males, and of these 6,801 returned as free. The number of ex-convicts was 2,214: making a total of 4,000. The census also showed that the number of adult males had increased since the previous census, 10 years before, at the rate of 71 per cent., and allowing the same rate of increase for the five years since 1870, during which no convicts have been introduced, there would now be in the colony 14,000 adult males, of whom nearly 10,000 would be free. But, having such a good case, let us make every allowance; let us allow for those amongst the ex-convicts and conditional pardon holders who may have been accidentally returned as free. Let us allow on this score 1,000; that would increase the number of persons belonging to the bond class in 1870 to 5,000. Since then we must allow say at the rate of four per cent., for deaths and departures amongst them, and for this we should have to strike off 1,000, making the number of persons of the bond class in the colony at the present time at 4,000. Of this 4,000, 1,340 are in the hands of the convict department as prisoners, ticket-of-leave holders, &c., leaving 2,660 quasi free persons who have originally been convicts.

No persons of this class can ever, even now, or under the future Constitution which we contemplate, obtain a seat in Parliament, and only an infinitesimal proportion of them have votes and the good qualities that those amongst them must possess who have raised themselves to this position in spite of the hindrances which we know exist are a sufficient guarantee that from them nothing much need be feared. I think those figures will clearly show the fallacy of Lord Carnarvon's main arguments; instead of two-thirds of the adult males in the colony belonging to the bond class, not one-third does. It is useless for me now to dilate upon the advantages of Responsible Government; as the hon. member for Geraldton said, we have all made up our minds. If the hon. newly-elected member for Perth, who says he has heard no arguments, had been able to read these resolutions he would have seen first-rate ones, and the best possible answer to the resolutions prepared as an amendment. We who voted before for the introduction of Responsible Government will do so still, and are prepared firmly and resolutely to support our opinion, while, at the same time, expressing in the spirit and words of Mr. Steere's last resolution, our devotion to Her Majesty the Queen, and to those free institutions of our Imperial Mother Country to which we do venture to aspire. (Cheers.)

Mr. BICKLEY said no doubt Lord Carnarvon viewed many phases of the question from a very different point of view from what we did, but he did not think the noble lord had sufficient basis for one-half the statements made in the despatch under consideration. He need not stop to refute the insinuation that Governor Weld urged the adoption of Responsible Government upon the people of this colony. It was a well-known fact that, though his proclivities were in favor of that system in a progressive measure, His Excellency took no steps towards its introduction until he was urged to do so by the representatives of the people. It was stated in the despatch, and surprise was expressed, that 12 months prior to His Excellency recommending Her Majesty to approve a Bill to establish a system of ministerial responsibility, His Excellency had informed Lord Carnarvon's predecessor that, for various reasons, he did not consider the colony fit for Responsible Government. That was not at all unlikely. Twelve months in the history of a young colony is as eventful as an age in an old-established country. Colonies advanced by leaps and bounds, and measures suitable for their requirements today might 12 months hence be utterly unadapted to their wants. This colony had progressed at a remarkable rate during the past year or two, and

it certainly was better prepared now to take upon itself the responsibility of self-government than it had ever been at any previous stage of its history.

Mr. BURT said it was evident that Lord Carnarvon's despatch was intended to delay the advent of Responsible Government, and he thought it was also intended to frighten hon. members. But the only hon. member upon whom it seemed to have produced that effect was the hon. member for Geraldton, who appeared to be alarmed at anything that tended to show that we were in a fit position to govern our own affairs without reference to Downing Street. The noble lord's despatch was misconceived from beginning to end, and the House owed a debt of gratitude to the hon. baronet who had taken the trouble of proving, by force of figures, which, like facts, were stubborn things, how fallacious were the premises from which the noble lord had deducted some of his conclusions, and especially with regard to the relative proportion of the bond and free classes of the community, with reference to which a lamentable amount of ignorance appeared to prevail in Downing Street. Yet there were those amongst us who preferred government by Downing Street to government by those who, by local experience, were thoroughly conversant with the circumstances and requirements of the colony. One of the arguments used by those who were opposed to the adoption of Responsible Government was that we had not men available to carry out a system of party government, forgetting that, under that system, the existing property qualification of members, and which shut out a large number of able men from taking part in the work of legislation, would be abolished, thus throwing open a much wider field for selection than at present. (Hear, hear.) Although the Secretary of State had thought fit to interpose some delay in the way of our obtaining Responsible Government, his lordship knew very well that we intended having it, and that we would have it. The noble lord said as much in the concluding paragraph of his despatch, where he said he felt it his duty, though not a grateful one to his lordship personally, to withhold any hasty consent, and to interpose at least such prudent delay as would secure a full and dispassionate consideration of a decision which was fraught with such important consequences to the colony. It appeared to him (Mr. Burt) that the course open for hon. members to pursue was a very clear one. Having already affirmed the principle of the desirability and expediency of adopting Responsible Government, it now only remained for the House to reiterate its views of

the question, by adopting the resolutions submitted by the hon. member for Wellington; and thus to show the Home Government that we really intend having what we ask for. If the people of this colony consider themselves able to manage their own affairs, what possible objection could be urged by others against their doing so? Allusion had been made to delay and inconvenience resulting, in the case of public works under our existing form of government, which rendered an application to Downing Street necessary before any steps could be taken to carry out any public undertaking of magnitude or importance. He had heard it said—whether true or not he could not say—that the proposal submitted by Messrs. Seimans Brothers, and unanimously affirmed by the Legislative Council of this colony, relating to cable telegraphy, had been negatived by the Crown. Now, he had supported the motion for the extension of our line to Eucla, in a great measure, because there was a prospect our having a cable to connect us direct with Europe; and, no doubt, that consideration had induced other hon. members to do same. Now, it appeared the Downing Street authorities had decided that we were not to have a cable, on the very fair terms offered by the Messrs. Siemens. Another fact not generally known was that Governor Weld had the greatest difficulty in the world in convincing the Imperial Government that it was desirable and expedient that this colony should be connected by telegraph with the sister colony and the outside world, and His Excellency only obtained the sanction of Downing Street for the construction of the telegraph line to Eucla—to use a common expression—by the skin of his teeth. The same again with regard to the Geraldton and Northampton railway, for which His Excellency fought tooth-and-nail with Downing Street. This sort of thing had been worked to death and we could not remain as we are much longer. (Hear hear.) A great deal had been said with regard to the increased expense attendant upon a system of self-government, and one hon. member had mentioned £50,000. That, of course, was mere exaggeration; the extra cost would not be £50,000 nor yet £5,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F.P. Barlee): Hear, hear.

Mr. BROWN: Question.

Mr. BURT said that just as an example of what might be saved to the colony were it possessed of Responsible Government, he might allude to the fact that we were now paying because we were hampered with Crown Agents, at least £3 per ton more for the freight of railway iron from England than we need do had we

the entire management of our own affairs. Here, of itself, was a considerable item that might have been saved the colony were it in the enjoyment of the privileges of Responsible Government. The same again with regard to immigration; the colony was hampered with the action of people who called themselves Emigration Commissioners. If hon. members would but consider the question dispassionately and refrain from under-rating their abilities and the resources of the colony, they would see that a system of self-government was not only desirable and expedient, but a necessity. The resolutions of the hon. member for Wellington would have his cordial support. (Cheers.)

Mr. PADBURY would also support the resolutions, being quite satisfied that we could no longer remain as we are. We must either push forward and accept the responsibilities of self-government, or go back to the old nominee system, which, of course, was not to be thought of. In voting for Responsible Government he did so believing in the end it would not only cost but very little more than the existing system, but prove an actual saving to the colony. The representatives of the people would then have some little control over the expenditure of public money, and those who spent it would be amenable and responsible to that House. That the colony had prospered wonderfully during the past five years, there was no doubt, but that prosperity was not attributable to the form of government under which we live, but rather to the development of our resources and successful harvests. Our revenue had been materially augmented by the increase of *ad valorem* duties; but though our income was now greater than ever, the Treasury chest was not so full as it was five years ago. We had then £25,000 in the public chest, and were out of debt. Now, the chest was empty, and we were £35,000 in debt, to say nothing of the Geraldton Railway Loan. Here was £60,000 gone, and all we had to show for it was a jetty at Fremantle and a telegraph line to Champion Bay. So that the present form of government had not been so very beneficial as some of its advocates would have us believe. He firmly believed that what the colony could save under Responsible Government would be more than commensurate with the increased administrative expenditure which Lord Carnarvon said would inevitably result from the more complex form of government.

Mr. MARMION joined issue with the hon. member for Wellington as to the power possessed by the elected members of passing any legislative measure calculated, in their opinion, to prove beneficial to the interests of the col-

ony. The very question then under consideration proved that such was not the case. By an almost unanimous vote of that House, a resolution affirming the desirability and expediency of introducing Responsible Government had been adopted, a Bill to that effect had been submitted to the House, its principles were affirmed, and it had passed its second reading; and now the Secretary of State withheld his assent, and endeavored to dissuade them from taking a step which was generally considered to be essential to the advancement of the colony. Relatively speaking, the other Australian colonies when they adopted self-government were not in a more prosperous condition than this colony is in at the present time. The hon. member for Perth had said that one of the reasons why the laboring classes would not settle down here was the difficulty of obtaining arable land in the neighborhood of our town, which no doubt was true. But it was equally true of the other Australian colonies, where emigrants desirous of cultivating land have to go hundreds of miles into the interior to do so. This, however, they are enabled to do by means of railways, which, like other progressive measures, are the result of the introduction of Responsible Government, our neighbors under that system having the power to mortgage the capital of their country—land—for the purpose of affording facility of communication to the colonists. This colony had abundance of good land within comparatively easy distance of the centres of population, and all that was required to create settlement was that facility of communication and the easy and cheap means of transport which railways alone could provide, and which we could never hope of obtaining until we assumed the administration of our own affairs under a system of self-government. (Hear, hear.)

Mr STEERE said the hon. member for Geraldton had challenged the House to point out a single measure of importance to the country which, having been adopted by that House, had been vetoed by the Home Government. He could not conceive anything being of greater importance to the colony than its land regulations. The Legislative Council had not very long ago devoted much time and patient labor to the modification and liberalising of our land laws, and those were in a great measure marred by the action of the Secretary of State. Among other resolutions adopted by the Council was one recommending that certain areas should be set aside for agricultural purposes, and, in order to induce settlement, that the price of land in those areas should be reduced. That resolution was adopted by a large majority of the members of that Council, but when sent home for the approval of the

Secretary of State was vetoed. As another instance of the obstructiveness of Downing Street, he might point out to the first proposal of the House to raise a loan for public works. The proposal, though adopted by a large majority, was vetoed by Downing Street. It now appeared that the Secretary of State had also been throwing obstacles in the way of the contraction of a loan for the Geraldton and Northampton Railway, although that House had unanimously adopted a resolution in favor of the undertaking, and the Bill had been supported by all the power Governor Weld could bring to bear. The Secretary of State had merely assented to it because the Council had been entirely unanimous in the matter; had there been a single dissentient voice raised against it, although the work was one of paramount importance and necessity, Downing Street would have vetoed it. He hoped he had now convinced the hon. member for Geraldton that the opinions of that council had very little weight upon the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It did appear to him somewhat singular that the hon. member, who appeared to be the most strenuous opponent of self-government, should be the elected representative of a district which, a few years ago, clamored for separation, in the belief that self-government would be more advantageous to the district than metropolitan government. The hon. member had twitted certain hon. gentlemen for changing their opinions on the question under consideration; he (Mr. Steere) thought the constituency which the hon. member now represented had rendered itself liable to a charge of glaring political inconsistency. The hon. member had also stated that he looked upon the result of the election held that day in Perth as a significant expression of the opinion of the metropolitan constituency with reference to the question of Responsible Government, and yet the hon. member in the tenth of his counter-resolutions contended that the result of elections in this colony cannot be regarded as a conclusive test of the feelings of its electors upon political questions. (Cheers.) With reference to the number of those electors, and their relative proportion to the non-electors, it was a somewhat singular coincidence that they bore exactly the same proportion as in England and Wales. The population of this colony was roundly stated to be 27,000 souls, of which 2,000 were electors; the population of England and Wales was, in round numbers, 26,000,000 and the number of electors were roughly estimated at 2,000,000. Western Australia, therefore, lost nothing by comparison with the Mother Country in the relative proportion of its "free and independent" with the less favored section of the community. (Cheers.)

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) said he did not rise to offer any remarks upon the question before the Council. The members of the Government in the House had, in his opinion, very properly refrained from taking part in the debate. The question under consideration was one entirely for the elected representatives of the people to deal with, without any intervention or influence being brought to bear by the Government, who had refrained from doing so. He and those who sat with him on what was called the Government bench, would, however, vote in favor of the resolution submitted for the affirmation of the House by the hon. member for Wellington, inasmuch as his colleagues and he wished to be consistent in their actions, and because they believed now, as they had believed when they supported the principles of the Constitution Bill when before the House, that the contemplated constitutional change was a movement in the right direction, and one that would tend to the benefit and advantage of the colony; and because they further conceived, and conceived truly, that a large majority of the electors of the colony were entirely in accord with them in this view.

Having congratulated the House on the moderate tone of the debate and the ability with which it had been conducted, the hon. gentleman resumed his seat.

Amendment put, upon which a division was called for, the result being as follows:—

Ayes	3
Noes	15
Majority against	12

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Randell	The Hon. F. P. Barlee
Mr. E. Hamersley	The Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Brown (Teller).	The Hon. H. H. Hocking
	Mr. S. Hamersley
	Mr. Crowther
	Mr. Padbury
	Mr. Gale
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. Burt
	Mr. Bickley
	Mr. Glyde
	Sir Thomas Cockburn-
	Campbell
	Mr. Steere (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question, that the Resolution proposed by Mr. Steere be adopted, put, upon which a division was called for, the result being as follows:—

Ayes	15
Noes	3
Majority for	12

Ayes.	Noes.
The Hon. F. P. Barlee	Mr. Randell
The Hon. M. Fraser	Mr. E. Hamersley
The Hon. H. H. Hocking	Mr. Brown (Teller).
Mr. Bickley	
Mr. Burt	
Mr. Glyde	
Sir Thomas Cockburn-	
Campbell	
Mr. Pearce	
Mr. Marmion	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. Padbury	
Mr. S. Hamersley	
Mr. Crowther	
Mr. Gale	
Mr. Steere (Teller).	

Resolution thus passed.

PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION.

Mr. STEERE moved that this Council is of opinion that it is not desirable to expend any public money on the Philadelphia Exhibition, as it conceives that the cost would be more than commensurate with the advantages to be derived.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE FOR COOLIE IMMIGRATION.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking) moved that Mr. Burt and Mr. Marmion, in conjunction with Mr. Glyde, be appointed as the Committee for Coolie Immigration.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at 11.45 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 26th January, 1875.

Prorogation.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 12 noon.
PRAYERS.

PROROGATION.

His EXCELLENCY arrived at the Council Chamber at three minutes past 12 noon, accompanied by his staff, consisting of the Hon. the Commandant (Major Harvest), Mr. J. Grant Elliott, A.D.C., and Mr. Henry, Private Secretary; and having entered the Council Chamber and desired the members, who had risen on his entrance, to be seated, said:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

In relieving you from further attendance in Council, I desire to express to you the pleasure which it affords me to inaugurate my personal