

tary of State had invited our views; he wanted us, in fact, to give some arguments which might convince him, and inasmuch as the resolution embodied no argument, and suggested no way out of the difficulty, he failed to see what was the good of it. As they had not seen the amendment in print, he would move that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

MR. PARKER thought it was hardly necessary to report progress, as he did not object to the amendment. He would point out that it was highly desirable these resolutions should be placed in the hands of the Governor at the earliest possible date.

The motion to report progress was agreed to.

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*Friday, April 6th, 1888.*

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT: MR.  
PARKER'S RESOLUTIONS.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day for the further consideration of the resolutions, the amendment submitted by Mr. MARMION in the course of the previous debate was put and passed, without further discussion.

MR. PARKER then moved the 7th resolution standing in his name—"That no ground whatever of necessity has been shown for placing the interests of the aboriginal population in the hands of a body independent of the local Ministry." The House, no doubt, remembered the words that the Governor used in his despatch to the Secretary of State, when dealing with this question. His Excellency pointed out that at present we have a Board, known as the Aborigines Protection Board, established under an Act passed by the Legislature; and the idea of the Governor was that this Board should continue to exist under

Responsible Government, but independently of the Ministry of the day. His Excellency proposed that an annual sum of £5,000 should be set apart for the use of this Board, to be expended for the benefit of the native population. The Governor also suggested that a portion of this money should go towards the maintenance of the Revenue cutter, employed in connection with the pearl shell fishery on the North-West coast, where a considerable number of these natives were employed. As a set-off to this charge of £5,000, the Governor's idea was that the ordinary Estimates be relieved of a portion of the vote for the Aboriginal Department, and relieved of a part of the cost of maintaining the Revenue cutter. We were at present expending about £3,000 a year for the protection of aborigines, under the direction of the Board referred to, and the annual grant for the maintenance of the Revenue cutter was £2,000; so that, if the Governor's views were carried out, there would be no great additional expense entailed. But it appeared to him—and he thought they would find it out in the course of this debate—that the Governor was not altogether in accord with the members of that House, or rather that the members of that House were not altogether in accord with the Governor, as to the necessity of vesting this money in the Aborigines Protection Board, independently of the Ministry of the day, or of Parliament. There was no reason to suppose that the natives had been badly treated in the past, or that they were likely to be treated badly in the future. He did not suppose there was another colony where the natives were so well treated as they were here, and especially at the North. Of course there may have been a few exceptions, there may have been a few cases of ill-treatment, as was bound to occur in any community; but, on the whole, no one could say that the natives of this colony had been badly used by the settlers. It was to the interest of the settlers and of the pearlers who employed these natives to treat them well. Latterly, he was sorry to say, owing to the stringent regulations which had been passed by that House, governing the relations of these employers and the natives, a great many of

[ *Responsible Govt.*

them had ceased to employ any natives at all; and the consequence was, a great many of these natives had been thrown out of employment, and not caring to return to their old habits, took to stealing, and got into gaol. Although, as a rule they were a fine body of natives, and willing to work, still in consequence of the stringency of the regulations, few of the settlers or pearlers cared to employ them. The result was as he had stated. These unfortunate natives, thrown on their own resources, stole the settlers' sheep and committed other offences, and consequently were sent to prison. He could not help thinking himself that the natives here had suffered considerably more from the officious, though no doubt well-meant, interference of persons who wished to do them good, than from any other cause. He mentioned these facts to show that so far as the settlers or the Legislature were concerned, there was no ground whatever for suggesting that the interests of the natives should be placed in the hands of a body independent of the local ministry under Responsible Government. They knew very well that when Responsible Government was granted to Queensland, no special legislation was made in the interests of the native population. The natives there were left to be dealt with like any other persons, and he could see no reason why in this colony, where the natives had been so exceptionally well treated in the past, and were likely to be well treated in the future, there should be any special legislation required in their behalf. He failed to see why, in taking over the Government of this colony, we could not guarantee the proper treatment of the native population, without placing them under the care of a body independent of the Ministry or Parliament of the day. He hoped that on this occasion they would have an opportunity of hearing what the members for the North had to say on this subject.

MR. RICHARDSON had much pleasure in supporting the resolution, and the remarks of the hon. member who had moved it. He believed everyone in that House endorsed the hon. member's sentiments. There could be no doubt about it—and the colony at large was realising it—that what the natives were suffering from now was over-legislation.

He thought the poor natives had good reason to say, in this respect, "Save us from our friends;" for, if they were suffering from anything at all it was from their professed friends. And what was the result of all their over-legislation? One result was this: we had at the present moment the lamentable spectacle of over 100 natives, who were formerly happy and contented in the employ of the settlers or pearlers, now confined in the gaol at the North, simply because of the stringent and impracticable nature of the regulations governing their employment. The settlers could stand it no longer, and their only alternative was to turn these natives adrift, and let the Government deal with them the best way they could. He thought it was a regrettable state of things—regrettable as regards the natives themselves and regrettable to think of the labor thus wasted. But it was never too late to learn wisdom, and he thought the sooner the better this colony and its Legislature recognised the fact that this system of over-legislation was proving most injurious to our native population, and that the best friends the natives of this colony ever had were their employers. It was to their employers' interest to treat them well, as everyone who had any practical knowledge of the service of natives must know. These blacks at the North were suited to the climate, and made excellent servants, and it was to the advantage of their employers to treat them properly and kindly; and he challenged anyone to prove that they had not been properly, and kindly, and most humanely treated by their employers, as a body. But, as he had already said, so stringent had the labor regulations become that their employers had to part with them, and the result was that our gaols were filled with these unfortunate fellows, who, though willing to work, were driven to steal. He honestly believed these Northern natives, employed by the whites, were the happiest lot of people in the colony, until they were interfered with by their professed friends. He thought it was a most unfair reflection upon the future Parliament of the colony to suggest that it was not fit to be trusted with the control of our native population. The resolution had his most cordial support.

MR. HENSMAN said he desired to say a few words on the subject, for he thought it was a very important one. It appeared to him that if the Secretary of State was right in suggesting that if the colony adopted Responsible Government it would be necessary to place the native population under the care of an independent body—a body independent of the local Parliament—if the Governor, in the first instance, and the Secretary of State were right in suggesting that, then, in his opinion, this colony was utterly unfit for Responsible Government. If they were able and fit to make laws for the white population, were they not able and fit, and were they not to be trusted, to make laws for the black population? He thought the despatch which contained this suggestion was one which reflected, and seriously reflected, upon the Legislature and the people of the colony. No doubt there were isolated cases of natives having been ill treated, no doubt in the past there had been cases of injustice done to the natives, here as elsewhere; but, every year, the treatment of the natives had been improving, and the Legislature had passed laws for the direct purpose of protecting the natives; and, as years went on, public opinion would be brought more and more to bear to ensure the still further good treatment of the native population. He hoped we might yet see in this colony special reserves set apart for them, as in the United States. If the suggestion that the Legislature of the future was unfit to be entrusted with the management and control of the natives of the colony had emanated from some outsider, if it had come from the Reverend Mr. Gribble, there would have been a great howl of indignation. But not so when it came from the Governor of the colony, in a despatch to the Secretary of State. He thought it was to be regretted that the Secretary of State's reply was not in answer to the suggestion of some obscure individual, but in answer to a despatch penned by the Governor of the colony. It was to him strange that the same pen should have written the despatch of the 12th July, 1887, which suggested to the Secretary of State that, if the colony were granted Responsible Government, the management and control of the native population should not be entrusted to the

colonial Ministry or the local Parliament, but to an independent body—it was to him strange that the same pen should have written that despatch and the despatch of the 20th December, 1886. It was curious that the same Governor, in repudiating the attack made upon the settlers of the colony by Mr. Gribble, should have written this: "I have admitted that Mr. Gribble's action, however blameworthy were its excrescences and eccentricities, strengthened the hands of the Government; but to say that the Legislature was not—even without or before that action—quite ready to consider fairly and favorably any feasible proposals in the interests of the natives, is to say what is not just to the Legislative Council of this colony." It was curious that the same Governor who wrote in that manner of the Legislature of the colony in December, 1886, should, in July, 1887, suggest to the Secretary of State that the Legislature, if we had Responsible Government, would not be fit to be entrusted to watch over the interests of the natives. It was difficult to reconcile the two statements. He believed that there was at present a feeling in this community which would give a tone to the Legislature, and that no Legislature in the future would wish to do any injustice to the natives of the colony. He supported this resolution with all his strength and heart. He was not speaking for the Legislative Council as a body, he was only speaking for himself when he said he regarded it as an insult, when they were told that although they were fit to be members of a House that might pass good laws for the white population, they were not fit to be trusted to look after the interests of the natives. He did not know what he, or any member of that House, had done to justify this insult at the hands of the Governor of the colony. For his own part he rejected it with indignation; and he hoped the Secretary of State would be made aware, whether they were fit for Responsible Government or not, that they were unanimous in their desire to do full justice to the natives of the colony.

MR. A. FORREST said he agreed fully in the remarks just made by the hon. member for the Greenough, that the Governor had gone out of his way to

[ *Responsible Govt.*

suggest to the Secretary of State that that Council would support anything in the shape of doing injustice to the natives, and that, if we got Responsible Government, the natives of the colony ought to be handed over to a Board independent of Parliament. If the Parliament of the colony was not fit to govern the native population, it was certainly not fit to govern the white population. He represented a Northern constituency, and had travelled over all the colony, and, speaking generally, there were few cases indeed in which the natives who had come into contact with the whites had been ill-treated. On the whole they had been treated in the very kindest way. Taking the whole country north of Champion Bay right up to Kimberley, cases of breach of the regulations had been very few indeed. Latterly perhaps they had been more so, because of the ill-advised nature of the regulations passed by that House; and the end of it was, the natives, being no longer employed, got into prison. The Government had themselves to blame for the present state of things at the North, though they had been assisted to some extent by that Council in framing such ill-advised laws. Those who had any practical experience of our Northern territory were well aware that the present Native Labor Act was doing no good at all; on the contrary it was doing a great deal of harm, and costing the colony a great deal of money, in support of native prisoners who, but for these laws, would be happy and contented in the service of the settlers. He trusted that when we got Responsible Government a great many of these laws with reference to the employment of natives would be done away with.

MR. SHOLL said he also was a Northern member, and he should have much pleasure in supporting the resolution before the House. He must express his surprise at the ill-advised action of His Excellency the Governor when he penned that 14th paragraph of his despatch to Sir Henry Holland. He really thought His Excellency could not have given the matter his serious consideration when he asked the Secretary of State to stipulate that, before Responsible Government should be granted to this colony, the power of legislation as regards the natives should be taken out of the

hands of the Ministry of the day. [Mr. PARKER: Not of legislation.] Well, at any rate, that the Legislature was to provide funds for the protection of the natives, to be distributed by somebody altogether independent of Parliament. The Governor in his despatch said: "Having carefully reflected on the best method of proceeding, I recommend that the appointment of the Aborigines Protection Board, under the Act of 1886, be vested, independently of the Ministry, in the Governor, at whose disposal a reserved annual sum of £5,000 should be placed, to be allotted to the Board, or otherwise expended by the Governor, under the Secretary of State's direction, for the benefit of the native population." If that was not taking it out of the hands of the Ministry, he did not know what was. He thought, with the other hon. members who had just spoken, that it was an absurdity to think that any community would submit to such an insult—for he considered it was an insult to say that they were not fit to be entrusted to legislate for the protection of the native population, or, in other words, that they would not treat them fairly. With regard to the interference caused by over-legislation, there was not the least doubt in the world that the natives at the Nor-West were, two years ago, a well-fed and a happy and contented race, but, through this over-legislation—partly the fault of the Government, acting probably under instructions from the Colonial Office, backed up by that Legislature to a certain extent—these men were now out of employment, and the majority of them, probably, in prison. These natives were willing to work and able to work, both for the settlers and in the pearl-shell fishery, and their employers would have continued to employ them but for this irritating interference caused by what had been over-legislation for the further protection of the natives. As a rule these natives have always been well treated without any special regulations affecting them. Of course there had been some exceptional cases of injustice and ill-treatment; but they all knew perfectly well that in every community, even the most well-ordered community, there were always some offenders against the law. But was a whole community to be con-

demned because one or two individuals misconducted themselves? Was a whole community to be branded as unfit to be trusted to manage the natives, because of one or two cases of ill-treatment and cruelty? What did we pay our magistrates and our police for at the North? What were Native Protectors appointed for, except to prevent these individual cases of native ill-usage or hardship? They might just as well charge all the people of Perth with being drunkards or thieves because a few individuals were brought up at the police court charged with those offences. He was pleased that the hon. member for Perth had brought forward this resolution, and he could say for his own part that if His Excellency's suggestion had been carried out he, for one, should have resented the insult, and would not have accepted Responsible Government under such conditions.

MR. MARMION said he should like to say just a word or two; so much had been spoken with regard to the resolution that very little fresh ground was left. He thought the interests of the natives had been well guarded under the present constitution, and he thought it was an insult to those who were to control the destinies of the country in the future to suggest that they were not likely to have the same sense of right and justice, and be animated by the same humane instincts. Only very lately they had adopted some further special legislation for the protection of these natives, with the object, he supposed, of meeting the views of the English Government, and of gratifying that "Exeter Hall" sentiment, which, though well-intended no doubt, had done much harm for the natives in many respects. With regard to what had been said on this subject, he concurred with much that had fallen from previous speakers. He thought it was to the interests of the natives themselves that the same good feeling which had hitherto existed between them and their employers should be encouraged; but they must remember that in order to create and to sustain this bond of sympathy between the two races the one thing necessary was the employment of the natives by the whites, to their mutual benefit. The feeling that they were necessary to each other would create the tie which would enable

them to live together on friendly terms. A few years ago a large number of these natives were employed by the settlers, as shepherds and otherwise, and many others were employed in the pearling industry; but, in consequence of the stringency of legislation of late, these natives had been thrown out of employment; and, as they had become used to white people's food, they did not care to return to their old savage habits, having become partly civilised by constant contact with the white population, and the result was they began to thieve, and they were now in prison. He would ask any reasonable person whether this state of things was for the benefit of the natives, or of the settlers, or of the country? He said it was not for the benefit of anyone. Our legislation in this direction had been a mistake altogether, prompted too much as it had been by that maudlin sentiment he had referred to. In spite of those who preached to us from a distance as to our duties towards the aboriginal race, and who knew nothing of what they were preaching about, or of the conditions of colonial life, he submitted that the local Legislature, under any constitution, would be much better able to legislate for the benefit of these natives than strangers at a distance; and he, for one, thought it was a piece of impertinence on the part of these people to be lecturing us and hectoring us from a distance. He deprecated their interference, and he resented their well-meaning but ill-advised officiousness. He, for one, would not consent to any such arrangement as had been suggested with regard to the control of the natives in the future, though, in the first instance, the proposal had come from the Governor—possibly in a mistaken spirit, thinking it would tend to reconcile the Imperial Government to the proposed change, and gratify their prejudices. At all events he was not prepared to accept the proposal put forward by His Excellency and echoed by the Secretary of State; and he thought the least we could do was to show that we were as fully aware of our obligations towards the native race, and as desirous of doing justice to them, as the Secretary of State himself, or those who held forth at Exeter Hall; and that, if we were left alone, we would in all probability do a great deal more good for the natives.

[ *Responsible Govt.*

The resolution was then put, and passed unanimously.

The various resolutions, as adopted, were then reported to the House, and, on the motion of Mr. PARKER, the report was adopted.

MR. PARKER then moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, conveying the Resolutions passed by the House in response to the despatches of the Secretary of State on Responsible Government, and praying His Excellency that he would be pleased, in forwarding them to Lord Knutsford, to point out the extreme importance attaching to an early settlement of this most important question." He did not think, after all the discussion that had taken place upon these resolutions, and upon the subject generally, it was necessary that he should further prolong the debate.

MR. HENSMAN suggested that some intimation should be conveyed to the Governor that what had been said in that House in support of these resolutions should also be sent to the Secretary of State. It appeared that the Governor wrote a long despatch to the Secretary of State to accompany their two short resolutions of last session, and that the Secretary of State wrote back two despatches in reply. But it was that House, representing the people of the colony, that was concerned in the controversy,—not the Governor; and, judging by what had been said that evening, that House, he presumed, would not consent to be tied down by any arguments used by the Governor to the Secretary of State, some of which had been somewhat curtly replied to. It appeared to him that what these resolutions lacked was argument. They did not pretend to give the arguments of that House in support of the position taken up; and he did not think, if they went to the Secretary of State in this bare form, they would be likely to convince; or if we left it to the Governor. He thought some authorised copy of the debates that had taken place upon these resolutions should go home with them. The Secretary of State would then see what had been said; he would have the views entertained by that House expressed in their own plain language, free from circumlocution. It appeared to him it would be very awkward that the Gov-

ernor, who had made certain suggestions to the Secretary of State, should now have to put forward arguments against his own view; therefore he thought their own arguments ought to go to the Secretary of State, who might perhaps then see that he had to deal with men who felt strongly this imputation upon their humanity. Otherwise, we should be giving scope for other people to write despatches and to argue our case—despatches which we should not have an opportunity of reading before they were sent home.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he had framed an amendment, which, if added to the address, would meet the views of the hon. member. He thought himself it would have been a mistake to have introduced arguments into these resolutions themselves, which were simply intended to answer certain questions which had been put to them by the Secretary of State. They, of course, took it for granted that a report of the debates would be sent home with the resolutions, and, in order to meet the hon. member's views, he would move that the following words be added to the address: "This House further requests that His Excellency the Governor would forward to the Secretary of State the *Hansard* report of the debates which took place when the resolutions were under consideration."

These words having been added to the address, it was agreed to.

#### MR. HENSMAN'S RESOLUTIONS: PROVISIONS TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE CONSTITUTION BILL.

MR. HENSMAN, referring to the resolutions introduced by him on the 21st March, said he had understood that those resolutions would have gone into committee with the other resolutions. It would be remembered that the hon. member for Perth said that he had brought his resolutions forward without consulting other members, and he (Mr. Hensman) had sketched his out in order that they might assist in the general discussion of the whole question. But the hon. member for Perth met them at the very outset by saying that he intended to vote against everyone of them. He did not complain of that; the hon. member had a perfect

right to do it. He had simply risen to say that he thought it was unnecessary to keep them on the Notice Paper any longer, because he understood the hon. member for Wellington was going to move a certain number of similar resolutions. He would, therefore, withdraw his own.

The Order of the Day was thereupon discharged.

#### THE QUESTION OF A CONSTITUTION BILL.

MR. VENN, in accordance with notice, moved: "That the question of a Constitution Bill for Western Australia be referred to a select committee, and that the Resolutions passed by this House be considered as instructions to that committee in drafting a Constitution Bill." The hon. member said this question was not one of to-day; it had been before them for some considerable time, and, in taking the present course of action, he was doing what he felt justified in doing. He had this satisfaction at any rate,—whatever some of the public journals of this colony might think of his action, he believed he was supported in the course he was taking by some of the best statesmen of the other colonies. The hon. member for Greenough had just explained the position of affairs as regards the resolutions which the hon. member and himself had placed on the Notice Paper; they had been placed there with a view to a full discussion of the whole subject. The hon. member for Perth when he tabled his resolutions told them he had done so entirely on his own account. When he (Mr. Venn) adopted the same course on a former occasion, he was charged with having done something dreadfully wrong. However, let that pass. The hon. member for Greenough and himself had been told by a section of the Press that in bringing forward their own resolutions, and in pursuing the action which they did in this matter, they were chargeable with endeavoring to put themselves forward as "would-be generals in the campaign." He need hardly say there was no ground for such a charge: these resolutions were simply put forward to invite discussion, and he did not think it could be said that they had failed in that object, for not only

had they incidentally led to a great deal of discussion, but they had served to give a great deal of point to the resolutions of the hon. member for Perth. Therefore he did not think it was fair, either towards the hon. member for Greenough, or himself, to accuse them as having put forward these resolutions in opposition to the other resolutions; it was done more in response to the invitation of the hon. member for Perth himself. The hon. member for the Greenough and himself had but one idea, and that was to bring this question of Responsible Government somewhere within a measurable distance of some point of finality. He was not abusing any confidence of the House when he stated that at a meeting of several members of the House, when they were discussing the question of these resolutions, it was generally understood that the course he was now taking would be a fair one,—that was, to allow the resolutions of the hon. member for Perth, or of other hon. members, to be first discussed; and that, if it should be thought advisable, those resolutions, when passed by the House, should form instructions to a select committee in drafting a Constitution Bill. He did not know what hon. members might think of that question now, if they had read what he had read in the columns of the press that morning. They had been told that nothing could be more absurd, more unpractical, and ill-advised, that it was difficult to conceive how such an idea could have entered the brain of anyone of average common sense, and that the select committee, if appointed at all, would be composed, most probably, of members knowing little or nothing of constitutional questions, and who would do probably a great deal more harm than good; and yet this "absurd idea" had really been thought over by the hon. member for Perth. He did not know what effect this opinion of the press would have upon other members of that House; but, so far as he was concerned, he was not at all convinced that his action was in any way an improper one. They had been told, only a few evenings ago, by the Colonial Secretary, that the present position of the colony was due entirely to the inaction of members on the elected side of the House, and the half-hearted manner in

[ *Responsible Govt.*

which they had treated this question of Responsible Government. In fact, the hon. gentleman told them, as plainly as possible, that the Reform Party should not have been content with merely passing resolutions,—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): The hon. member is putting words in my mouth that I never uttered.

MR. VENN, continuing, said that was the direct inference; and no other could have been drawn by the Reform Party from the hon. gentleman's words than that, by the half-hearted way in which they had dealt with this question of Responsible Government, they were altogether responsible for the present position of the colony, and not the Government; in other words, that they ought to have taken some further step than passing certain abstract resolutions. That step he invited them now to take, as he suggested at the time the abstract resolution was passed. He was told the other evening that he must have had the history of New South Wales in his mind, when he drafted his resolutions. Not altogether so. He might say that when this same question was brought before the House years ago a Constitution Bill was then introduced—he believed by His Honor the present Speaker; and he believed that bill was taken to its second reading. On that occasion, it appeared, it was thought it would not be wise simply to move mere abstract resolutions, but to have a Constitution Bill introduced into the House and discussed. If that was a right course to pursue in those days, surely it was an equally wise and constitutional course to pursue now; and that, as in New South Wales, they should have a Constitution Bill brought in, and not be content with merely passing abstract resolutions. The advantage of a Constitution Bill was that it enabled both the public and the Home Government to see what we were really asking for; it defined the question and gave debatable ground upon which to stand by saying—This is what we mean when we ask for Responsible Government. These resolutions might do very well as instructions to a committee to frame the bill, as they would show the inclinations of the House as regards many important points which

would have to be dealt with in the bill, whenever it came before them. In fact, some of the main principles of the Constitution Bill had been discussed, and, he thought, very intelligently discussed, in that House; and he thought it was rather a libel upon members to be told, as they had been by some of the papers that day, that if they did consent to go into select committee, the members of that House were not exactly the right sort of people to prepare a Constitution Bill. They had already, as he had said, discussed the main principles of the bill; but there were many matters of detail yet to be discussed, and it struck him it would have been better to have these details drafted by a select committee. He took it that at the present moment they were in this position: the Governor, through the Secretary of State, had told them that until this question of Responsible Government is settled, one way or the other, absolutely nothing could be done in the way of initiating another loan, or undertaking further public works. The colony therefore was simply at a standstill until this constitutional question was settled. Were they content to remain in a state of *statu quo* any longer? It appeared to him it was not even a case of *statu quo*, but a case of going backwards; for the colony was certainly not holding its own at the present moment, and he thought it was the duty of that House, and especially of those who had carried on this movement in favor of Responsible Government, to bring the matter to a final issue, without further loss of time. If the Government still intended to take the stand which they had taken as regards the initiation of loans and public works, and everything was to remain at a standstill until this constitutional question was decided, then the sooner the question was settled the better would it be for the colony. As the matter now stood, the House had simply answered, in a mild sort of way, certain points put forward by the Secretary of State; and the result would be—if they did not bring in a Constitution Bill themselves—the matter would be again referred home. Whenever the Constitution Bill did come before them, it must necessarily include some of the principles which that House had affirmed, but—unless they brought it in themselves—it might be



found that a great many of these principles had been objected to. It appeared to him that we were the people who ought to settle these points. Hon. members were there to legislate for the good of the colony we lived in; and surely, if they had brain power for the position, they could accentuate that position by giving point to their arguments. He took it that the resolutions now passed, only in a small degree represented all we wanted; and unless we went further, and a very great deal further, and bring in a Constitution Bill—not necessarily to be passed through all its stages—very little point would have been given to our arguments. The provisions of the bill must necessarily be discussed by that House, and surely a select committee would be able to grapple with the task of preparing the bill for discussion. Unless this discussion took place this session, it would have to take place at some future time. Why could they not take time by the forelock. At the present moment the country did not really know what the House intended. There was a very general idea that the members of the Reform Party were disunited; but, he thought, that was altogether wrong. He believed they had but one idea, and that was to bring this question to a finality. To that end he thought it was due to themselves, and due to the country, that they should take the action suggested in the motion now before the House. He did not think, if he spoke for an hour, he could say very much more. He had touched on the main points that had suggested themselves to him, and he thought the motion itself was one which would recommend itself to the House.

MR. A. FORREST seconded the motion.

THE SPEAKER, before putting the motion, said: I think I should here state what my views are in reference to a certain point involved in the hon. member's motion. It is not in the power of this House to introduce, or carry through any of its stages, a bill imposing a charge upon the people, without a recommendation being sent down by the Governor for that purpose; and, of course, the hon. member must be aware that a Constitutional Bill would be of no avail unless it provided for a Civil List.

[ *Responsible Govt.*

MR. VENN said he intended to have omitted the Civil List.

THE SPEAKER added that it was only right he should point out that the hon. member for Wellington was wrong when he stated that he (the Speaker), when a private member, had some years ago brought in a Constitution Bill. The hon. member had been misinformed upon that matter, for the bill in question was introduced by the Government of the day.

MR. HENSMAN, in supporting the motion, said it was well known that he differed from the mover in his views upon the question of two chambers; but that was a question that would not be decided by the present House, but by a Council fresh from the country, after it had had this question submitted to it. Although he differed from the hon. member in matters of detail, he agreed with him most fully and cordially that they ought to get on with this question, and have it settled—not dallying with it, but dealing with it in a practical way. It seemed to him that the question of Constitutional Government in this colony had not been dealt with in the same practical way as it had been in the other colonies. In 1850 the Imperial Parliament passed an Act which gave power to the Legislative Councils then in existence to pass a Constitutional Bill, provided they had two chambers. The majority of that House had, so far, declared in favor of two chambers. It might be—though he was not prepared to assent to it—that it would be for the Government to bring in this bill if it dealt with money matters. It seemed to him that nobody's leave was asked in the other colonies, and, if brought in by a private member, the Civil List might be left out. What was more, the Imperial Act provided that a Constitution Bill, when passed by the local Legislature, shall lie on the table of the House, so many days, before it shall receive the Royal Assent. But, so determined were they in the other colonies to push on the question, and, apparently, so sympathetic were the Governments of those colonies with the aspirations of the people in their desire to obtain a free constitution, that in some of the colonies pressing for it the Constitutional Bill received the Royal Assent without going through

the formality of being previously laid on the table of the House of Commons, and the constitutions so obtained were afterwards declared to be as legal as if they had been granted with the Royal Assent given after the bills had lain on the table of the House of Commons, as required by the Act. This colony had the same right conferred upon it by the Imperial statute as the other colonies had, and we had as much right to take every advantage of it. Nor did he think we were treating anybody with disrespect when we sought to do so. Seeing that the Imperial Parliament had given us the same powers as it did to the Legislatures of all the other colonies, he did not understand why we should approach this constitutional question with cap in hand to the Secretary of State. He saw no necessity for it. It might be that before the Royal Assent was given to our Constitution Bill, the Imperial Government might say, "We will reserve for ourselves certain power over the Crown lands of the colony, or the power to divide the colony, provided a division should be found convenient." Such conditions as these, he presumed, we should not think unreasonable. At all events, we should not pause before going into Responsible Government simply for that reason. That was a very different thing from going to the Secretary of State, and saying, "On what terms will you grant us Responsible Government?" He agreed with the hon. member for Wellington, it was for us to say what we wanted; and he hoped we should say, resolutely and firmly, "This is the Government we desire; it is the Government that the Parliaments of the other colonies have obtained, and which was given to Queensland before it had as large a population as we have. If you have any objection to it, point it out, either in detail or in principle, and we will endeavor to improve it." That appeared to him the attitude which that House ought to assume in this matter. Instead of that, it seemed to him they had really gone backwards. They passed certain resolutions last year, and now they were beginning to consider whether they ought to have passed them. Of course, when they said Responsible Government, last year, they meant it for all the inhabitants of the colony, white and black; but now they had gone

behind that, and commenced an argument on the subject between the Secretary of State and the Government. He did not understand the way in which they were dealing with this question. He was afraid the House was not prepared to press on with it. When he saw the combination with which the resolutions had been brought forward, and the manner in which they had been dealt with, he feared the House would not support his hon. friend on the left, in the motion now before them. At the same time he should support the hon. member if he went to a division. He wished to point out that there was nothing inconsistent in this motion with the resolutions they had already passed. There was nothing inconsistent in their bringing in a draft bill, and going on with it up to a certain stage. In fact it was exactly what the Governor himself suggested some time ago; he said he had a bill prepared, and that it would be introduced, and that when the discussion had proceeded up to a certain stage, he proposed to dissolve the Council, so that the country should have an opportunity of electing fresh members, on something more tangible than mere abstract resolutions. The colony at present only knew that what the House wanted was Responsible Government. They had nothing to show them whether it was intended to have two Houses, or how many Ministers it was proposed to have, what was to be the qualification or the number of members, what the franchise was to be—they had nothing before them at present except certain vague resolutions. He called them vague, because they were not followed up by something substantial. Therefore, he hoped the House would not reject the motion now before it, and would say: "At all events, let us get a draft bill, if nothing else—as the Government won't bring a bill down themselves—and let us put it before the colony;" and then let them request that the House be dissolved as soon as possible, in order that a fresh Council might meet, by which time, it was to be hoped, they would have received from the Secretary of State a definite statement of all the conditions which the Imperial Government wished to impose. Unless they did this, they might meet again in four, or

five, or six months time, and they would be no forwarder then than now. As he had already said, although he differed from the hon. member for Wellington on certain points of detail in his scheme, he cordially supported the hon. member's proposition that they should press on this matter to an issue, and show that they were in earnest.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he had only one or two words to say. He wished to say, so far as he himself was concerned, that if he thought for a moment it would forward the question to an earlier settlement, he would give the motion his support. He regretted that the hon. member for Greenough should be constantly throwing out hints that other members were not equally in earnest, and equally anxious with himself to have this question settled. The hon. member must know that there were others in that House who had lived here much longer than he had, and who had the interest of the colony as much at heart as he had, and who felt that the fact of this question not being settled was injuring the colony. He believed himself there was not a single member in the House who was not anxious to forward it. The only question was, what course of action was likely to have that effect. The reason why he thought the course of action now proposed, if pursued in, would not do so, was because it had not had that effect in another colony where it was pursued—New South Wales. He did not know what action was taken in the other colonies, but he had been very careful to look into the history of the question in the first colony where it was introduced. There—as was now proposed to do here—they introduced a bill, and they took about six weeks to draft it; but it had no effect in the world in furthering the question. The bill when it was sent home was taken no notice of. Lord John Russell, who was Secretary for the Colonies at the time, wrote back, pointing out how unconstitutional it was for private members to bring forward such a bill, and that it ought to have been brought in by the Government. A delay of two years and a-half occurred before the basis of the agreement was settled with the Secretary of State; and, until that was done, the bill, over which so much labor and debate

had been spent, was utterly worthless; and that would be the case here. Until we arrived at the basis of an agreement with the Secretary of State, a bill would be of no avail whatever. The hon. member for Greenough, when he spoke of the other colonies, forgot that there was no opposition on the part of the Imperial Government or the English people to their demands; on the contrary, they were glad to get rid of them. But our position was a very different one; definite objections had been taken to our having Responsible Government, and we should have to remove these objections before we could get any farther. Once that were done, our course afterwards would be simple. But he did not think it would simplify matters if they were to bring in a bill at the present time.

MR. SCOTT said he had been carefully thinking, himself, how it would hasten matters to bring in this bill at the present time; and it seemed to him to be a matter of common sense that a bill introduced by private members, at the present stage of the proceedings, would not expedite the settlement of the question at all. If they looked at the English papers they would see that there was a strong opposition at home to the granting of self-government to this colony, the paramount objection being as regards the enormous area of Crown land to be handed over to so small a population. The resolutions which had just been passed would convey to the Home Government the views of the Legislature on the subject, and possibly the objection would be removed. For that reason, he agreed with the hon. member for Greenough that a copy of the *Hansard* debates should accompany the resolutions. He thought also it would have been well if His Excellency had seen fit, through the channel of the Treasury bench, to have combated the arguments which had been put forward with regard to the native question, and that of a loan for public works—if they had any feeling in the matter at all. As to bringing in a bill, it seemed to him it would merely be work thrown away, at the present moment, until some ground of agreement had been arrived at between ourselves and the Home Government.

MR. A. FORREST said he had not made up his mind as to whether he

[ *Responsible Govt.*

should support the motion or not; he should like a few more remarks from the hon. member for Wellington. If he thought it would have the effect of our having what we wanted any sooner, he should vote for it. The hon. baronet, the member for Plantagenet, told them that the bill passed in New South Wales remained a dead letter for two years and a half. If this colony had to wait that long, and no public works were to be started in the meanwhile, as they had been told would be the case until this question was settled, then all he had to say was they ought not to leave a stone unturned to bring this question to a settlement as quickly as possible. If the bringing in of a draft bill would hasten it in any way, he thought they ought to vote for the motion of the hon. member for Wellington. But the objection he saw to it was this: were the present members the members who would be in that House to pass the bill? He understood there was to be a dissolution very shortly, and it might be a question whether many of the present members would be returned; and, if the bill were drafted now, it might be objected to by those who were returned at the general election, and who would have to pass it finally. That was the objection he saw to a bill being drafted now. It would entail a large amount of labor and discussion, keeping them there for weeks, and, after all, it would not be binding upon the Parliament returned at the general election. This question was a very serious one for the colony; and he thought every member would go with him that something should be done to hasten this Constitution Bill onward. He thought the dissolution should take place as soon as possible; and that the Secretary of State should be cabled to, as to whether he agreed with the resolutions which had been passed by the House, so that the House might be dissolved, and the whole thing settled during the course of the present year. It must be obvious to every member in the House that something ought to be done before two years, because he thought if they had to wait that long, and the present state of things existed, we should not require Responsible Government at all. He, for one, if he stood alone, would go back rather than go

forward, if we had to wait two or three years.

MR. RICHARDSON thought all hon. members, to a man, would vote for the motion if they thought it would hasten the settlement of the question. That was just where the point came in. It appeared to him, if this bill were framed, it would embrace so many debatable points, upon which there would be such a diversity of opinion, that these points would be the very points that would be picked out by the Secretary of State; whereas points of minor detail, upon which there would be no difference of opinion, would not be touched at all. He did not see how the minor details of the constitution being placed before the Secretary of State would hasten to settle the question at all, because the leading principles had yet to be settled, and he thought these cardinal principles were covered by the resolutions which they had just passed. Seeing that, he did not see how the question was to be advanced much, until these leading principles had been satisfactorily arranged and agreed upon. He did not think anyone wished to treat the resolution of the hon. member for Wellington except with deference, and everyone must appreciate the hon. member's desire to further the question, as, he thought, they all desired. With regard to the hon. member for Kimberley, who doubted whether the members of the present Council were the proper members to bring in the bill, it must be obvious that it was no good going to the country until they had a bill or something tangible to place before the country. At present there was nothing to go to the country upon. He thought if the Secretary of State were convinced that with regard to the leading principles of the constitution there was unanimity of opinion amongst the members of that House, he would either say that we could have our way, or, on the other hand, would say that the Home Government could not agree; and, in that case, the whole question would be (as the Yankee said) "busted up," for he thought that upon these leading principles they were practically all agreed. Looking at the way the matter was regarded by the English press, and the importance attached to it, one would think this was the finest colony that had ever existed, and that the

British Government were loath to give up whatever control they had over it; and he was afraid it would not be a question of two years but of a great many years, before a settlement is arrived at, unless we could agree with the Secretary of State upon the basis of the compact.

MR. MARMION said he could not support the resolution. He did not think it would, in any way, expedite the settlement of the question which they were all so anxious to see settled. It seemed to him that if any hon. member had been desirous of having a bill passed this session, his better course would have been to have asked the Government to bring in a bill, upon the lines of the resolutions passed by the House. Assuming that the hon. member's motion were agreed to, he did not presume the Government would be inclined to support it, and he thought they required the support of the Government in this matter. They knew perfectly well that at this moment the Government had a bill already prepared, and that the alterations that would be suggested by the resolutions passed by the House would not require such very important alterations in the draft bill. If the Governor were disposed to hasten the introduction of Responsible Government, he might perhaps be disposed to bring forward this bill, and submit it for the consideration of the House. Were His Excellency to do so, he thought it would be a very good thing. He agreed so far with the hon. member for Wellington, that the sooner we got a bill the better; for they all knew that the present position of affairs was this: the Secretary of State had submitted a number of suggestions, which he wished that House to express an opinion upon. The House had now done so, but probably the Secretary of State might suggest some further alterations, and the Constitution Bill might, or might not, possibly, be sent out again, if they passed it. But assuming that the Secretary of State were to agree to our views, and the Governor brought in a bill, it would have to go home, and be laid on the table of the House of Commons, and we did not know what the result might be. In all probability, in the present position of affairs at home, when they were beginning to ascertain that

some portions of Australia were of more value to them than they had imagined—and especially this colony, which, until a few years ago, was *terra incognita* to them, but which they now seemed to regard as another Goshen, a land flowing with milk and honey, a perfect Paradise, where they could find an outlet for all their surplus population—in the present feeling at home, when Western Australia, poor, despised Western Australia, had suddenly assumed a position of Imperial importance, we might find a strong opposition to our cutting the painter at all. It was satisfactory, at any rate, to find that the English people considered this colony such a valuable portion of the Empire,—though it was rather an unfortunate thing for us that they only just made the discovery when they found us anxious to slip the cable. He thought, at any rate, we might be left to look after our own affairs, for, whatever might be the value of the colony as an integral portion of the Empire, the fact of whether we were under one form of Constitution or another was of very little importance to these gentlemen so many thousands of miles away. He did not suppose we should ever be anxious to shut our gates against them, under Responsible Government or any other form of Government. He thought, as regards the motion now before the House that the better course would be to ask the Governor to introduce a Constitution Bill upon the lines of the resolutions agreed to by the House. He thought that if the Government could be induced to adopt this course it would expedite the introduction of Responsible Government by many months. He thought the responsibility ought to be thrown upon His Excellency the Governor rather than upon private members of that House, for he thought the Governor was to a great extent responsible for the present position of affairs, for His Excellency had informed the Secretary of State that the present Constitution could not be worked satisfactorily any longer. His Excellency having made that statement, ought, he thought, to be prepared to take upon himself the responsibility of expediting the introduction of a form of Government, under which the colony could make some sort of progress. He did not suppose His Excellency would be bound down from so

[ *Responsible Govt.*

doing by the following simple paragraph in the Secretary of State's despatch, in which Sir Henry Holland wrote: "I request you to communicate this despatch to the Legislative Council, and in due course to forward to me any resolutions that may be arrived at upon it, together with such observations as you may wish me to consider. Some delay will be inevitable; but, in a matter of so great importance to the future prosperity of Western Australia, every question should be fully and carefully considered before steps are taken for introducing what would be an irrevocable change in the Constitution of the colony." He thought they had pretty well considered this part of the question—as to the expediency of taking these steps. He did not suppose, if they were to consider it for months, or years, longer, any great change was likely to take place in their opinion on that point; but a very great change for the worse might take place in the position of the colony, and it was the duty of the Government to realise that fact, and to make it plain to the Secretary of State that in the present state of the colony it was absolutely necessary that some movement should be made,—either step forward boldly, or take a retrograde step. The representatives of the people in that House had declared in favor of a forward step, and he hoped the Governor and the Executive would do all they could to expedite matters forward, and not sit there with folded arms while the vessel of State was drifting on a lee shore. In his opinion one of the means which the Governor had at his hand for promoting the advent of Responsible Government within a reasonable time, was to take the responsibility upon himself, at the present time, to introduce a Constitution Bill on the lines of these resolutions. He felt sure, if pressure were brought to bear upon His Excellency by that House, that course would be taken by His Excellency, who would be able to satisfactorily explain to the Secretary of State why such a course was expedient in the present critical position of the colony. It appeared to him that His Excellency would be able to show good cause for taking immediate action, and decisive action in this matter, and that he was more likely to gain *kudos* than blame for it. He would

suggest that His Excellency be requested to introduce a bill this session: and he thought, if the hon. member for Wellington were to alter his motion to that effect, instead of referring the matter to a select committee, he would carry with him a large majority of votes. At all events it would place the responsibility upon the proper shoulders—those of the Governor of the colony, and those who represented him in that House, who, he was sorry to say, had remained dumb throughout the whole of the discussion on this most momentous question, never assisting the members of that House by one solitary piece of advice or counsel, or one solitary argument. He must say that, in his opinion, this was most discreditable—he would not say on the part of the Governor, but on the part of the Government, that this silence should have been maintained throughout these important debates, in the present critical position of the country. Whatever might be the opinion of the Governor and of the Executive as to the propriety of their occupying a position of neutrality, the fact remained that the House and the people of the colony had been in the habit of looking to the Governor, or to his representatives in the Legislature, for an expression of opinion, and for counsel and advice; and never had the House and the country a better right to do so than on the present important occasion.

MR. PARKER said certainly the Governor stood in a very peculiar position, and not a very happy one. When they passed certain resolutions in favor of Responsible Government last year, the Governor, in a most elaborate despatch, did all he could to forward the object they had in view; he went into arguments as to certain principles and details of the proposed Constitution Bill, and did all in his power to urge upon the Secretary of State the importance of an early decision on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the matter. The Secretary of State replied, making his comments upon the proposals put forward by the Governor, and asking the Governor to place the whole correspondence between them before the Legislature. Now they found from the hon. member for Greenough that the Governor, instead of doing all he could to support

those resolutions, should simply have sent home the bare resolutions, without any comments or arguments of his own in support of them. The hon. member said we did not want the Governor to argue our case, that we could argue our case better in our own way.

MR. HENSMAN, interrupting, said he did not think he had gone so far as that, he may have objected to the way in which the Governor put it, and said that he thought the Governor had done a good deal of damage to the cause of Constitutional Government.

MR. PARKER, resuming, said he had understood the hon. member to say more than once that the Governor had gone out of his way to damage the cause of Responsible Government, by referring to the native question, and to the question of separation, and that His Excellency should have kept his arguments to himself, and simply sent home the resolutions of the House. Now, they were told by the hon. member for Fremantle that it was most discreditable on the part of the Governor, or, if not on the part of the Governor, on the part of the members of the Executive in that House, that they did not assist the House with their arguments and their advice, when the matter had been specially referred to the House at the request of the Secretary of State himself. It appeared to him that whatever the Governor did he did wrong, in the opinion of some hon. members; and the same with the Executive. For his own part, he was prepared to do the Governor and the Government justice. There were some members in that House who would cast all the slur they could upon the Governor and the Government, and who thought that to do anything else was toadyism. There was such a thing as toadyism of the "people"; and he thought it required sometimes a great deal more courage to hold oneself aloof from toadying to the people than toadying to the Government. Still, in some quarters it was a very popular thing always to run down the Government, but sometimes it was a very cowardly thing as well.

MR. MARMION: I congratulate the hon. member upon his change of views.

MR. PARKER, continuing, said it appeared to him that the Governor had done all he could to promote this cause

of Responsible Government. The Governor had been blamed for referring to the question of Separation. Why, for years past various Secretaries of State had pointed out that whenever the colony did get Responsible Government the colony would have to be divided. That was the very reason why they passed the resolution last year declaring that, in the opinion of that House, Western Australia should remain one and undivided under the new Constitution. Lord Kimberley, when he was Secretary of State, told him himself, in his own office, that they would not grant Responsible Government over the whole colony to 30,000 people. Then, again, as to the native question. The Governor had been blamed for his action in relation to this question. If hon. members would do the Governor the justice of looking at what His Excellency did suggest, they would see that he only proposed to continue a Board which that House itself had created by statute—the Aborigines Protection Board—and to make this Board independent of the Government of the day. Had not that House already established this Board, and voted it annually a large sum of money for the protection of the natives? The Governor was only suggesting—he (Mr. Parker) thought unwisely—to the Secretary of State that it might be advisable, as regards the natives, to continue the existing arrangements. The Governor did not propose that this Board should legislate for the natives, as some hon. members seemed to imagine,—that would be absurd. No legislation could emanate from any source but the Parliament of the country. The hon. member for Fremantle, again, blamed the Governor because he did not bring in a bill. It was known that the Governor had prepared a bill, and that he would have been ready to have introduced it during the December session, had he been authorised to do so. His Excellency told the Secretary of State this, in his despatch, and that the Government would be ready, should the Secretary of State, by post or telegraph, give the necessary authority, to bring the bill forward last December. But what did the Secretary of State inform His Excellency in reply? Not what the hon. member for Fremantle had quoted, but that his despatch would require an answer before the Constitution Act

[ *Responsible Govt.*

could be introduced. That despatch they were now considering, or had been considering. The Governor was distinctly told that this despatch must be answered, before he would be authorised to introduce a Constitution. Yet the hon. member for Fremantle blamed him for not introducing a bill, in the face of these instructions. It appeared to him that no Governor, in the face of that despatch, would think of introducing a bill; and, to ask him to do so, would be to invite a rebuff at his hands. But the question before them now was that they should form a select committee, with the view of preparing a Constitution Bill. The hon. member who had made this proposal had also placed certain resolutions on the Notice Paper which he proposed should embody the cardinal principles of the bill. Those resolutions had since been abandoned, and the House had affirmed other proposals—his (Mr. Parker's) proposals; and the motion now before them was these proposals should be considered as instructions to a select committee in drafting a Constitution Bill. He thought when the hon. member introduced this motion that his idea was to proceed with his own resolutions, as instructions to the committee.

MR. VENN: The motion distinctly refers to "the resolutions passed by this House." My resolutions have not passed the House.

MR. PARKER, continuing, said he was not aware himself that they had passed any resolutions, as instructions to any committee. They were simply an answer to the Secretary of State's despatches. Why had the hon. member abandoned his own resolutions? The hon. member apparently took exception to his (Mr. Parker's) action in placing his resolutions on the paper, before the hon. member had an opportunity of introducing his own. As he said at the time, he simply brought his resolutions forward at that early stage of this session in order to hasten the matter forward, and he asked any other member who had any amendments to propose to give due notice of them. The hon. member himself introduced a more elaborate set of resolutions which were to form the basis of a bill, and then abandoned them. The hon. member for Greenough, who also had tabled a series of resolutions, had stated

that after the way they were met by him (Mr. Parker), he did not care to proceed with them any further. He had sat in that House for ten years, and he must say he had never heard resolutions submitted as those resolutions were. It appeared to him that the hon. member simply placed them on the Notice Paper in order to enable him to deliver a speech on the subject. He did not ask the House to affirm one of them. The hon. member gave them a very long prologue, but the play itself never appeared, and had since been withdrawn from the bill. They then came back to his own resolutions; and perhaps he ought to congratulate himself upon the fact that six out of the seven resolutions which he put forward had received the unanimous assent of the House. With regard to the present motion, he had not the slightest objection to a select committee being formed to bring in a Constitution Bill, so long as the hon. member did not put his name on the committee. But he would point out that if it was competent for a select committee to bring in a bill, it was quite competent for any private member to have done so; and, if some hon. members were so anxious to proceed with the bill, why did they not introduce one of their own? Some years ago, when he was anxious to move in this same matter, he brought in a bill, but he was sorry to say it was somewhat unceremoniously treated. He did not think it was allowed to go to its second reading, but was dexterously shunted off by somebody moving the previous question. There were some members, apparently, under the belief that they were the only people who were really desirous of advancing the cause of Responsible Government, and that there were certain "combinations" who, though ostensibly in favor of the cause, were really retarding it. [MR. HENSMAN: Hear, hear.] Why did not the hon. member for the Greenough himself, if he was so desirous of advancing the cause, bring in a bill, and show the House and the country that he was really in earnest? When the hon. and learned member did this colony the honor of coming out as its Attorney General, the hon. gentleman was perfectly satisfied with the present constitution, so long as he occupied a seat on the Treasury bench. But when the hon. and



learned member ceased to be a member of the Government, he could not say anything that was bad enough about the present constitution. If the hon. member was so dissatisfied, why did he not bring in a Constitution Bill of his own? As to a select committee, he had already said he was not prepared to sit on it himself, if asked; he had not the time to spare, at the present time, and it was very probable he might not be in the House much longer to assist in preparing such a bill.

MR. LAYMAN said the hon. member for Perth had told them he thought he ought to congratulate himself upon the fact of so many of his resolutions having been passed. He, for one, was quite prepared to congratulate the hon. member; he thought the hon. member had done very well. But the question now was, were they to have a bill? The hon. member for Fremantle said the Governor ought to have brought in a bill. [MR. MARMION: I never said anything of the kind; I said the Governor, if pressed, might be induced to bring in a bill.] Did the hon. member think the Governor would bring in a bill until he had orders to do so from home? He presumed it would not be left to the present Council to settle this bill, when it was brought in; he supposed it would be referred to the country, and that the present Council need not trouble itself much as to the wording of it. He had not quite made up his mind yet as to whether he would vote for the resolution or not; the arguments he had heard that evening had not assisted him much. But he thought a bill could do no harm, and it might do good. At any rate it would be a recreation to hon. members residing in and about Perth, to amuse themselves drafting this bill after the country members had gone home.

MR. CONGDON said he could not help thinking that if it was competent for an elected member to bring in a Constitution Act minus the Civil List, he would strongly advise the hon. member for Wellington to do so, as he felt sure that by going to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State with a Constitution Act in our hands, hon. members would be strengthening their position, and advancing the object we had in view one stage further; but as there appeared a

doubt of the competency of elected members bringing in such a bill, he would strongly advise the hon. member for Wellington to adopt the suggestion thrown out by the hon. member for Fremantle, namely, to present an humble address to His Excellency the Governor praying that he would be pleased to cause to be introduced, at as early a date as possible, into this honorable Council, a Constitution Act, based upon the resolutions already adopted by this House. Whatever course was pursued he was anxious in the interests of the country to see the matter brought to a final issue, and an end put to the present feeling of uncertainty and depression which was paralysing the progress of the colony.

MR. VENN said if his resolution had done nothing else, it had evoked a large amount of feeling; but he preferred to deal with the subject logically, himself. He would remind the House that the Governor made a distinct promise, he might almost say, to bring in a Constitution Bill during the session which opened on the 15th December last. But when the 15th December arrived there was no sign of a Constitutional Bill, and no proposal made to bring one forward. The House feeling very strongly on the subject refused to pass supplies for the whole year, and so urgent was the matter considered that a telegram was sent to the Secretary of State requesting him to inform the House when the question was likely to be definitely settled. The reply received was that a despatch on the subject was on the way out, and the House adjourned until March, making sure that when it met again they would certainly have a bill brought in. The House did meet again, but—no bill. It did seem strange that the House, after showing its teeth as it did last session, by refusing to pass supplies until it got a bill, should this session vote the year's supplies, with no further prospect of a bill than they had in December last. The situation was, to say the least, incongruous. The hon. member for Perth had congratulated himself with regard to the passing of his resolutions; he thought the hon. member ought rather to have congratulated the House upon the feeling of unanimity it had shown in coming to some conclusion on the subject. The hon. member had taunted him with hav-

[*Responsible Govt.*]

ing abandoned his own resolutions. If the hon. member had carefully compared them with his own, he would have found that in principle they were in accord. He had simply brought them forward to enable the House to discuss the subject a little more in detail than it was otherwise likely to be; and he thought they had at any rate served that purpose. He believed it was the same with the hon. member for Greenough's resolution, as regards a single chamber. There was no desire or intention that the resolutions should clash with the resolutions originally tabled. They simply carried the matter a step farther—just what was wanted. Now he proposed to go a step further still, and he was sorry to find that his motion was not likely to meet with more general support. The hon. member for Plantagenet told them that there was a delay of two and a-half years in New South Wales between the passing of the bill and the granting of Responsible Government. That may have been, but the introduction of the bill had this effect: it afforded an opportunity for its provisions being fully discussed by the country. It was for this reason that he was so anxious to see a bill introduced in that House. At present they had simply passed a number of abstract resolutions, which in no way strengthened their position. He had no objection—if hon. members objected to a select committee—to accept the proposal suggested by the hon. member for Fremantle, that the Governor should be asked to bring in a bill. The reason he had not done so himself, was because he thought, with the Secretary of State's despatch staring him in the face, the Governor was not likely to bring in a bill. But, if hon. members thought that the Governor, backed up by a distinct resolution of the House, would bring in a bill, his object would be served. His sole object was that they should have something definite, something tangible, before the country, and to put an end to the erroneous and absurd ideas which had got into the heads of the English people on this subject, and which showed their total ignorance of the actual position of affairs. He thought it would have strengthened our position if we had sent a bill home long ago, showing what we really require. Had we done so, probably there

would have been none of the outcry—the silly outcry, he called it—which they had recently seen in the columns of the English press. He thought it was a mistake on the part of the Reform Party to have taken up the matter up to a certain point, and then left it to others. The hon. member for Perth said he had no time to serve on this select committee, if appointed. He was sorry for that, as the hon. member was one of those he had intended to nominate. If those members who were the most capable and the best qualified in the House for the work declined to serve upon this committee, all he could say was, he was sorry for it—very sorry indeed. He had thought there was a little more patriotism among the elected members of the House, when the most vital interests of their country were at stake. It was a humiliating admission to make, and, he would say again, he was sorry for it. He would only add that the hon. gentlemen whom he should have liked to appoint on the committee were Mr. Parker, Mr. Hensman, Mr. Marmion, Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Mr. Shenton, and the mover. He ventured to believe that if these gentlemen consented to devote their time and their abilities to the work, they would have brought in a Constitution Bill not unworthy of the colony.

MR. MARMION moved, as an amendment upon the original resolution: "That 'an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that 'in view of the present position of affairs 'in the colony it is expedient that no 'delay should occur in settling the Constitutional question; and that His Excellency will be pleased to introduce at 'this session of Council a Constitution 'Bill framed upon the lines of the resolutions passed in Committee.'" He thought no harm could be done by adopting this address, and certainly some good might result. At all events, it would show the country that those members who had taken up this movement were in earnest at least, and that, in their opinion, no time should be lost in introducing the proposed change. So far as the position of the Governor was concerned, His Excellency had addressed the Secretary of State on the subject, and the Secretary of State had replied. All this correspondence was before them, and had been discussed, and His Excel-

lency was now in a position to know the views of the members of the House on the subject. The amendment at any rate could do no possible harm. It would show Her Majesty's Government that there was an earnest and anxious desire on the part of the people of the colony to expedite, by every legitimate means, the settlement of this question, and to have their aspirations realised. He had no desire to hamper His Excellency or the Government; at the same time, he thought this was an occasion when every member should be outspoken, and that there should be no room for mistaking the earnestness of their desire that an end should be speedily put to the present period of uncertainty and inactivity.

MR. PEARSE, in seconding the amendment, said he was in accord with the wish expressed that the sooner the better they brought this matter to an end; and it appeared to him, if they could get a Constitution Bill once introduced, it would be an important step in the right direction.

MR. SCOTT said, although the Governor might not be in a position to bring in a bill this session, the amendment would show that it was the desire of the House that a bill should be introduced without any delay that was avoidable. The Government having admitted that the present constitution had become unworkable, he thought it was their duty to give them one that would work, and so relieve the colony from its present unpleasant position.

MR. RICHARDSON said he should oppose the amendment most thoroughly. It had been brought forward avowedly to advance the question a step further, but it appeared to him it would be a waste of time to proceed with the bill in the present stage of the negotiations. He believed that instead of expediting the matter, it would have the effect of delaying it another year.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said the hon. member must know that it was impossible for the Governor to introduce a bill; he was not in a position to do so, and what was the use of adopting an address which they knew must be abortive. It was simply a waste of time to pass such a resolution.

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MR. VENN was afraid himself that it would be futile to pass this address, still he had no desire to press his own motion, if he thought there was a better chance of their obtaining a bill in this way than in the way he had suggested. His own opinion was we were asking the Governor to do that which his special instructions tell him not to do, but if it is thought by a majority of this House a resolution will force the Governor to send down a bill, his motion will not pass. He must express an opinion that the whole question will be wrecked by the resolution of the hon. member for Fremantle if the Governor declines to bring down a bill.

MR. HENSMAN thought the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion), whatever position he might have taken up previously on this question, had that evening expressed himself most earnestly as desirous of putting an end to what he and most of them considered was a crisis in the history of the colony. They knew that so long as the present state of things existed there would be a stoppage of all improvements and of all progress. It had been said that the Government bench had been silent during this debate. Not quite so; because, during the speech of the mover of the resolutions (Mr. Parker), the Attorney General's voice shouting "Hear, hear" had been constantly heard. Therefore, whoever had supported the hon. member for Perth, at all events the learned Attorney General was one of his prime supporters. If the Government bench had been silent, the Government had, at any rate, found an earnest champion that evening on the other side of the House. The hon. member for Perth had given them a speech which, for strong advocacy and energy, could not have been surpassed by any member on the Government bench. But he thought it was unnecessary for the hon. member to remind him of his having been formerly a member of the Executive himself. The hon. member might, at any rate, have done him the justice to say that he had given up £600 a year rather than work with such a body. Actions spoke louder than words. He could not work with it, and he thought the sooner this colony got rid of it the better. The hon. member for

Plantagenet said the amendment would be waste paper; but the hon. member seemed much alarmed at it, even though it be waste paper. It might not have the effect which some of them desired it should have. He dared say the Governor would not move until he had his orders. But he had the telegraph at his command; and it might be that when the Secretary of State saw that some of them, if not all of them, were in earnest, he might reconsider his views, especially when, at this grave crisis in the history of the colony—when the colony was not only not advancing but probably retrograding, for no country could be at a standstill—they were asked why don't you press it, why don't you show yourselves in earnest? If the Governor would not bring in a bill, let him say so in express terms. The amendment was more likely to command support than the original resolution, and on this occasion they ought to give way in their personal views, in order to attain the common end they aimed at.

The amendment was then put and passed.

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*Continuation of Debates of*

*Wednesday, 21st March, 1888.*

*from page 220.*

**ABORIGINES ESTIMATES, 1888 (£2,700).**

The House went into committee for the consideration of these Estimates, covering the proposed expenditure of the Aborigines Protection Board during the year 1888.

MR. SHOLL asked for some information as to the item "Aid to Protestant Mission, North District, £100." A similar vote was granted last year, but he was not aware that the Mission had been re-opened after Gribble went.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the money voted last year had not been expended; but they

had to make provision for the grant, in accordance with the resolution of the House. The item first appeared on the general Estimates in 1885. Of course if the Mission was not re-established the money would not be expended.

MR. A. FORREST said he should like some information as to the item "Provision for Secretary, £100." What did the Board require a secretary for?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said this was the first time this vote had been specially asked for, but the gentleman who had given his services as secretary to the Board—and who was also the secretary to the Board of Immigration—had done so on the understanding that this year the two offices would be separated, and a separate vote taken for his salary. He received £100 a year as secretary to the Aborigines Protection Board, and £150 as secretary to the Immigration Board; the latter amount appeared on the Immigration Estimates.

MR. MARMION asked why no provision was made on these Estimates in aid of the Catholic Mission at the North, as well as of the Protestant Mission?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the vote for the Roman Catholic Mission at the North was included under the head of "Aid to Roman Catholic Institutions, £250,"—£150 for the New Norcia Mission and £100 for the Mission at the North.

The Estimates were then agreed to.

**IMMIGRATION ESTIMATES, 1888 (£5,820).**

These Estimates were considered in Committee.

MR. A. FORREST asked for some explanation as to the first item, "Passages for W. A. Land Co.'s immigrants, in accordance with contract, £3,000." He thought it had been agreed that this company should not send out any more immigrants.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said this vote was for immigrants introduced by the company last year, the money not being payable until three months expired after the immigrants landing. The same remark applied in a great measure to the next item, "Assisted passages for nominated immigrants, in accordance with present