

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Second Session of the First Parliament was prorogued by His Excellency the Governor on 26th February, 1891, to the 30th June; thence to 2nd September; thence to 12th October; and thence to 7th December for the despatch of business; and the second Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Administrator.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 7th December, 1891.

Opening of Council—Administrator's Speech—New Member—Police Bill; first reading—Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

OPENING OF COUNCIL.

The Council met at noon, pursuant to a Proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR (A. C. Onslow, Esq.) shortly afterwards entered the Chamber, and took the chair.

THE ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH.

The members of the Legislative Assembly, in obedience to His Excellency's command, attended the Chamber, after which His Excellency delivered the following Speech:—

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"I meet you with pleasure, and regret that owing to various causes, more especially the preparation of the infor-

mation required to be placed before you, in order that the works authorised under 'The Loan Act, 1891,' may be proceeded with, it has not been possible to summon you at an earlier date.

"2. Immediately after the prorogation, the Delegates appointed by Parliament attended the National Australasian Convention held in Sydney for the purpose of considering the question of the Federation of the Australasian Colonies. For the first time, Western Australia took her position as a self-governing Colony on absolutely equal terms with the other Colonies of Australasia, and received a hearty and cordial welcome. The result of the labors of the Convention, with full reports of the debates and the draft Federation Bill as passed by the Convention, will be communicated to you; but my Ministers do not propose, at present, to take any action in this very important matter.

"3. I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Finances of the Colony are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition; and the estimated Revenue for 1891 will be considerably exceeded. The prosperous condition of the Finances shows that the Colony has been able to respond to the vigorous Public Works policy of the Government, and that the Estimates of Revenue for 1891

"were not based on a too sanguine expectation.

"4. Out of the Loan authorised by Parliament of £1,336,000, the sum of £250,000 was raised in London last July; and, considering the state of the London market, the money was obtained on good terms. It is proposed to raise a further portion of the Loan at the earliest possible moment; and although the market is not at all promising, it is believed that the sound financial condition of the Colony, its increasing Revenue and population, and its substantial credit balance, will enable the remainder of our Loan to be raised on terms fairly satisfactory. At the same time, my Ministers are of opinion that it is most essential that the greatest care and supervision should continue to be exercised over our financial operations.

"5. My Ministers have given careful consideration to the question of the Amendment of the Constitution Act, on those points which have engaged public attention, and they are of opinion that before another General Election takes place, the Qualification of Members should be abolished, and the Franchise placed on a more satisfactory footing; and they are prepared to introduce legislation on the subject so soon as the state of public business permits. Bearing in mind, however, the many pressing matters which instantly require attention; that the major portion of our Loan has yet to be raised; that most of our Public Works under the Loan Act of last year have yet to be either undertaken or completed; that great delay would necessarily result from a General Election, as any change of this kind in the Constitution Act must be followed by a dissolution: my Ministers consider that it would be most unwise to attempt to amend the Constitution Act during the present Session of Parliament.

"6. The Public Works Department has been reorganised during the recess, and my Ministers believe that it is now in a position to carry out the important and urgent demands made upon it. An able and experienced officer has been appointed Engineer-in-Chief, and my Ministers consider that they have been fortunate in obtaining the services

"of a man in every way suitable for this important position. An experienced General Traffic Manager has also been appointed, in order to deal with the fast-increasing business in connection with the Railways of the Colony.

"7. Measures dealing with the following subjects will be submitted to you:—Customs, Police, Mineral Lands, Settled Estates, Masters and Servants, Protection of Game, Bankruptcy, First Offenders, and several others of importance. You will observe that several of these Bills are of a very comprehensive nature, and have required much attention. Railway Bills, to authorise the construction of a railway from Northam to the Yilgarn Goldfields, from Boyanup to the Vasse, from Boyanup to Minninup Bridge, and from Geraldton to Mullewa, will be placed before you. Trial surveys of all these lines have been made, and, as soon as these Bills are passed, the permanent surveys will be taken in hand, and the rails and other materials will be ordered, so that as little delay as possible may occur in commencing the work of construction.

"8. The great success attending the Yilgarn Goldfield cannot but be of vast importance to the whole Colony. During this year about 13,000 ounces of gold have come to Perth, and, as far as can be judged, we are only at the beginning of these valuable reefs. The construction of the Railway will give the greatest assistance to this important field, and the Government proposes to push on the work with all possible speed. The goldfields in the North-West portion of the Colony, at Pilbarra, Nullagyne, Ashburton, and other places have, owing to the prolonged drought, been worked under great difficulties—while the Kimberley Fields, owing to various causes (principally the difficulty of transport), have not progressed as rapidly as could be desired. A rich discovery of gold has recently been made at the Upper Murchison, and a large quantity of gold has been extracted by a very primitive process. The Government has declared a goldfield, appointed a Warden, and established a Postal Service to this new discovery, from which great results are confidently expected.

"9. The important question of providing a safe and commodious harbor at Fremantle has given my Ministers much thought and anxiety during the recess. They have felt that any harbor scheme which would not provide safe accommodation for the Ocean Mail steamers in all weathers would not be likely to meet with the approval of Parliament, or be satisfactory to the Colony. They therefore again consulted Sir John Coode on the subject, and they have now received his report, in which he approves of opening a passage through the Success Bank into Owen Anchorage, and also through the Parmelia Bank into Jervoise Bay and Cockburn Sound if necessary. His very interesting and valuable reports will be placed before you, and my Ministers have decided to ask your approval of a scheme for opening a passage through Success Bank, and making a harbor in Owen Anchorage—connecting it, by a short railway a mile and a-half in length, with the Custom House and Goods Sheds at Fremantle; and they are advised that sufficient of this work to meet present requirements can be carried out for the sum of £150,000 provided in 'The Loan Act, 1891,' for the improvements at Fremantle. My Ministers have every confidence in the work to be undertaken, and believe that within three years this part of the Colony will be able to boast of a safe and commodious harbor, and that all objection to Fremantle as a port of call for the Ocean Mail steamers will be removed.

"10. Plans of the proposed Harbor improvements at Geraldton and at Cos-sack will be placed before you for your approval; and plans are being prepared for all the improvements required at the Ports of Carnarvon, Ashburton, Derby, and other places, for which provision has been made in 'The Loan Act, 1891.' Tenders have been accepted for a Pump Hopper Dredger of 600 tons burden, capable of dredging 600 tons per hour, to be delivered in the Colony at a total cost of £20,300. The Government proposes ordering another Dredger of about 800 tons burden, capable of dredging 800 tons an hour, so that before long the important works at Princess Royal Harbor, Geraldton,

Carnarvon, and other places may be proceeded with.

"11. The telegraph from York to Yil-garn, a distance of 162 miles, is being erected and will shortly be completed. The survey of the line from Flint Cliff to Freshwater Camp, in Sharks Bay, has been completed, and the survey of the line from Busselton to Hamelin is in progress; and both these works, together with the telegraph line from Beverley to Broome Hill, will be undertaken as soon as the material arrives. Telegraph material will also shortly arrive for repairing and re-wiring the lines between Derby and Wyndham *via* Hall's Creek, and no time will be lost in placing these important lines in thorough working order. Owing to the size of the wire used on the line from Derby to Hall's Creek, constant break-ages occur, while principally from the same cause, and also from the damage done to it by the natives, the line from Hall's Creek to Wyndham has never yet been in working order.

"12. The proposed improvements to the Eastern Railway and Railway Stations, particularly at Perth, have been carefully considered; and about eight acres of land have been resumed so as to extend the accommodation at the Perth Station, rendered urgently necessary by the construction of the Midland, South-Western, and Yilgarn Railways. Surveys are also in hand with a view of improving the grades on the Eastern Railway; and the result of the surveys, as far as they have proceeded, shows that it is quite possible to do so. My Ministers, however, are advised that in order to improve the Eastern Railway to the extent necessary, a very considerable sum will be required.

"13. The erection of the Lighthouse near Cape Leeuwin, for which £10,000 is provided in 'The Loan Act of 1891,' has not yet been proceeded with, owing to the difference of opinion, amongst those most competent to judge, as to the position which it should occupy. The Government is, however, taking steps to have the matter decided.

"14. During the recess, at the special request of the Government, two members of the Legislative Assembly, Messrs. A. R. Richardson and W. Paterson, visited the Irrigation Colo-

"nies of Mildura and Renmark, as also
 "other Irrigation Works in Victoria.
 "An exceedingly interesting Report of
 "their visit and observations has been
 "published, and will be placed before
 "you, and my Ministers consider that
 "the information obtained must be pro-
 "ductive of much good, and that the
 "Colony is under obligation to Messrs.
 "Richardson and Paterson, for the im-
 "portant work that they so satisfactorily
 "performed.

"15. In order to place the Customs
 "Department on a more satisfactory
 "footing, the Victorian Government was
 "asked to place the services of an ex-
 "perienced officer at the disposal of this
 "Government. The request was cour-
 "teously complied with, and Dr. Wol-
 "laston, LL.D., now Collector of Customs
 "of Victoria, visited the Colony. His
 "able and exhaustive report will be placed
 "before you, and has proved of great
 "service to the Government in re-organ-
 "ising this important branch of the
 "Service.

"16. During the past year several
 "Agricultural areas have been declared,
 "of which a large quantity has been
 "surveyed, and will shortly be opened
 "for selection. The Crown lands within
 "the Hordern area are now again at the
 "disposal of the Government; and al-
 "though the Company has been granted
 "about three millions of acres in fee
 "simple, still the Government is pos-
 "sessed of one-half the frontage to the
 "Railway, and will, it is believed, soon
 "be able to dispose of the greater portion
 "of the land along or near to the Rail-
 "way.

"17. Owing to the change of Consti-
 "tution, the Secretary of State informed
 "the Government that it was undesir-
 "able that the Crown Agents should
 "continue to perform the duties as
 "Agents for this Colony, and it became
 "necessary to establish our own Agency
 "in London. As there were many im-
 "portant matters requiring attention in
 "London, besides the important one of
 "arranging for raising a portion of the
 "Loan, it was considered to be highly
 "desirable that the Attorney General
 "should visit London, and personally
 "arrange the business. Before the re-
 "turn to the Colony of the Attorney
 "General last month he had fully estab-

"lished the Agency Office in London,
 "where the whole of the Government
 "business is now transacted.

"18. During the past year the Mid-
 "land Railway has been proceeded with
 "at a rapid rate, and at the present time
 "100 miles have been opened for traffic.
 "The Company has expended nearly
 "half-a-million of money upon this Rail-
 "way, and hopes to be able to complete
 "the whole work in the time allowed by
 "the contract. Owing, however, to finan-
 "cial difficulties in the London market,
 "the Company contemplated temporarily
 "stopping the works, but before doing
 "so appealed to the Government to guar-
 "antee an advance of £60,000 to be
 "expended on the Railway under the
 "supervision of the Government. My
 "Ministers considered that, in the in-
 "terests of the Colony, both financially
 "and otherwise, it was most undesir-
 "able that the works should stop, even
 "temporarily, and gave the guarantee
 "required, subject to certain conditions—
 "taking, however, ample security for
 "such guarantee. A copy of the agree-
 "ment and guarantee will be placed
 "before you, and I believe you will be
 "of opinion that the course taken was
 "that which was most desirable in the
 "public interests, as it enables the works
 "to be proceeded with without intermis-
 "sion till the end of February, by which
 "time it is expected the Company will
 "be in possession of further capital and
 "in a position to complete the contract.

"19. The visit of H. M. S. '*Ka-
 toomba*,' as the representative of the
 "Auxiliary Squadron supported by the
 "Australasian Colonies, has been marked
 "with much enthusiasm by the people
 "of this Colony, and the officers and
 "men have been warmly welcomed and
 "entertained. My Ministers have en-
 "couraged as far as possible the national
 "sentiment, and they believe that this
 "beginning of federation in defence must
 "tend to great results, and in the near
 "future place Australia in a position to
 "defend herself from her only possible
 "enemies, viz., those who may attack her
 "from across the sea.

"20. The Fortifications at King
 "George's Sound are being constructed,
 "under the direction of the Victorian
 "Defence Department; and in a short
 "time it is believed that this important

"Harbor will be in a thoroughly safe position from attack in case of war.

"21. The drought in the Northern portion of the Colony still continues, and is the subject of much anxiety to the Government. It is hoped that the usual rainy season will set in within a few weeks, otherwise there is reason to fear that the fruit of much labor and enterprise will be imperilled.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
"THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"22. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and also the Loan Estimates, for the year 1892, will be submitted to you as soon as possible. They will be framed with due regard to economy. In the Loan Estimates will be included the estimated Expenditure for the year 1892, out of the amounts provided for the works in the Schedule to 'The Loan Act, 1891.'

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE
"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
"COUNCIL,—

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
"THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"23. The year that is now drawing to a close has been one fraught with great issues for this Colony. Responsible Government has been successfully introduced; the Colony has begun to go forward; our Goldfields are being firmly established, and promise a great and permanent future; our Tinfields continue to be developed; Coal seams within easy distance of a port of shipment have been favorably reported on; population is being attracted towards us; our finances are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition; our revenue is increasing at a rapid rate; and with the one exception—viz., the drought in the Northern portion of the Colony—our immediate future is bright and promising.

"24. I now leave you to your important duties, more important and more responsible, probably, than at any other period of our history; but I feel sure that, under God's good Providence, your labors on behalf of the Colony will be such as will redound to your credit and honor, and provide for a future of prosperity and progress."

HIS EXCELLENCY, having handed to the President a copy of the Speech, left the Chamber. The President then resumed the chair.

NEW MEMBER.

The Hon. John Winthrop Hackett, being introduced, took and subscribed the oath required by section 22 of the Constitution Act.

POLICE BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton), without notice, moved the first reading of a Bill intituled "An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Police in Western Australia."

Question—put and passed.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: Mr. President,—It is with some degree of pleasure that I rise to move an Address in reply to the Speech which has just been delivered by His Excellency the Administrator; and, in doing so, I must confess that I am sensible of the honor which has been done me in asking me to undertake the task. This, sir, is the second session of the first Parliament under Responsible Government, and it is one which will, I think, prove to be one of the most important in our parliamentary history. At no time in the history of this colony has the outlook been more bright, were it not, perhaps, for the unfortunate cloud which is hovering over our Northern Districts; but, sir, it has been well said that to every cloud there is a silver lining, and if we substitute golden for silver in this instance (having in mind the rich finds of gold in the Murchison and other districts) the ultimate effect may be renewed prosperity in these districts; the gold, in some measure, recouping the settlers for the loss of the stock. It may not be out of place for me, at this juncture, to express the feelings of deep sympathy I have in common with all other hon. members for those settlers who are now experiencing such losses by the protracted drought which exists. At the first meeting of Parliament under Responsible Government, Ministers had not had a very large amount of time since their accession to office to

enable them to bring before us any comprehensive or extensive legislation. They were content to pass those measures only which were absolutely necessary, among them being a Loan Bill for £1,336,000, providing for a number of public works which were enumerated in the schedule. This Bill was passed through both Houses after much debate, and after what, at one time, might have proved to be a very serious conflict between the two branches of the Legislature. Happily, sir, that was averted by the tact and conciliation of hon. members; but I may say that the action taken by this House was not uncalled for, for it resulted in the establishment of a principle which, although not interfering with the rights and privileges of the other branch of the Legislature, maintained for this branch also its rights and privileges. If hon. members will now turn to paragraph 9 of the Speech, they will see that the bone of contention of the last session has been done away with. It will be remembered that on the Loan Schedule £150,000 was provided for the improvement of the harbor at Fremantle, and it was understood at the time that this sum was to be spent on an extensive breakwater. We in this House could not see how that sum was going to prove sufficient for the work; but we now see by paragraph 9 that Ministers have decided on a fresh scheme, which has been approved by Sir John Coode, by which a safe and commodious harbor will be made at Owen's Anchorage. The scheme now being a practical one, we may expect in the next three years to see vessels of the P. and O., Orient, and Messageries Companies coming into Fremantle. If this be so, it will really be the commencement of an intercolonial line of railway. We now propose constructing a railway to the Yilgarn Goldfields, and as the intercolonial railway must also go this same way, it behoves us to bear both projects in mind when undertaking one. As to the harbor works, I may say that I hope that the dredges which have been purchased may prove capable of doing what is required of them. Shortly after the prorogation of last session the delegates from this colony proceeded to the International Australasian Convention, and it was interesting to us who remained behind to watch how well this colony was received through its representatives; and

now that we have the official report before us we shall be able to follow more closely the part they took in the debates on the various subjects brought before them. I am, however, of opinion that Ministers are wise at the present time—considering the financial and political difficulties existing in the other colonies—not to attempt any action in this most important matter of Federation. With regard to the finances of the colony, I am convinced that they now are in a thoroughly satisfactory condition, and I think I am right in saying that at the end of last month the revenue had already exceeded the estimate for the year. With regard to the loan, some difficulty has been experienced in raising all the money, but with the financial condition of the colony as satisfactory as it is I dare say we shall shortly be able to float the balance on fairly good terms. In paragraph 5 Ministers refer to the Constitution Act. No doubt in a few years, perhaps two or three only, the population will have become sufficiently large to enable this House to be elected. I may at once say that I am not in favor of a qualification for members; but I agree with Ministers that it would not be wise that any alteration in this respect should take place now, when there are so many other matters of greater importance before the country. Such a change as this would necessitate a dissolution, and such a thing happening now would, I am sure, be highly detrimental to the best interests of the colony. It is very gratifying to us to learn that the Public Works Department has been reorganised. The appointment of the new Engineer-in-Chief has been most satisfactory, and I hope that under Mr. O'Connor's direction our public works will proceed in such a manner as they never did before. The various Bills referred to in the Speech will all come before us in due time, and then will be our opportunity for discussing them. The Railway Bills will perhaps be the most important, but it is not wise for us to comment upon them until we have them before us with all the information possible as to distance, cost, &c. I notice that Ministers have decided to construct the line to Yilgarn from Northam, and whether this be the best starting point obtainable I am unable now to say, although I must

admit that hitherto I have had a leaning towards York as being the most central place in the Eastern districts. As I have said before, we must not forget in considering this question that this line will be the commencement of the great transcontinental Railway, and therefore it should, if possible, start at some point on a main line of railway and run in as straight a direction as possible. Of the success of the Yilgarn fields there can now be no doubt, for we have had the gold for some time past coming down, and dividends have already been paid. As to the other goldfields, reports have come to hand of such a character that we can only hope the anticipations contained in them will be realised. The erection of the telegraph to Yilgarn is a most important work, and it will, I believe, shortly be finished. When such is the case we shall have more frequent reports, and the shareholders will the better know what is going on. I believe that the output of gold from Yilgarn has amounted in value to several hundred thousand pounds. The dividends of one company amount to £10,000 a year—an amount, I am given to understand, that will shortly be doubled. When the harbor at Fremantle is completed, and we get the ocean steamers here, a more urgent necessity will arise for the lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin. I have always looked upon this as a work which should have been undertaken jointly by the colonies: but as they do not see their way to meet us we shall have to bear the whole cost ourselves. We have had laid before us the report of Messrs. Richardson and Paterson on their visit to the irrigation works in the other colonies, and they have supplied us with a good deal of important and valuable information. One of their principal suggestions is the formation of an agricultural bureau. We might perhaps start with one in Perth and follow it up with others in the districts, and I hope the Government will take steps to bring such about. I think the Government were fortunate in being able to secure the services of two such capable and practical gentlemen for the work, and I think our thanks are due to them for the way in which they executed it, and for their admirable report. As to the Customs Department, I think the proof of the good Dr. Wollaston did is

to be seen from the returns under the management of the present energetic head of that department. It is satisfactory to us to learn that many agricultural areas have been declared, and that the Crown lands within the Hordern area are being opened up for purchase. There is a great deal of excellent land close to railways only waiting to be acquired. The appointment of an Agent in London is a matter that will require a great deal of care. It was very fortunate that the Government were able to obtain the services of the Attorney General (Mr. Burt) to go to London to arrange matters at the commencement of the new order of things, and I hope before long we shall have some gentleman appointed to the office who is thoroughly conversant with the colony, and who will be able as Agent General to direct our affairs in London. One of the most important things done by the Government during the recess was the coming to the rescue of the Midland Railway Company at a moment when it was found they were in difficulties, and when, perhaps, some 400 men might be thrown out of work. At this stage, I am glad to say, the Government came to the fore and guaranteed £60,000, which was to be expended under the supervision of the Government. This enabled the Company to go on with their work for the present, and let us hope that the effect of the action of the Government will be to enable the Company to raise the rest of the money they require for the completion of their work. In regard to the guarantee, the Government have incurred no danger. They have £12,000 of the Company's money in hand; they have a lien on 200,000 acres of land worth at least £1 per acre; and they have also £90,000 worth of the Company's bonds. In addition to this they have also arranged with the Company to withdraw any right, title or interest they may have had under their contract to select town-site lands, reserves or commonages within the area of selection or within two miles of the Eastern Railway. This is a very great concession, and will save any legal difficulties which might otherwise have cropped up. The fortifications at King George's Sound are progressing, and are a sight worth looking at. I am sure with these it will be impossible for any

enemy to shell our troops who will be protected behind them. I have already spoken of the drought, and it being such a melancholy subject I will not refer to it again. In conclusion, I have only to heartily congratulate Ministers on bringing before us such a far-seeing and extensive scheme of legislation. I beg now to move that the following Address be presented to His Excellency, in reply to the Speech with which he has been pleased to open Parliament:—

*"To His Excellency Alexander Campbell
"Onslow, Administrator of the Govern-
"ment in and over the Colony of West-
"ern Australia and its Dependencies,
" &c., &c., &c."*

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection to our Most Gracious Sovereign.

"We thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to deliver to us.

"The various matters to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, shall receive our most careful consideration and attention, and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and welfare of the Colony."

THE HON. E. HAMERSLEY: I have been asked, sir, to second this Address-in-Reply, and I may say that I have not had an opportunity of knowing the contents of the Speech until it was read in this Chamber. Feeling, however, that the views of the Ministry were so in accord with my own, I accepted the position with pleasure, and I am now pleased to say that the result has justified my action. I do not know that it is necessary for me to occupy the time of the House to any extent, inasmuch as the speech of my hon. friend who has just resumed his seat has left me little to say. Still, there are one or two paragraphs to which I would like to refer. The first is that referring to the loan. As we are all aware, there was some difficulty experienced when our bonds were placed on the market and we were able to raise only a

portion of the money we required, and in the future I think the difficulty which existed in the past will be increased rather than decreased. No blame can, however, be attached to the Ministry for this, for we find that nearly all the Australian colonies have suffered in the same way. The next point I wish to refer to is that referring to the amendment of the Constitution Act. The Ministry, we learn, are of opinion that before another general election takes place the qualification for members should be abolished, and that the franchise should be placed on a more satisfactory footing. I must say that the reference to the franchise is very indefinite. It may mean that the Ministry propose to adopt manhood suffrage, and I may at once say that if this be so I am opposed to it. With the abolition of the qualification of members you will find very nearly the same men in the House as we have now; and I agree with the Ministry that it would be unwise to put the country into the throes of a general election at the present time. I think a subject for our congratulation is the fact of the Public Works Department having been re-organised, and no doubt under the present head of the Department our new works will be thoroughly successful. When the Ministry placed the Yilgarn Railway in their Loan Schedule, I felt very doubtful as to whether it would prove a profitable undertaking, but there can now be no doubt that the success of the fields is assured, and with them must go the railway. I am glad to see the much-vexed question of harbor works for Fremantle at last settled, and I hope shortly to see something done to reduce the heavy grades existing on the Eastern Railway. We must all hail with satisfaction the fact that the land within the Hordern area is to be thrown open for selection, and let us hope it will induce settlement. The appointment of an Agent in London will need our most careful consideration, for the better the man we obtain the better will the colony's interests be attended to. A matter I think the Ministry deserve a great deal of credit for is the guarantee they gave to the Midland Railway Company, to enable them to tide over the difficulties which have beset them owing to the state of the London money market. The guarantee of this £60,000 will help them

in London, and in a short time they may be in a position to carry on their works. I regret that the drought in the North has proved to be so extensive and so disastrous; but I hope it will soon pass away and that some excellent seasons will follow, so as to recoup those who are the sufferers now. I have now much pleasure in seconding the motion of my hon. friend.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 4.20 p.m. adjourned until Wednesday, 9th December, at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 7th December, 1891.

Meeting of the Legislative Assembly—Message from His Excellency the Administrator—Mineral Lands Bill: first reading—The Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech—Adjournment.

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met pursuant to Proclamation of His Excellency the Administrator, bearing date the 24th day of September, 1891, which Proclamation was read by the Clerk.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR.

A Message was delivered at the Bar by the Usher of the Black Rod, requesting the immediate attendance of the Legislative Assembly in the Chamber of the Legislative Council. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, with the House, went to attend His Excellency, who then delivered the Opening Speech (*vide p. 1 ante*). Upon the House re-assembling, the Speaker announced that he had, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy of His Excellency's Speech, which he then read to the House.

MINERAL LANDS BILL.

Introduced by the Hon. the Premier, and read a first time.

THE ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

MR. CLARKSON: Mr. Speaker.—Sir, I rise to move the Address-in-Reply to the very able and exhaustive speech with which His Excellency the Administrator has opened this, the second session of the new Constitution. I do not propose, sir, to dwell at any length upon the various matters included in His Excellency's Speech; they will all come before us, before very long, in another form, and will no doubt receive careful consideration and elicit full discussion. In the second paragraph of His Excellency's Speech he alludes to Federation,—a matter which, so far as I can gather, has not elicited very much attention in this colony. People do not seem to take a great interest in the question; and I think it is rather wise on the part of the Government to have allowed that matter to stand over for the present. Federation may be a very grand idea,—no doubt it is; but I fancy there would be some difficulty in establishing it upon a basis which would prove satisfactory to all the Australian colonies; and, as I have said, the Government did well to postpone taking any action in this matter this session. A matter of far more importance to Western Australia is that alluded to in the following paragraph, referring to the financial position of the colony. It is there stated that the finances of the colony are in a most flourishing state, that the revenue is rapidly rising; and this, sir, in the face of the fact that we are passing through one of the most severe seasons, so far as the pastoral and agricultural interests are concerned, we have known for many years. The determination expressed on the part of Ministers to exercise the utmost care and supervision over the financial operations of the colony is, I think, a wise one, in the face of the present very depressed state of the money market all over the world. Still there are important public works in course of construction, and others which have yet to be carried out, and I trust that before long there will be an alteration for the better in the money market, and that the Government will find themselves in a