

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH BILL.

The Order of the Day for the third reading of this Bill being read,

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved that the order be discharged and the Bill recommitted, with the view of amending the 10th clause. This clause provided a penalty for divulging the contents of any private message transmitted by telegraph; but it might be desirable in some cases, in order to meet the ends of justice, that the contents of a message should be made known to the Government, to facilitate the arrest or conviction of a criminal, or otherwise to meet the exigencies of the law. He therefore proposed to add a few words to the clause, authorising the Postmaster General, with the consent of the Governor, to divulge the contents of a message, without rendering himself liable to the penalty provided by this clause.

The Bill was then re-committed.

Clause 10:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved to insert after the word "shall," in the second line, the words "without the consent of the Postmaster General."

MR. STEERE: Does the hon. gentleman mean that the contents of any message may be divulged through the Postmaster General?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman): That, I presume, would be the effect of the amendment.

MR. STEERE thought this would be a most extraordinary provision. They had better have no telegraph at all if they were going to give the Postmaster General authority to divulge the contents of any private message.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he understood this was merely intended for police purposes; it might not happen once in ten thousand. If the hon. member preferred it, the granting of the permission to divulge the contents of a telegram might be left to the Colonial Secretary. He could conceive that a case might happen where it would be in the interests of justice that the Government should become acquainted with the contents of a telegram, but, unless the words proposed to be added to the clause were introduced, this could not be done.

MR. STEERE said he would not object to the insertion of the words "without the consent of the Colonial Secretary."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) thereupon amended his motion to that effect, and the amendment being accepted, the clause was put and passed.

The House adjourned at three o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 22nd August, 1883.

Remission of Duty on Guano—Vote for New Norcia and Yatheroo Roads—Petty Debts Court: Extension of Jurisdiction—Wharfage for Cossack—Detailed Statement of proposed Expenditure upon certain Works and Buildings—Responsible Government—Intestate Estates Bill: first reading—Rabbit Bill: first reading—Clearing line of road between Child's Well and Newcastle Road—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

REMISSION OF DUTY ON GUANO COLLECTED AND USED IN THE COLONY.

MR. MARMION, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary when the Government intended to carry out the wishes of the Council as expressed in its resolution of October 1st, 1879, having reference to the remission of any duty or royalty upon guano gathered or collected upon the islands or coasts of the colony, and sold for use or consumption within the colony? Probably the resolution in question had escaped the attention of successive Administrators,—at any rate, no legislation on the subject had resulted from it, the law remaining as it was before. If strong reasons existed at the time for passing the resolution, those reasons were still stronger now, with railway

communication extended to our agricultural districts, and he thought it would be a wise step on the part of the Government to give effect to the policy affirmed and recommended by the House four years ago. In the other colonies, not only was guano admitted free of duty, but it was also conveyed on the railways at a lower rate than almost any other article, the Government knowing what an excellent fertilising agent it was for agricultural purposes, and being desirous of doing all they could to encourage an important industry. This was a view of the matter which he would commend to the careful consideration of our own Government.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he was entirely in accord with the hon. member in his sympathies with the agricultural interest of the colony, when he expressed his anxiety that this fertilising product might be utilised as cheaply as possible. But there was a difficulty connected with the matter which he was not sure could be cleared away. He was, however, in communication with the Collector of Customs, with a view of ascertaining the exact loss to the revenue which would be entailed by the proposed remission of duty and royalty on guano used in the colony, and, so soon as this information was obtained, he would give a reply to the hon. member's question.

VOTE FOR NEW NORCIA AND YATHEROO ROADS.

MR. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary to apportion out of the Road Grant for 1884 the sum of £100 to place in repair the road between Newcastle and New Norcia; also the sum of £50 to extend the road between Yatheroo and Dandaragan. The hon. member said he had received a letter from the Chairman of the Newcastle Road Board stating that as there was no chance whatever of a railway being constructed between the Clackline and Newcastle, it was absolutely necessary that the main line of road should be put in repair, so that the settlers may have an opportunity of transporting their produce to the nearest railway station. As to the road between Yatheroo and Dandaragan, this was a main line of

road, and the residents had contributed liberally towards it out of their own pockets.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he would note the hon. member's wishes for consideration when the vote for roads was being apportioned.

PETTY DEBTS COURT: EXTENSION OF JURISDICTION.

MR. CAREY, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intended during the present session to carry out the recommendation of the Council as expressed in an humble address presented to His Excellency the Governor (September 18th, 1882), by bringing in a Bill to extend the jurisdiction of Petty Debts Courts?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the matter referred to had been considered, but the Government was not prepared to bring in a Bill. The subject, however, would receive attention when the arrangements connected with the recent addition to the Bench of the Supreme Court had been finally decided upon.

VOTE FOR WHARFAGE ACCOMMODA- TION AT COSSACK.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. GRANT, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place on the Estimates a sufficient sum of money to construct necessary conveniences for the shipment of stock from Cossack." The necessity of providing wharfage accommodation had been acknowledged by the Government officer who was sent down to report on the subject, and it was very desirable that the work should be commenced at once, in view of the shipments of stock which were likely to be made from this part of the colony to Singapore and the Indian markets. Much inconvenience, and he might say loss, had already been occasioned by the absence of conveniences for shipping stock; a number of fat bullocks intended for Perth and Fremantle could not be sent down for this very reason.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the hon. member must be oblivious of the fact that on the same Notice Paper as contained the intimation of his intention to bring forward this resolution was one calling for a detailed statement of the expenditure proposed under the head of "Improvement Port Cossack, £700;" and, if the hon. member would refer to the Estimates, he would see that the sum in question would be asked for, with the very object, so far as he was aware, of carrying out the improvements meditated by the hon. member himself, and contemplated in this address. Possibly it might be said that the sum proposed to be expended was not enough; all he could say was, if our revenue were greater our achievements would be correspondingly greater.

Mr. GRANT said he was perfectly well aware that a sum of £700 was placed on the Estimates for certain improvements at port Cossack, but he understood that was to provide means for landing goods; the address he had moved was for a totally different object—the shipment of stock.

The address was then put and agreed to.

DETAILED STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE ON CERTAIN WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

Mr. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That there be laid on 'the Table of the House a detailed statement of the following expenditure proposed under the head of Works and Buildings, in the Estimate for 1884:—'Improvement Port Cossack, £700; Northampton Police Station, £1,500; Repairs Public Buildings: Albany £1,000, Bunbury £650, Fremantle £500, Geraldton £200, New-castle £580, Vasse £150, York £350; Busselton Jetty £1,000; Conversion of Pensioners Barracks £450.'" The hon. member said his reason for asking for this detailed statement at this early date, was in order that the House, when it came to deal with these items in committee, might be in possession of full information as to the proposed expenditure. He did so more particularly owing to the very vague replies which were given the other evening with reference to

certain other works, for which the amount voted had proved inadequate.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Thomas) submitted that a motion of this kind was an interference with the functions of the executive Government. When that House voted a certain sum for certain specific works, it should be left to the Executive Government to carry out those works. Supposing these detailed estimates or specifications were to be laid on the table, did they mean to tell him that his hon. friend the member for Toodyay would understand them? Or any other hon. member? Not one of them. The hon. members of that House were not supposed to have scientific attainments which would enable them to understand these estimates; they were neither engineers nor architects, and it would be a perfect waste of money to get them drawn out. Of course if the thing were insisted upon, it must be done, but it would entail an addition to the staff of the department; the officers of his department were doing nothing else now but preparing returns for the information of that House.

Mr. SHENTON: Surely there must be some estimate made out for the guidance of the Government before they place these amounts on the Estimates, and ask the House to vote the money.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. H. Thomas): Nothing of the sort.

Mr. STEERE said, so far from this motion being an interference with the functions of the Executive, if the hon. gentleman would look at the Colonial Office Regulations he would find that in the case of public works to be undertaken, and defrayed by parliamentary grant, one of the rules of the service was that, as a preliminary step, an estimate of the work shall be made by the officer responsible. Surely the Government must have had some estimate to guide them in fixing the amounts asked for to carry out these works; it was to be hoped that they did not do everything in the same haphazard way as the Director of Public Works told them the proposed alterations of the Fremantle jetties were undertaken. He thought there must be some difference of opinion between the hon. gentleman and the

members of the House as to what constituted a detailed estimate. What the House wanted was some kind of estimate showing that the work proposed had received some consideration at the hands of the Government, before a specific sum was placed on the Estimates for carrying out the work. The House did not expect nor ask for such a detailed specification as would be required to bind a contractor.

The motion was then put and carried.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he rose for the purpose of moving the resolution that stood in his name, which was this, "That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when it is highly desirable that the Colony of Western Australia should adopt a system of Responsible Government." (The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Hear, hear.) He was pleased to hear a right hon. gentleman on the Treasury bench endorsing that sentiment. He had no doubt that the right hon. gentleman himself saw that the present form of Government was not that to which, as Englishmen, we were entitled. The hon. gentleman evidently felt that, like all other Britons, the people of Western Australia had an undoubted right to govern themselves. Although the present constitution was one under which the colony had made considerable progress, under which population had slightly increased, under which our exports and imports had largely increased, and under which also our expenditure had correspondingly increased, yet he maintained that had we during the past ten years governed ourselves, had we had the full control and management of our own affairs, not only would our revenue have still more largely increased, not only would our exports and our imports have still more largely increased, not only would we have managed to secure a larger increase of population, but we should also have managed to do what we had not yet succeeded in doing—we would have retained them here when we got them. He was not that evening going to enter upon any arguments as to the merits or demerits of Responsible Government; he had so often pointed out the relative advantages which

it offered as compared with our present system of Government, and other hon. members had also spoken on the subject so often—the question in fact had been so thoroughly ventilated—that it was unnecessary for him on the present occasion to enter upon any arguments in support of this system, and for this reason: the universal impression, not only among the hon. members of that House, but also among the public outside, the general feeling throughout the whole country was that to self-government we must attain sooner or later. Everybody looked forward to it. The people of the colony looked forward to it. The members of that House looked forward to it. The members of the Government looked forward to it, and the Secretary of State looked forward to our ultimately attaining to the full rights of citizenship. It had always been admitted, and admitted by the best friends of the present constitution, that it was only a stepping-stone to a more advanced political system, a system of self-government. We had now enjoyed the privileges of the present constitution for a period of thirteen years, and the question we had to determine now was simply this—Has the time arrived, or has it not arrived, when we should take upon ourselves the fuller rights, the fuller privileges of self-government. Hon. members were aware that this question was mentioned in the House during the short session held some four months ago. It was mentioned in this way: a resolution was brought forward by himself and affirmed by the House, to the effect that it was desirable the Local Government should ascertain from the Colonial Office what were the terms and conditions upon which the Imperial Government would be prepared to grant us the right of governing ourselves. He believed no answer had yet been given to that question,—any way, no answer had been communicated to that House. It might be that the Secretary of State had deemed it advisable not to answer it. He might have thought it would be better to deal with the subject when this Legislature adopted a resolution or passed a Bill affirming the desirability of taking upon ourselves the responsibilities of self-government. And he referred to the matter now for this reason: on the occasion when the

resolution of last session was under discussion, several hon. members who had consistently and persistently opposed a change of Government spoke on that occasion in terms which clearly showed that those hon. members had at last been brought round to admit that the time was not far distant when this change must take place. Among other hon. members who spoke on the occasion was the hon. baronet the member for Albany, who said "he could see perfectly well that "before long the change was inevitable, "and that we cannot go on as now. "Matters cropped up," the hon. baronet said, "which showed the serious loss entailed upon the colony by reason of the "delays which a reference to the Colonial "Office sometimes involved." He (Mr. Parker) was not now going to bring forward any instances in which the colony had suffered by these delays, nor was he going to point out where further losses might occur, and were likely to occur in consequence of these delays. It must be obvious to all hon. members and to the country generally that so long as the cause of these delays remained they were likely to continue. In this way important schemes calculated to promote the advancement of the colony might fall through, simply owing to our not being at liberty to deal with them on the spot, on our own account; and he quite agreed with the hon. baronet that this was a very strong reason for urging on the adoption by this colony of self-government. Another hon. member who spoke on the same occasion, Mr. Randell, said "he was in as full sympathy with Responsible Government as ever the hon. "member himself (Mr. Parker) could be; "his objection to it had been that the "time had not yet arrived for our entering upon the change." He merely quoted these words because they confirmed what he said, that the only question for consideration was, whether the time had arrived when we should adopt Responsible Government, or not. Everybody looked forward to its adoption at no distant date,—even the strongest opponents of the change. The same hon. member went on to say that "he "thought himself that the time when we "shall have to enter upon it was looming "in the not far distance;" and, referring to an opinion expressed by Governor

Robinson—who, the hon. member said, "was better able than he was to observe "the signs of the times, and in a better "position to ascertain the feeling of the "colony"—they were told that "His Excellency had expressed the opinion that, "in his belief, we were on the eve of the "adoption of that form of Government." Therefore, we had it on the authority of Governor Robinson himself that public feeling in the colony was favorable to this change. The hon. member for Fremantle also spoke on the same occasion, and said "although he had been to some extent opposed to Responsible Government, he thoroughly believed in the "principle which allowed people to "manage their own affairs; and when "the time arrived that the people of "this colony displayed greater unanimity "on the subject, he should be most "happy to give his support to the hon. "member for Perth, or any other hon. "member who may bring in a Bill to "establish Responsible Government in "Western Australia." It would thus be seen that even those who were avowedly opposed to a change in the constitution at present looked upon it simply as a question of time. In fact this was the only solitary plank now left for those who opposed the change to stand upon. We heard no longer the old plea, put forward at one time, that we had not the men to carry on a ministerial system, or that the colony could not afford to take upon itself the responsibilities of self-government. The only question now was, had the time arrived for making the inevitable plunge, or were we to remain still longer shivering on the brink? His own opinion was that the time had arrived, and that the sooner we faced it the better. In asking the House to affirm this resolution he wished it to be understood that he was not asking hon. members to affirm the desirability of adopting Responsible Government for a portion of the colony, but for the whole of the colony. By the Imperial statute under which the present constitution was established, Western Australia was empowered to take upon herself the responsibility of self-government as soon as she thought proper to pass a Bill to that effect—a Bill not dealing with a portion of the colony, but with the whole province, as now constituted, under our pre-

sent form of government. That Bill, when passed, had to be laid before the House of Commons for thirty days, and, if no opposition should be raised to it by the Imperial Parliament, it would then receive Her Majesty's assent. There was no provision in the Imperial statute under which our present constitution was established providing that, in the event of our adopting Responsible Government, the Imperial authorities should have the right to limit the application of the Bill to a portion of the colony alone. No such contingency was ever contemplated; so that if we changed the constitution at all we changed it for the whole colony. He was quite ready to admit—he was not going to contend for a moment that the Imperial Government might not say they would refuse to assent to such a Bill. The Imperial Government might introduce a Bill dividing the colony into portions, but, unless such a Bill passed the House of Commons and became law, he did not think it would be possible otherwise to partition the colony; and, looking at the difficulties in the way of legislation in the Imperial Parliament now, looking at the trouble and the delay involved in passing even the most important measures, he did not think the Imperial Government were likely to add to their difficulties by going to the trouble of bringing forward a Bill of that kind, or that the House of Commons, in the great pressure of Imperial business, would be inclined to devote its attention to any measure of that character. Under these circumstances, he thought we might safely rely upon having the whole colony. He thought there was no fear of the Imperial Parliament troubling its head about us. If we passed a Bill for establishing a constitution in Western Australia, it must be a Bill establishing a constitution for the whole colony, and nothing but the colony. For his own part, he would not be content with Responsible Government upon any other condition. His motto was "Western Australia for Western Australians." He was not prepared to sacrifice a portion of his patrimony, even for the sake of obtaining the privileges of self-government. He had no doubt some hon. members would say—as some hon. members would always say, for we could never expect to have perfect unanimity

on such a question as this—that the present was not an opportune time for adopting this change. He had no doubt it would be said that, in view of the important works which were at present projected, we ought to pause before we seriously contemplated any change which might interfere with the initiation and prosecution of those works. He thought he should be able to show that, if the House adopted this resolution and passed a Bill establishing a constitution, it would not in any way interfere with the carrying out of these projects. Supposing the House were to adopt, as no doubt it would adopt, the recommendations embodied in the report of the select committee brought up that evening dealing with these projects, and the Government brought in a Bill empowering the construction of these railways—and it appeared to him, whether we adopted a change of constitution or not, the Government would have to come before the House with a Bill empowering them to deal with these syndicates. And if the House passed that Bill, as no doubt it would pass it, surely it would not be contended for a moment that such a Bill would not be binding upon the colony, under any form of Government. It would not be contended that such a Bill would not be as binding as the Loan Bills which the House had passed providing for the borrowing of capital, and the payment of interest upon that capital. Surely no hon. member considered that the adoption of Responsible Government would relieve the colony from its liability in respect of these loans. Surely no hon. member in that House would suggest that if the colony adopted a new constitution to-morrow, it would be within its province to repudiate these loans. Why then should there be any apprehension felt with regard to these other undertakings? He maintained, and maintained it without fear of contradiction, that any syndicate, contractor, or company would much prefer dealing with a colony possessing the rights of self-government than with a colony possessing such a form of government as that which this colony now possesses. (Hon. members: No, no.) Hon. members said no, no. Did they think these syndicates would not be inclined to make us these offers if we had Responsible Government? Had

not similar offers been made by equally powerful and influential syndicates to the other colonies, where that system of government prevailed? Had not such proposals been made to the Queensland Government? It was true that colony had not accepted the proposals made, but the fact that they were made, and that syndicates were prepared to negotiate with colonies possessing Responsible Government, showed that we had nothing to fear on this score. He thought any hon. member who considered the subject would agree with him that these syndicates would prefer dealing with a Government which could deal with them directly, and give them an answer at once, one way or the other, than to have to deal with a Government whose hands were tied, and who had to refer such a question 10,000 miles away for an answer. Another reason why he deemed this a desirable opportunity for entering upon Responsible Government was the prominence which had of late been given to the question of the Federation of these colonies. The question had not only been agitated in Australia, but also in the mother country, and, as the House was aware, it had been brought into greater prominence by reason of the recent action of the Queensland Government in connection with the annexation of New Guinea. There could be no doubt that the federation of these colonies would before long become an accomplished fact; but was it to be supposed for a moment that Western Australia would be admitted into this Federation under its present form of Government? So long as we remained a Crown dependency, so long would we remain the despised Cinderella of the family; and, so long as we remained the Cinderella of the family we could never expect to be admitted on terms of equality with our more fortunate sisters. The hon. gentleman the leader of the Government told them the other evening that he thought we might now change the name of our State vessel to that of *Fortune's Favorite*; but, he was afraid no matter what name we gave it, it would never be classed A1 until we prepared to take the command of it ourselves. Unless Western Australia obtained the right of self-government, we could never hope to be admitted into this Federal

Union; and he thought this was a view of the question which ought not to be lost sight of, and which ought to weigh with hon. members in considering this question, unless we wished to be left out in the cold altogether. It could not be thought for a moment, that after thirteen years training under the present constitution—which admittedly was only intended as a sort of training school to prepare us for the full enjoyment of the rights and privileges of self-government—surely it could not be seriously said that after all these years of training we were not yet fit to be entrusted with the full rights of citizenship. It could not be urged with any show of truth that we had not men amongst us capable of carrying on a system of ministerial government. No doubt there were even some hon. members on the Treasury bench who would deem it worth their while to cast their lot with us, and to try their hands at governing the colony under such a system of government. If they did so he was sure they would enter upon their work with greater interest and with a stronger desire to distinguish themselves, if they felt they were responsible to the country, instead of being as at present virtually responsible to no one,—if they felt that the country looked to them to advance its interests, and if they felt that while on the one hand they would be called to account if they neglected the trust reposed in them, they would on the other hand receive full credit for their exertions on behalf of the colony,—which he was afraid they did not always receive now. On the last occasion when he brought this matter before the House at the session of 1882, he then entered into the question of the cost which this change would entail upon the colony. As the basis of his calculations, he took certain figures which had been prepared for the information of the House by Governor Ord, who, as hon. members were aware, was no friend to the proposed change, and who did not put forward those figures with a view to induce the colony to enter upon the change. Yet, accepting the figures of Sir Harry Ord as the basis of his calculation, the result he arrived at, when considering the question last year, was, that it would cost about £5,000 per annum. Now, however, it

would be less. The Imperial grant in aid of the magistracy and police was gradually being reduced, and, in 1886, he believed, it would cease altogether, and we should then be only receiving from the Imperial Government a sum of £1800 a year towards the Governor's salary. But, accepting the figures as they stood now, he arrived at this conclusion: assuming that we adopted the change at once, that we passed a Bill this very session to establish Responsible Government, the change would only cost us at the outside not more than £4,000 a year. This Bill would have to lie upon the table of the House of Commons for a certain time before it received the Royal assent, so that it would not come into operation until next year at any rate. If any hon. member thought that £4,000 was too great a price to pay for the privilege of having Western Australia for Western Australians, all he could say was he hoped that hon. member, whoever he might be, would vote against this resolution. For his own part, he felt it would be a very small price indeed to pay for the privileges we should enjoy under a system of self-government, a very small price indeed for a community to pay for the enjoyment of the rights of full citizenship.

MR. BROWN said he deemed it a great privilege to be permitted to second the motion. Hon. members were aware that ever since 1874, ever since he had a seat in that House, he had sat there pledged to oppose the immediate introduction of Responsible Government; but, as some hon. members were aware, subsequent to the last session of Council, he resigned his seat as the representative of the constituency which had returned him upon that platform, and went to the country with changed views on the subject, and was returned for the electorate which he now represented as an avowed advocate for the immediate introduction of the form of Government which this resolution affirmed it was desirable the colony should adopt. In the course of conversation with many of his fellow members, he had gathered that they were under the impression that the change to which he had alluded had been a very sudden one, and that it had been made on the spur of the moment, without a note of warning. He also noticed that

the same impression on this very point appeared to be entertained by a portion of the press of the colony. He was exceedingly surprised that such an impression should prevail, for it was altogether contrary to fact; and, as he gathered that it was expected he should offer some explanation with reference to this change of platform, he should be happy to give that explanation, although it would involve a more lengthy speech than he desired to have made or probably than would be acceptable to the House. At the same time he felt encouraged in the task before him by the knowledge that he should receive at the hands of hon. members the same kindly consideration that he had always met since he had occupied a seat in the House. The course which he proposed to pursue would necessitate his taking a retrospective glance of the past history of the colony, and of his making frequent references to *Hansard*. He would do so for this reason: judging from the temper of some persons in the colony—he did not think there were many in that House, in fact he did not think there was one—but, judging from the temper of a portion of the Press, he thought, if he were merely to state the course he had adopted with reference to this constitutional question, without supporting his statement by citing the very words he had made use of from time to time, he should probably be accused of lying, and he therefore thought his best course to follow was to give his own words from *Hansard* itself, rather than rely upon a mere statement of facts. As early as the year 1875 he had stood in the minority in that House when this very question was opposed by many of those hon. members whom he now saw supporting it. Two years afterwards, in July 1877, when the subject of a railway between Fremantle and Guildford was under discussion, he spoke as follows in the course of the debate on the Address in Reply: "With regard to projected undertakings in the nature of public works, he was exceedingly disappointed to find the long-talked-of railway between Fremantle and Guildford still 'spoken of by His Excellency as a 'projected' work. At least two years ago, it was known that the country desired this railway; twelve months

"ago it was known that this House considered the railway necessary, and passed a resolution affirming the desirability of undertaking the work, and he thought every hon. member present must have felt sure that this session they would have had placed before them a Bill authorising the commencement of the line. On the 19th June, 1876—over twelve months ago—the Secretary of State had written to His Excellency the Governor, asking for certain information, as a preliminary step to granting authority to construct the railway; but it was not until June last that this information was supplied. The information sought was not such as need have occupied much time in furnishing. A 'rough' survey of the route, such as would enable an approximate estimate of the cost of the line to be prepared, was what was asked for, and this was within the power of His Excellency to have furnished without delay; and he must say that it appeared exceedingly strange to him that the information sought by Lord Carnarvon a year ago could not have been supplied before last month (June). Had the compilation of that information been prosecuted with vigour, the Government would have been at the present moment in a position to commence and push forward this very necessary work. Instead of making a 'rough' survey, as requested by the Secretary of State, they appeared to have gone extensively and elaborately into the matter, and the result had been, as the hon. member for Wellington had pointed out, that the scheme was still hanging about—no one seemed to know exactly where—between the Colonial Office and Government House. He hoped that the suggestion of the hon. member for Wellington with regard to the introduction of a Railway Bill during the present session would be adopted, and further that the House would not be content with a line from Fremantle to Guildford, but that it would request the Government to make the necessary surveys for the extension of the railway to the Eastern districts, and, when those surveys were complete, to raise the necessary funds to carry on the line, while the other portion was proceeding. If the Secretary of State would not

"allow us to do so, then they must take the work on their own shoulders. Up to the present, they had had no reason to adopt that independent step; but if the Home Government would not consent to our borrowing money (he did not think they would refuse) for the construction of necessary public works,—without which the resources of the colony would never be developed—then, all he had to say was, let us do it ourselves. He thought they would be perfectly justified in pledging the colony itself in order to secure railway communication, so as to connect the agricultural districts with the port, without which there was no hope of the country ever making any material progress." Hon. members would recollect that the people of this colony had been trying very hard indeed to induce the Government and the Secretary of State to move in the matter of this railway, but they were thwarted for a long time; and although, at the period referred to, he was not in favor of an immediate change of constitution, he was strongly in favor of progress. The last time he spoke with reference to this constitutional question in the House was on July 15th, 1878, and what did he say then? He would read what he said: "When the privilege of holding two-thirds of the seats, and of having a corresponding voice in the work of legislation, was extended to the representatives of the people of this colony, I assume that two-thirds of the responsibility of the government of the colony was imposed upon us, and that to that extent the Imperial Government was absolved from its former responsibility. Such having been the case, I maintain it was the duty of the Imperial Government to relax to a corresponding degree that amount of vigilant supervision over the proceedings of the Government of this colony which it was justified in exercising under a purely nominee constitution. If, however, the Imperial Government do not relax any of that right of supervision, but still require to review the details of every important measure adopted by the local Legislature, I say that practically the powers and privileges which this constitution was intended to confer are nullified." And, again, referring to the actions of the

Weld Administration, he said that that Administration had actually led the people of this colony forward, in adopting measures of progress, adding that "had the contrary been the case—had we found the people of the colony through their representatives in that House actively moving in the van of progress, and the Government of the day seeking to thwart their aspirations, and to retard the advancement of the country"—what then? "There would have been good grounds indeed for demanding that the supreme power should be taken away from an anti-progressive Administration and placed in the hands of the people, by entrusting to them the rights of self-government." In the same speech he made use of these words: "If hon. members will look over *Hansard* they will ascertain that last session when the Order of the Day for the consideration of the Estimates in Committee was moved, I brought forward an amendment to the effect that this House would resolve itself into that Committee when the Government were prepared to authorise the commencement of the railway to connect the Eastern districts with Fremantle. I then referred to the grievous delay which had occurred in commencing that work, and to the whole history of it, and I stated that my object in moving that amendment was to use the only power we possessed to push forward that undertaking—the power of the purse. I pledged myself that if the result was unsatisfactory, and that if this House should not be called together at an early date to adopt measures for carrying out this work, I would join with the advocates of constitutional change in endeavoring to force it upon the Government—if I may use the term. I was then only supported by the hon. member for the Williams and the Murray, and I never was so proud of that hon. gentleman as on that occasion. And why was it I was only supported by him? Because other hon. members had faith in the assurances of the Government that we should be called at an early period to consider the measures necessary to carry out that railway. Month after month have passed away since then, and justified the want of faith which I then

expressed, and which was engendered by the action of the Government—I do not say the Local Government, but between them and the Imperial Government. Sir, I came down to this Council, I may say, a disappointed man—disappointed at finding what I may term no proof whatever of sympathy on the part of the Imperial Government with the aspirations and desires of the people of this colony. I came down to find that our views, and our wishes were, practically, ignored. It was exceedingly disappointing to me, when the despatches of the Secretary of State were presented to this House, to find that the whole question of railway communication between Fremantle and Guildford had been settled in a manner which showed that the wishes of this country had been ignored. Sir, I came down with a firm resolve to advocate the adoption of Responsible Government on two conditions. If, on the one hand, I found that this work was refused to us—a result which, in the face of the telegram received by His Excellency from the Secretary of State could hardly have been anticipated, but which was nevertheless within the range of possibility—or that it would be unduly delayed, I was prepared to support the movement in favor of a change in the constitution; if, also, I found that in this House there were to be found the necessary constituent elements out of which a Ministry commanding the confidence of the country could be formed; then would I have been prepared to join in the cry for a reform of the constitution." In concluding the speech from which these quotations were made, he made use of the following words: "Sir, although in common with the rest of the community I feel exceedingly dissatisfied with the treatment which this country has during the past few years received from the Imperial Government, I have been exceedingly pleased and satisfied with the proof which His Excellency the Governor has given us that he himself does not regard this House as a legislature in name only—an institution ethereal as the shadow of a shade, but on the contrary a substantial reality, and as such possessed of substantial rights, and entitled to honorable consideration. The course of action which

"His Excellency adopted with regard to the proposed railway must convince this House that in Governor Ord at any rate we have an Administrator who is prepared to recognise the rights and privileges of this Council, and one who will hold the balances evenly between the Imperial Government on the one hand, and the colony whose affairs he has been called upon to administer, on the other. Is it not possible that under these circumstances we may, not unreasonably, expect a modification of the relations which for some years past have existed between the Imperial authorities and the local legislature, and that Her Majesty's Government may be induced to relax that course of absolute control which it has exercised of late years in reviewing every important measure adopted by the colony? Should that be the case, I feel myself, that with an administrator such as Governor Ord has already shown himself to be, we shall find it vastly more to our benefit to remain under the present constitution than to adopt that of Responsible Government. If, however, it is found that the Home Government is not prepared in any way to relax this supervision over the legislative measures of the colony, I do think it will be our duty to the country to re-consider the whole subject, and do our best to ascertain if we cannot in some way or other take the entire management of our affairs upon our own shoulders." Hon. members would thus see that for years past his action and his language in that House had pointed to the present change—pointed in a most marked manner. He could quite understand anyone saying it was surprising how he had adhered so long to the present constitution, and he really did surprise himself when he considered that he had been able so long to give it that loyal support which he hoped he had given it. But what had taken place since the last occasion he opposed the change in that House? He would not attempt to go through all the various matters which had influenced him in withdrawing that support, and which had caused him such a feeling of grave disappointment with the present constitution, but he would briefly refer to the chief of them. Hon. members would recollect that at the instance of the elected members of that

House the Government were asked some sessions ago to raise a sufficient sum of money, upon loan, to construct two exceedingly important works—the extension of the Eastern Railway from Guildford to York, and the construction of a telegraph line from Northampton to Roebourne. Provision was made for giving effect to this joint proposal, the way was paved for it in every way, and yet the colony had only just succeeded after a great deal of trouble and what he considered needless loss of time in getting permission to construct this railway half-way to York, while the telegraph line remained in abeyance until the present moment. This tedious, and, he maintained, needless delay, had been the cause of exceeding disappointment to him, for he could not agree with any one that it was not well within the power of the colony, and well within the power of the people's representatives in that House, not only to have raised the necessary funds to extend this railway right through to York long ago, and to have had it in a forward state of completion, if not entirely completed by this time. With Responsible Government, and without the intervention of the Secretary of State, probably this would have been achieved. There was another matter he wished to refer to: hon. members had in their minds many resolutions of an important nature which, for years and years past, had been passed by the Legislature, expressive of the views and desires of the House in reference to many matters, and begging the assistance of the Government. Hon. members knew with what little sympathy many of these resolutions had met; they knew that resolution after resolution passed by that House had simply found their way into a pigeon hole, and no notice whatever taken of them, until they were again raked out at the instance of some hon. member or other, as several of them had been during the present session. All this he thought was highly detrimental to the interests of the colony, and certainly very discouraging to the representatives of the people under the present constitution. It was a state of things which he averred was very unlikely to occur under a system of ministerial responsibility, when the members of the Government were more responsible to the

people than they are under the existing constitution. Hon. members, some of them, were in the House when the Government proposed the first exploration of the Kimberley District. The hon. member for the Swan, their recognised leader, however, he was sorry to say, was not in the House at that time, and it became his (Mr. Brown's) privilege and honor to occupy the hon. member's seat during his absence. In that position he was naturally brought very much more directly into communication with the Government than he had been at any other period of his legislative career, and he was able to state positively what the question in dispute between the Government and the Legislature was with reference to the proposed exploration of that district. The Legislature refused point blank to grant any money for the exploration, unless upon certain conditions. He need not name all those conditions, but one of them was this: that the Government should pledge itself to give the members of that House an opportunity of discussing the land regulations for the occupation of the district, before they were put in force. Another condition, so to speak, was this: the Government pledged themselves to have these lands settled under exceptionally liberal regulations. And what took place? The Government took the money, the people's money voted by that House, on the conditions referred to, and, having got the money, they appointed a Commission, and had the land regulations promulgated and put in force before they gave the members of that Council any opportunity of having a voice in deciding them. And what were those regulations? They were regulations which had certainly brought in a considerable amount of money to the Treasury chest; at the same time, in his humble judgment, they were regulations which were very unsuited for the settlement of the district. Let hon. members contrast them with those which the Government pledged themselves as being ready to support, in a general way, on condition of their receiving the money required for an exploration of the district. The draft regulations as prepared by the present Colonial Secretary, who at that time was Commissioner of Crown Lands, proposed

(1) that land required for plantation purposes, to be selected in blocks of not less than 500 acres or more than 2000 acres, should be let on very reasonable terms, and (2) that pastoral lands should be let for twenty-one years on the following terms: first 7 years at 2s. 6d. a thousand acres; second 7 years at 5s. a thousand acres; and the remainder of the lease at 7s. 6d. a thousand acres, the preemptive rights to be the same as allowed in the Central and South-Eastern Districts of the Land Regulations. The Government committed a breach of faith with the Legislature with regard to these lands, which went very far to determine him at any rate no longer to give his support to a constitution under which such a breach of faith occurred. Again, there was the Volunteer vote. When that vote was put before the Legislature, and the House was asked to provide a sum of money to secure the services of a paid commanding officer, the House decided, after mature consideration, that no such officer was required, and refused to vote the money for that purpose, but granted a lump sum to the Government to be expended upon the Volunteers. They all knew the result. They all knew that notwithstanding the strong expression of opinion on the part of that House adverse to the appointment of a paid Field Officer, an officer was appointed. He did not mean to say that the appointment was not a good thing as far as the appointment went, and a good thing in the interest of the Volunteers. He was referring to the way in which the expressed wish of that House had been pointedly ignored and over-ridden, and the views of the Legislature departed from, as they had been departed from with reference to the Kimberley land regulations. There was yet another thing that had caused him disappointment. The Governor of the colony opened the session of 1880 with these remarks, among others: "You are aware that during the past few years the Legislature has authorised by resolutions the expenditure of considerable sums on services for which no provision was made in the Estimates. I cannot but think that this practice—imprudent at any time, but doubly so when the public resources are straitened—is to some extent to blame for our financial

"difficulties; and I would strongly urge on you to sanction in the future no items of expenditure but such as are included in the Estimates. The Government, on the other hand, should adhere strictly to the Appropriation Act. I do not for a moment say that any items of expenditure—large as they have sometimes been—which the Government may from time to time have incurred in advance of Legislative authority, were unnecessary; indeed, I find it stated by the select committee on the Overdraft Expenditure for 1878, which considerably exceeded the average, that 'due regard to economy was, as a whole, observed by the Government.' But the practice is equally as faulty as the appropriation of moneys by resolution, and should certainly not be continued." There was a great deal of discussion in the House over this subject, and although the House set its face against unauthorised expenditure, and although the Governor himself in this solemn manner condemned the practice, and assured the House it should be discontinued, what was the fact? Within a few months after this solemn assurance, this same representative of Her Majesty the Queen had arranged to expend some thousands of pounds in the survey of the Kimberley District without the shadow of Legislative authority. In the face of such proceedings as these, a man he thought might be excused if he lost faith in the present constitution. There was yet another thing he felt exceedingly sore about, and that was the very much vexed native question, which had something to do in deciding him no longer to support the existing constitution. Whether he was right or whether he was wrong, it was his firm conviction—and he had expressed it before—that the Government had alienated from itself the sympathies of a large and a deserving class of pioneer settlers by its attitude in regard to this native question. These were some of the causes which had induced him at last to withdraw his support from a form of Government under which such things could take place. He did not now wish to enter at any great length into the advantages or disadvantages of the system of Responsible Government. He might say that

no one regretted more than he did—no one could possibly regret it more than he did—the fact that the present constitution had not been worked during the last seven or eight years in a manner advantageous to Western Australia. He regretted it exceedingly because he did feel that there were conditions under which it could be worked satisfactorily, and advantageously to the interest of the colony. But he had got sick and tired of waiting for those conditions to be observed. He had mentioned some of the causes which had disappointed him with the working of the present system, but in giving his adhesion to another system he would say this—he did not at all expect that Responsible Government would be a cure for all the evils of the present constitution. But it would do this—it would place in the hands of the people of Western Australia a means of checking these evils, and he would far rather suffer these evils at the hands of his fellow-colonists than at the hands of strangers. As he had already said, he had got sick and tired of the system of "mild despotism" under which of late years this colony had been administered. He had got sick and tired of this system of personal government—for, in his opinion, it had been little else for some time past. When he first appeared on the hustings opposed to the then sitting member for Geraldton, who was in favor of Responsible Government, he said if anyone would show him a single measure of national importance which had been refused or unduly retarded under the present constitution, he would be one of the first to join in the cry for Responsible Government. So far as that condition was concerned he could only say now that, time after time, since then, he found this had been the case; yet he could not find the heart to abandon the constitution, although it would have been perfectly consistent on his part had he done so, if only in view of that one statement, which he had since often repeated in that House and out of it. He opposed the proposed change in 1874 because, in his opinion, at that time the Government of the day led the van in progressive measures. It was that Government which introduced steam communication on our coast and which extended our telegraph system, and it

was that Government which initiated railways in the colony. At that time, he often found the representatives of the people rather a drag than otherwise upon the Government which gave them all these progressive measures, and he said he would not be one to take away the power from a progressive Administration under the existing constitution, and place it in the hands of those who were not progressive. He also said at that time—it was some years ago now—that we possessed very few men of means and leisure and of ability in the colony prepared to undertake the task and duties of self-government, and, in a series of resolutions which he submitted to the House at the time, he put forward the various other reasons which in his opinion were against the colony adopting Responsible Government in those days. Now, however, the circumstances of the colony had changed, and, as had been pointed out by the hon. member who brought forward this motion, the country had been educated by means of the present constitution to enable it, without much fear as to the consequences, to accept the responsibilities of self-government. There were now numbers of men inside that House, whether they approved of Responsible Government or disapproved of it, who were perfectly fitted and qualified to discharge the duties of responsible Ministers of the Crown, while as regards the other circumstances which induced him eight years ago to oppose the change hardly any of them existed now. At that time the community was an imppecunious community, whereas now it is a fairly rich one. We had only to look at the immense strides which the colony had taken since then in material prosperity, the increase which had taken place in our exports and our imports, and the corresponding increase in our public revenue, to show how different were the circumstances of the colony now to what they were when he first opposed Responsible Government. He expected of course to be taunted with this change of mind on his part, but he did not think there was any hon. member in that House except the hon. member for York, and the hon. member on his left (Mr. Randell) who could consistently do so. He was now speaking of those who had taken a part in the

deliberations of that House for a long time past, and he noticed, on looking at the division list, that those who voted against his resolutions in the beginning of 1875—resolutions opposed to a constitutional change—were Mr. Fraser, the present Colonial Secretary, who was at that time strongly in favor of Responsible Government; Mr. Crowther, who also voted for it, being strongly in favor of the proposed change; Mr. Marmion, who was likewise strongly in favor of it at the time; Mr. Burt, another strong advocate of Responsible Government then; their good friend Mr. Glyde, who also voted for it; Sir Thomas Campbell, who did the same; and Mr. Steere, who also was strongly in favor of the proposed change. Yet these seven hon. members would, he believed, that evening vote against the hon. member for Perth and himself. These hon. members, who believed that the circumstances of the colony in 1875 were such as to have warranted us in demanding an immediate change in the constitution, believed that in 1883 there was no immediate necessity for it, and of course honestly believed it. He hoped then that hon. members would not taunt him with inconsistency. He hoped hon. members would believe, whatever might be the result of the issue to-night, that he was sincerely and truly of opinion that the course he was taking was a right one, and a wise one in the interests of Western Australia, and that otherwise he would not take it. He respected every man's opinion. He conceived that every man had a right to hold his own opinion, and he claimed that right for himself. He would say no more. He thought it had been very detrimental to Western Australia that the present constitution had never yet had what he conceived to be a fair chance. He thought it was only fair to the constitution itself that he should say so. There had always been this prospect of Responsible Government held up before them, and members in some instances had been guided and influenced in their actions by the consideration of the effect such actions would have upon the question of the immediate introduction of that form of Government. What he wished was this—that the people of Western Australia shall say, and in no uncertain terms, that they really desired

Responsible Government. He was not prepared to say that the people of this colony did really desire it. He could only answer for himself and his own constituents, who most earnestly desired it. He would say this—until the people of Western Australia declared in favor of the change in a very much more emphatic manner than they had ever declared for it yet, he did not think Responsible Government should be accorded to them. It was for the people, if they required Responsible Government, to be up and doing, to show that they were really in earnest, and that they no longer meant to play with the thing in the way it had been played with, to some extent, in the past. Surely the present was an opportune time to bring forward this question. The present Council would shortly expire: it had only about twelve months more to live; there would be only one more general session before its term expired. And he thought it was well that the people of the colony should know, on the eve of the coming elections, how many of their representative members had made up their minds for the change, and how many of them had not, and who they were. He should like to see such a formidable minority voting in favor of this motion as would justify the Governor in at once referring the question to the country, so that it might be settled one way or the other, as soon as possible. At any rate they were all aware it must come before the country at the time of the next general elections, which would be about eighteen months hence; and, for his own part, if the voice of the country did not then declare, in the most pronounced manner, in favor of Responsible Government, he was not going to bother his head about it any longer. He saw no use in having the thing fretting and kept boiling in the pot any longer. The best thing we could do, under those circumstances, would be to settle down, stick to the present constitution, and do the best we could under it.

MR. STEERE said he was not going to blame any hon. member of the House for changing his mind on this question, or any other question which had been agitated for a long period of time like this question had. It had been said, and he thought well said, that the man

who never changed his mind was the man who had no mind to change. But it certainly had been one of the most painful things to him, as a public man, to witness the sudden change which had come over the mind of the hon. member who had last spoken. Notwithstanding what the hon. member had said, notwithstanding the copious extracts he had read from *Hansard*, to account for his conversion, he felt bound to say that so sudden and startling a change in any public man was a most painful thing to witness. He could not help remembering that so late ago as the 30th of August last year the hon. member voted against the motion which was then brought forward by the hon. member for Perth in favor of a change in the constitution—a precisely similar motion to that now before the House—and that on the 23rd of September, only three weeks afterwards, he was informed that the hon. member had entirely changed his mind. He called that a very sudden change indeed. He should not have alluded to it now, were it not for the fact—which struck him at the time of the hon. member's sudden conversion, and which was now confirmed—that the actual cause of the change appeared to have arisen out of a discussion which took place in that House last session on what was known as the native question. He strongly supported the hon. member on that occasion, and as strongly disapproved of the action of the Government of the day in the matter as the hon. member himself did; but he did not think it necessary he should alter his views with regard to the constitutional question merely because the Government had differed from his own views on the native question. The hon. member, in giving his reasons for the change which had taken place in his sentiments as regards constitutional change, referred to several matters which the hon. member regarded as laches on the part of the Government, and which he said had wrought this change in his sentiments; but he (Mr. Steere) would remind the hon. member that, with the exception of this native question, all these sins of omission and commission on the part of the Government took place long before he voted against the hon. member for Perth's motion on the 30th of August last.

Therefore, surely these could not be the reasons which had induced him to change in this sudden manner. He had no wish to say any more as to what had been to him a very painful subject, as a public man. He had a very great respect for the hon. member: he had sat with him in that House since the present constitution had been established, and he looked forward to the time when, under Responsible Government, the hon. member will take an active and prominent part in working that system of Government. There was only one thing which caused him any apprehension in this matter. He noticed it said, he thought it was in one of the papers, that the hon. member was considered too old a man for that kind of work,—that we wanted younger men to carry on ministerial Government. If that was the case, he looked forward with some apprehension to the time when the colony shall be governed by men who are much younger than the hon. member. If the hon. member for the Gascoyne was too old a man to take an active part in the government of the colony under a ministerial system, he should like to know who we were likely to be governed by. Were we to be governed by babes and sucklings? He hoped not. He hoped that was not one of the blessings and advantages which Responsible Government would bring in its train. With regard to this motion before the House, it appeared to him a most inopportune motion, looking at the fact that only four months ago the House, at the instigation of the hon. member himself, adopted a very proper and a very sensible course in passing a resolution requesting to be informed by the Imperial Government what were the terms and conditions upon which they would be prepared to grant us the right of governing ourselves. The hon. member on that occasion said: "What the country wanted to know was whether a change in the constitution would involve a partition of the colony? Would it mean that the control of our Northern territory shall be retained by the Imperial authorities, and that the map of Western Australia, under Responsible Government, shall not represent more than half the territory which figures on the map of Western Australia now? What we wanted to know, again, was whether the Home authorities would insist upon a Civil List, and what that Civil List would be? Whether the Home Government, in the event of our assuming the management of our own affairs, would cease to contribute towards the grant for the maintenance of our magistracy and the police? Also what pensions the Home Government will insist upon our providing for the members of the present Executive? In short, what are the terms upon which the mother country will grant us the privilege of governing ourselves." These were very pertinent questions to ask, and in putting them forward the hon. member had the unanimous support of the House. Yet, before any answer whatever had been received from the Imperial Government, the hon. member with singular inconsistency brought forward the present motion, and asked that House to affirm the desirability of adopting Responsible Government, without reference whatever to what it may entail. The hon. member, when referring to the probable terms and conditions which the Home Government would insist upon, said he thought it was very desirable we should ascertain whether among other things they would insist upon our having both an Upper and a Lower House, or whether they would let us go on with one chamber. There appeared to have come a great change over the hon. member's mind as to the utility of two chambers since this question was last before the country. He had always been under the impression that the hon. member was in favor of two Houses, and this impression was confirmed by the recollection which he had of a celebrated cartoon in which the hon. member figured in a character something between a ballet girl and a housemaid, and in which he was represented as saying "I am for the upper chamber." A change seemed to have come over the hon. member himself since then. With regard to the present motion, he was opposed to the adoption of Responsible Government at the present time for several reasons. One, and perhaps the principal one, was that we had not yet received any information from the Secretary of State as to the conditions upon which the Home Government will agree to the change. He could not help thinking that the

answer we should receive to this question would be that we may have Responsible Government as soon as we like, but that it will not be for the whole colony; and if so, he thought a very large majority in that House would be of opinion, and in that opinion they would be supported by a very large majority of the public, that upon those terms it would be by no means desirable to adopt Responsible Government. There was another consideration which weighed very much with him at present in dealing with this question. He referred to the important schemes of public works now before the country, a report upon which had been presented to the House that evening. He felt that any agitation for a radical change in the constitution would very seriously interfere with the carrying out of these projects. He did not think with the hon. member who brought forward this motion that the course which our Government would adopt would be to immediately bring in a Bill empowering them to treat with the syndicates which had made these offers. How could they do that? Nobody yet knew with whom they would have to treat. What he apprehended would be the course which would be adopted by the Governor, if this motion were carried, was to appeal to the country; and, if that course were adopted—he merely put it forward as a suggestion, it would be the constitutional course to pursue—he should like to ask if any syndicate would care to enter into important engagements with the colony in connection with the construction of extensive public works, while it was in the throes of a general election, and while an important constitutional question was convulsing the whole community. He thought it was highly improbable that any syndicate of practical business men would care to enter into any negotiation with the Government of the colony while the agitation was going on, and the result would be that the initiation of these important works would have to be delayed perhaps for years. To his mind, the carrying out of this grand scheme of public works was of far more interest and consequence to the colony at the present time than the question of changing the constitution. The hon. member for Gascoyne said he looked upon the present system of Government

as a personal system, and that hon. member said he was sick of this personal system. When the hon. member talked of a personal system of Government under our present constitution, the hon. member must mean a system of Government under which the Governor himself rules the country. But the hon. member forgot that, under our present constitution, it was open for the House to appeal from the Governor to the Secretary of State. The House on one occasion did appeal and did so with the most successful results, and he believed if they had done so on many other occasions, when they found themselves thwarted by the Executive, their appeal would have been attended with the same satisfactory result, so far as that House was concerned. He was informed on very good authority that other Crown colonies possessing a similar constitution to our own had frequently appealed to the Secretary of State when the wishes of the local Legislature were opposed by the Governor and the Executive, and generally did so successfully. That the Secretary of State was prepared to be guided by the views of the Legislature had been shown in more than one instance lately. It had been shown, inferentially, as regard a Bill now before the House, or at any rate a similar Bill—the Dog Bill, which he introduced at a previous session, but which the Governor refused to assent to. The Secretary of State, in a despatch referring to the Bill so vetoed and the action of the Governor with regard to it, said that no representations having been made to him on the subject by the Legislature, he could not differ from the view of the matter taken by the Governor, showing that if the House had taken any steps to place its views before the Secretary of State those views would at any rate have received due consideration, even if they did not prevail. What had been the course adopted by the Secretary of State in regard to matters which had come before them this session? In the papers presented to them containing Sir Julius Vogel's proposals with reference to landing a submarine cable, what did the Secretary of State say as to those proposals? Did he not decline to have anything to do with them until the Legislature of the colony had an opportunity of discussing them? And, in a subsequent despatch,

Lord Derby said he would leave the question, so far as it concerned this colony, to be decided by the Legislative Council of the colony. In another despatch, relating to the proposed alterations in the land regulations affecting the Kimberley lessees and prior claims of Crown tenants, the Secretary of State laid it down that the most satisfactory mode of arriving at a conclusion upon these questions would be to invite the Legislative Council to take them into discussion. He thought, in the face of these despatches, we could but arrive at the conclusion that the Secretary of State's wish was that the Legislature itself should deal with these questions, and that he had no desire to interfere with us at all. As to carrying on Responsible Government, he did not mean to say we had not got a sufficient number of men of ability in the colony to carry on a ministerial system—he believed we had those who were quite competent to do so; but what he did doubt very much was whether we had men who also had the necessary means and leisure to be able to devote their undivided attention to ministerial duties. He was afraid some hon. members were laboring under a serious misapprehension as to the time which ministers in office under Responsible Government would have to devote to the discharge of their official duties. He believed there was an impression among country constituents that they would get a great deal more done for them under Responsible Government than they do now. It was a common cry with them, when they found they did not get their roads repaired or their bridges rebuilt, "Oh, let's go in for Responsible Government; we shall get what we want then." He knew this was the impression on the mind of some country constituencies. But his own firm conviction was that, if we had Responsible Government, those districts that were far away from Perth would get very little attention indeed—the farther away the less they would get, the greater their distance from the seat of Government the smaller would be their share of public expenditure, for, under such a form of Government, there would be a great deal more centralisation than at present. A great proportion of members would be those representing the larger

towns, and especially Perth and Fremantle; and country districts, instead of benefiting by the change, would find their wants much more neglected than they are now. He would not detain the House any further. He had an amendment to propose which he would now move, and which he had little doubt would commend itself to the majority of hon. members. It was as follows:—
"That this Council having by an address to His Excellency the Administrator requested him to obtain from Her Majesty's Secretary of State the terms upon which Responsible Government will be granted to Western Australia, deems it inadvisable, pending the receipt of such information, to express any definite opinion with regard to a change in its Constitution."

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said it had not been his intention to speak, but that, since he had entered the House this evening, he had been asked, as a matter of convenience, to second the amendment which the hon. member for the Swan had just made. He had no intention, however, of saying anything much on the subject before the House, because there really was nothing to say. The whole question had been so thoroughly threshed out, the arguments for and against it had been repeated with such wearisome reiteration, that he thought it would be better simply to vote, and to leave talking alone. He was sure that nothing which might be said in that House would affect a single vote. They all knew perfectly well that, with regard to questions of this importance, no member entered the House without having fully made up his mind which way he would vote. The speeches made on these occasions were merely made for the sake of the outside public, and he would not have said a word upon the subject had he not have been asked to second the amendment. He had made up his mind long ago, whatever might be his private views on this question, that he would take no active part in bringing about Responsible Government, for there could be no doubt it was a step of very great importance, involving very serious issues and very grave responsibilities. For his own part, he felt that the responsibility of assisting in bringing it about was a greater responsibility than

he should care to take upon his shoulders—unless it could be proved that the colony could make no progress under the form of Government that we have at present. He thought it was impossible for anyone to say that the colony had not made progress under this form of Government. If they considered what the colony was ten years ago compared with the present state of affairs, they were bound to acknowledge that the progress it had made was something simply marvellous. Considering the little handful of people who had brought it all about, he could not conceive it was possible for a colony to have made any larger progress; and, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for the Swan, we had now before us a chance of making still greater progress, by going in for extensive public works which, a short time ago, we should not have dreamt of. The adoption of this motion might—he did not say it necessarily would, but very probably it might—have the effect of causing considerable delay, to say the least of it, as regards these works; and it struck him it would be in the highest degree imprudent on our part to do anything which might cause such delay. So far as he could see, no valid reason had been given for taking such action in this matter as was now proposed—action which might endanger these projects being immediately carried out. It was not as if the country had this constitutional question largely at heart, for, whatever the hon. member who brought it forward might think to the contrary, he had no hesitation in saying that the country was very indifferent about it. The hon. member quoted Sir William Robinson as an authority on this point,—the only authority which the hon. member did quote, as to the feeling of the country in the matter. His own opinion was that a Governor, and especially a Governor who kept himself so very much secluded as Sir William Robinson did, was about as bad an authority as we could possibly get as to the feeling of the country. He thought the right way to judge the feeling of the country was to look at what had taken place at the various public meetings which were held; and how could any hon. member, looking at what took place at public meetings, say that the country was anxious for Respon-

sible Government? What they were anxious about was their roads and their bridges, and little matters of local importance of that kind. Responsible Government was about the last thing they ever thought of. He supposed if there was any part of the colony more than another in which a little mild agitation had taken place on the subject, it would be Fremantle; and what was the state of things there? Three years ago, when there was throughout the colony a very much greater wish for Responsible Government than now, Fremantle returned a representative opposed to it (Mr. Marmion), and, at every political meeting held there since, a vote of continued confidence had always been passed in him. Perth, again, which perhaps came next to Fremantle in the desire for a change, returned His Honor the Speaker, who, as they all knew, was opposed to Responsible Government. As for the country districts, a faint wave of feeling in favor of a change came across them when they did not get as much money as they wanted for their roads and their bridges, and other local requirements; but, as soon as things went on all right again, as he hoped things were going on now, that wave of feeling passed off. So far as his own constituency was concerned, he certainly should have to take their views upon this matter before he could say they were in favor of the proposed change, for he knew pretty well that their feeling on the subject was this—and, being in closer communication with the other colonies, where Responsible Government prevailed, they were possibly in a better position to observe what took place in those colonies than people in this part; he believed their feeling to be this: they were perfectly well aware, from what they saw elsewhere, that under Responsible Government the larger towns ruled the roost. In the other colonies, where population was not nearly so scattered as it is here, often nearly one half the members were men who lived in the capitals; and, if that was the case in those colonies, it would be far more so here, with our limited and scattered population, and no doubt Perth and Fremantle would then rule the roost. Anyone who knew what was going on elsewhere knew that this would be the case; and the feeling of his consti-

tuency was, that, although they are now sometimes neglected, what they would have to expect under Responsible Government was not only neglect but positive injury and injustice, for the sake of securing advantages, at their expense, for the more central towns. The hon. member for Perth had referred to a remark he had made at the first short session this year in seconding the hon. member's motion as to the terms upon which Responsible Government would be granted. What he said then was, he did not think we could go on much longer as we had been going on of late, without being forced into Responsible Government against our will. But, under present circumstances, his feeling as to the necessary imminence of the change had somewhat altered. So far as he could see now, everything was progressing satisfactorily; the colony was in a good financial position, and with still better prospects before it. He therefore saw no necessity for taking any action in this matter, in view of the indifference of the country, and in view, as he thought, of the indifference of hon. members themselves. He also thought the time was inopportune for bringing this matter forward, on account of the important works which we are proposing now to undertake, and which the bringing forward of this question might endanger or delay.

Mr. CROWTHER said he felt some little diffidence in attempting to deal with the question before the House. He regretted that the last time it cropped up he did not state some of his reasons for not agreeing with a similar resolution. Another thing he regretted was this: he had been altogether disappointed that evening with the speech of his hon. friend on the right (Mr. Parker), for he thought the hon. member said little or nothing in favor of the step which he asked them to take. The hon. member dealt with vague generalities rather than with any special claims which his resolution had upon the attention of the House. The hon. member said, although, under the present constitution, our revenue had largely increased, our exports and imports had enormously increased, and our population also had somewhat increased, still if we had had Responsible Government we would have

had a still larger revenue, our trade would have expanded to a still greater extent, and not only would our population have increased, but we should have kept people here when we got them. The hon. member, however, did not enlighten us as to how they were to be kept here. He had yet to learn that Responsible Government would alter the features of the country, that it would alter, for the better, the prices of the necessaries of life, that it would increase the rate of wages, or in any way render the country more attractive. Unless Responsible Government did this, he failed, for his own part, to see how it was likely to induce people to remain here when they came out, any more than they remain here now. Unless Responsible Government did more for us than was proposed to be done for us now in the way of extending our railways, in the way of opening up the country, and—to use an expression which hon. members may have heard before—in developing our untold resources; unless Responsible Government did all this for us, he was very much afraid the result would be disappointment. The colony would be in the position of the man who took unto himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself—and the last state of that man was worse than the first. The hon. member, he said again, had not yet assigned any reasons for bringing forward this motion. No doubt the hon. member had some good reasons for doing so, and in his prudence he may have kept them back; like the bridegroom of old, he may not have thought proper to put forward the good wine at the beginning of the feast, but kept it until the end. He certainly did say something about the hon. member Mr. Randell, and of Governor Robinson being a good judge of public feeling, and that was all. He did not care a straw for that; what he wanted was the hon. member's own reasons for bringing forward this momentous question at the present time. The hon. member for the Gascoyne, who seconded the motion—and for whom no one had greater respect than he had—told them that his sentiments on the subject had undergone a change. Well, so they had, and the sentiments which fell from that hon. member in 1878 were almost identical with his (Mr. Crowther's) own sentiments

now. Referring to the present constitution, the hon. member said: "We find that under it, every measure of progress with regard to which the people of the colony were agreed upon as necessary to the material welfare of the country was granted to the colony, and not only granted to it, but adopted and put in force with promptitude."

Those were the hon. member's sentiments in 1878, and those were his (Mr. Crowther's) sentiments in 1883. That was the only difference between the hon. member and himself. Neither on this occasion nor on the last occasion when this subject was before the House had he heard any good, solid, substantial reasons for adopting a change in the constitution. One of the reasons put forward was that measures of importance calculated to promote the welfare of the colony were delayed because we had to refer them to the Home Government, and that we only legislated on sufferance, that the Governor could step in and veto any Bills which that House might pass. But the question was—*did* our Governors do these things? From a rough estimate he had made of the Bills introduced during 1880, 1881, and 1882, he found that there had been 63 measures brought in by the Government, and 16 by private members. Of these the Government allowed two to lapse, for some reason or other; and of private Bills one had been allowed to lapse. Of the Bills introduced by the Government, three had been rejected by the House on their second reading, and one private Bill had met the same untimely fate. Of private Bills, three had been disallowed, at one time or other, but of these three two had been subsequently introduced. One of them was the Audit Act, which he believed was working as well as any Act could work; the other was the Dog Bill, which appeared before them again this session, in a somewhat different form and under the patronage of the Government itself,—a Bill which he believed would give satisfaction to all parties. So that only one Bill, during these three years, introduced by a private member, had been vetoed by the Governor, and that Bill was the Fencing Bill,—a Bill which, so far as he was concerned, he was very glad it had met with the fate it did. Of the private Bills introduced, one had

been shelved by progress being reported. One Government Bill had been negatived in committee, another on the motion for its adoption, and one had been withdrawn. That was the history of our legislation during the past three years. Out of sixty-three Bills introduced by the Government, twelve had been withdrawn or lapsed, for some reason or other, and out of the sixteen private Bills introduced, eleven had been rejected by that House itself, while three had been disallowed by the Governor, and two of those had been subsequently re-introduced. He certainly did not see any ground in for saying that the Governor thwarted their desires, or that we could not accomplish anything in the way of useful legislation under the present constitution. He must say again, nothing had fallen from either the mover or the seconder of this resolution which could be regarded as a good solid reason for adopting it. The hon. member who brought it forward certainly went into a few figures, but they were chiefly figures of speech. He should have preferred if the hon. member had given them figures of arithmetic, so as to let the House and the country have some idea as to what this change would really cost us. The hon. member in his off-hand and jocular way said: "Oh, the cost would be a mere bagatelle, some £4,000 a year." Well there was certainly a good deal of difference between the hon. member's figures and the figures of the hon. member who seconded his motion. When in 1879 that hon. gentleman (Mr. Brown) went into figures, showing what expenditure the change would entail upon the colony, the result of his figuring was that it would cost £103,000 to begin with. That was a very different thing from £4,000, which the other hon. member said it would cost to carry it on. With all due deference to his hon. friends, he did not believe either they or any other hon. member had the slightest idea what it would cost us. He did not believe we had any idea what it would cost, either directly or indirectly. We had some idea what the present machine cost us to work it, and he was quite sure, if we worked it fairly, it would do all we shall want done for many years to come. Any feeling of dissatisfaction that was felt, under the present constitution, was not attributable,

in his opinion, to any inherent defect in the machinery of Government. People here did not trouble their heads about these constitutional questions; what made them sore was some little matter of detail, or a little too much red tape, or their wants being neglected; then came the cry, "We *must* have Responsible Government." When they found money voted by that House for some local work, such as a hospital, years ago, and more money voted again for the same purpose another year, and when they found no steps whatever taken for carrying out the work for which the money was voted, people said, "We *must* have Responsible Government." When they found the head of a department coming to inspect the locality, followed sometime afterwards by another officer of the same department, and, months afterwards, they found that another reference had to be made to another subordinate, and nothing done after all, people cried out, "We *must* have Responsible Government." When they found the prosecution of natives at the Supreme Court costing the country hundreds of pounds, a great deal of which might be saved; when they found witnesses from the North who were only entitled to about £60 receiving £113 6s. 8d., and the Government, when their attention was called to it, taking no action in the matter, but treating the whole thing with indifference, people said, "These things would not happen if we had ministers who were responsible to the country; we *must* have Responsible Government." It was these little petty details, this needless irritation, this altogether unnecessary waste of red tape, this indifference to local requirements, which caused dissatisfaction in people's minds with the present form of Government. He hoped the hon. member would withdraw his motion.

MR. MARMION said it had been stated there was no necessity to enter into any arguments for or against this question, because members had made up their minds. He did not think the time had arrived, he did not think the political affairs of the colony had arrived at that stage of maturity that hon. members might come to that House with preconceived notions and fixed ideas on any

important question, and without being open to conviction by argument. They had that evening heard an expression of opinion from two hon. members in favor of Responsible Government, but very little argument. The hon. member for Perth, who had taken upon himself to represent what might be called the Reform Party in this colony, had again given them his views, many of which had become somewhat stale by reiteration. In the course of his remarks the hon. member had twitted him, amongst others, with something he had said when the motion with reference to the pains and penalties which the introduction of Responsible Government would entail was under discussion in April last. But what were the facts? Was not the House as much in the dark now as it was then as to the terms and conditions upon which the Secretary of State would grant us the right of self-government? Why then bring forward this motion now? He was not aware there had been any action outside, either in country districts or in the centres of population, which would lead the hon. member to suppose that his motion was a popular motion, even with the majority of his own constituents. He felt sure if the hon. member were in an open, straightforward, and honest way to go to his own constituents for an expression of opinion on this subject, he would find that the feeling amongst them, as it was the feeling throughout the country, was, that this was not an opportune time for bringing forward this question. When the hon. member sought to make them believe that no delay would occur in the carrying out of the important projects now before the country it seemed to him the hon. member was simply attempting to throw dust in their eyes. They must all be aware that in the event of the House adopting the report of the select committee brought up that evening, the Governor would not be in a position to introduce a Bill this session to empower the Government to grapple definitely with these undertakings. His Excellency must in the first place communicate with the promoters of these syndicates; and what would be the result as regards these negotiations if the present motion were carried? The Governor would feel himself in a position of great embarrassment,

and would not be able to do anything in the matter. He would be bound, acting constitutionally, to remit the question to the country, with the result perhaps that another set of men would be returned to that House, to whom these projects would again have to be submitted, unless indeed they were withdrawn altogether in the meantime. In his opinion the projects were of far more importance to the colony at the present moment than Responsible Government. As to the question of Federation, surely the hon. member did not intend them to suppose for a moment that the question of whether Western Australia—poor insignificant Western Australia—remained a Crown colony or was possessed of a full-blown constitution would prevent her more prosperous neighbors from federating. When the time arrived for federation, when the question now on the tapis came to be an accomplished fact, when the other great colonies of the group formed themselves into the United States of Australasia—when that time arrived he had no doubt that this colony also would be in a position to take upon herself the responsibility of self-government, and be justified in demanding admission into the federal union. But the argument put forward by the hon. member was somewhat premature, at this stage in our history. The hon. member had alluded to a very common fallacy in dealing with this question: he said the members of the Executive at present were responsible to nobody. No doubt this was only a thoughtless expression on the part of the hon. member, for, as a matter of fact, they were responsible to that House for the expenditure of public money, and they were also responsible to the Governor and through him to the Secretary of State; therefore he failed to see how it could be said they were responsible to no one. As to the assertion that we had men of means and of leisure, who would have ample time to devote to the performance of ministerial duties under Responsible Government,—he hoped the hon. member would not think he intended to be personal, but he could not help saying that if they were to judge of the time which those gentlemen would devote to their duties by the amount of time and attention which the hon. mem-

ber himself now devoted to his parliamentary duties, the country must not look for much under Responsible Government. As to the hon. member for the Gascoyne, he was not going to twit that hon. gentleman with changing his views on this subject, but he would draw attention to one fact, and that was this—that many of the reasons the hon. member assigned for having deserted the present constitution were certainly very paltry grounds on which to base his desertion. As to the progress made by the colony under the present constitution, it might perhaps surprise some hon. members what the actual progress made had been, and the wonderful strides which the colony had made even during the last five years. One or two items alone would serve to illustrate this progress. In 1877 the total revenue of the colony was £165,402, whereas last year it was £250,372, showing an increase of fully 50 per cent. The value of our exports in 1877 was estimated at £373,351, whereas last year our exports were valued at £583,000. Hon. members would see from these figures what enormous strides the colony had made under the present form of Government, and he had no doubt in his own mind that the progress of the colony during the next few years would be still more remarkable. The hon. member for Greenough had referred to some of the causes which led to dissatisfaction on the part of the public under the present constitution, but the hon. member did not even suggest that Responsible Government would remove those causes. But what seemed to be the strongest argument of all against the present motion was what he had already referred to, namely, the fact that an appeal to the country and a general election must undoubtedly jeopardise the great projects now in contemplation; and, in his opinion, anyone who threw any obstacles in the way of the adoption of these progressive works was no friend of his country. He believed the hon. member who brought forward this motion and those who supported him would be conferring a great benefit upon the country by ceasing their agitation at the present time. They were aware that a certain section of the press of the colony had been advocating the adoption of Re-

sponsible Government through thick and thin, and never lost a chance of bringing it about. They were also aware that sometimes this section of the press had adopted a style of argument which to say the least of it was not that which hon. members would like to see adopted: in fact, they had never lost an opportunity of seeking to damage the present constitution and to lower that House in public estimation. It had amused him, though at the same time it had rather disgusted him, to read some of the articles which had lately appeared in the columns of the particular paper referred to, and which regarded itself as the organ of the Responsible Government party. What amused him was this: that whilst ready to lay all sorts of crimes at the doors of those who were working the present constitution,—in order to show the necessity which existed for a change, the paper in question had never yet told them who were to be the men who would be called upon to work the new constitution. Were many of them, he would ask, not likely to be the very men who sat in that House now, as the representatives of the people? If so, were they not likely to legislate then, as they were told by the section of the press referred to they were now legislating, for their own selfish ends, and to the injury of the colony. If their powers for good would be increased under a more advanced system of Government, so also would their powers for evil be increased—they would certainly be increased as regards the opportunities of carrying their own selfish ends. One of the objects of the section of the press referred to was, and always had been, to seek to create a strife and a division of interests between the elected members of that House and the Governor of the colony for the time being, and also to destroy that confidence which at present existed between the people and their representatives. This had been rendered more apparent than ever within the last few days, in a series of articles which certainly did very little credit to the paper which inserted them. He did not know whether those hon. members who were pledged in favor of the immediate adoption of Responsible Government were in any way proud of their organ, or proud of the character which their organ

gave them as members of the present Council, and the curious light in which their organ held them up to the public gaze. He would read one or two extracts from the paper in question, just to show those hon. members in what estimation they were held by their own organ, in common with the other members of that House. In the *Morning Herald*, of the 21st inst., he read:—

“We had occasion to remark a few days ago that the aspect of the political horizon was such as to fill people with alarm. Events have happened since then which are rather calculated to increase this alarm than to allay it or restore confidence—events which go to show that the Government is anxious to conciliate the Council, and the Council anxious to conciliate the Government to an extent which bodes no good to the colony.”

This was certainly the first time he had ever heard it suggested that a policy of conciliation was a policy which boded evil to any country. This argument, carried to its logical conclusion, under party government, would lead one to believe that a policy of obstruction, a policy of contention, was the best policy for a country. It appeared to him highly desirable for the satisfactory working of any system of Government that a conciliatory spirit should prevail, and it was something new to him to find that such a policy boded ill to the colony. It boded ill, no doubt, to the object which this particular section of the press had in view,—that of endeavoring to put the representatives of the people and the members of the present Government at loggerheads. He would also read another opinion which the paper in question entertained of the members of that House, and he could not help asking those hon. members who were in favor of Responsible Government whether they liked the picture, as drawn by their own artist:—

“When they have once got the land in the Central districts locked up for the next eighteen years, and obtained permission to hold a million or so of acres in the Kimberley districts against all comers, even though they only have stock in some convenient corner, and have secured a few other little things they want, they may not be so inclined to hesitate. When they have made the great point safe, and can view with indifference the prospects of capital and population coming into the colony, they may not be indisposed to try their hands at governing. But at present, having as they think a chance of getting the Kimberley and Central district tenure question quietly settled in a way which may lead

to their ultimately obtaining all they seek for, they would be very unwilling to miss their opportunity. Could they really look at their chances with less sanguine eye they might see these to be not quite so good as they are ready to believe."

That was the estimate formed by the paper in question of the honesty of the present representatives of the people, but it did not enlighten the country as to who were likely to be the representatives of the people under Responsible Government. Perhaps the conductors of this paper themselves. Then again, it was said: "They probably forgot that though the matter might easily be allowed to drop out of sight at the Colonial Office, and a conciliatory Governor might not feel himself called on to interfere, there are those who sleep not, and would not permit a great wrong to the colony to be perpetuated without raising a warning voice." This was a little inconsistent. We were told in one breath that at present the Government is responsible to nobody, whereas here we were told there was a court of appeal, in the Secretary of State, who it appeared kept a very watchful eye indeed over our doings. There was rather a wicked suggestion in the concluding paragraph of this article, which went to show what the colony might expect if the object which this section of the press had in view were attained, and a change of constitution became an accomplished fact. No doubt the writer wrote with a prophetic eye to the future. "Really and truly," he said, "their best chance"—that was to say the best chance of the members of that House—"lies in adopting Responsible Government, under which they would probably enjoy at least a short reign of power, of which they could avail themselves." This, then, after all, was the advantage which ministerial government offered—a short reign of power, to be employed in accomplishing their own selfish ends. He hoped the hon. member for Perth would feel proud of the suggestion conveyed in this article, which appeared in a paper he supposed must be accepted as the organ representing the opinions of the party of which the hon. member was the mouthpiece in that House. It had been his intention to have moved an amendment upon the motion submitted by the hon. member, but as that had already been done and would

answer the purpose which he had in view himself, he would simply read to the House what it had been his intention to move, as it concisely expressed his views on the subject: That, in the opinion of this House, the present is an inopportune time to effect any radical change in the constitution of the colony, as there are now under consideration by the Government and the Legislative Council several subjects of very grave import—which will if satisfactorily arranged materially affect and hasten the future progress and development of the colony; and a dissolution or prospect of a change in the constitution before these important schemes are fully matured might endanger their successful negotiation, would in any case create great delay in their being undertaken, and might possibly lead to their total abandonment. Further, that as the present condition of the colony is in every respect most satisfactory—their being no crying evils to remedy, no grievous cause for general dissatisfaction, and no great public demand or want that cannot be supplied under and by the existing constitution—it is not expedient to agitate for an immediate change to a form of Responsible Government.

MR. RANDELL said the hon. member for Perth had referred to something that fell from him when the hon. member moved a resolution in April last relating to the terms upon which the Home Government might be disposed to grant us self-governing powers. But he did not think the hon. member, although he had made an adroit use of what was said on the occasion, had succeeded in misleading the House as to the purport of what was then stated. For his own part he might say that he had come to the House that evening without any preconceived ideas on the subject, and quite open to conviction by argument, if he heard any convincing argument put forward. But in this he certainly had been disappointed. He had expected to have heard more cogent arguments from the hon. member as to the opportuneness of the present time for adopting the proposed change,—which he thought was the main consideration likely to influence the House on this occasion. He believed every member present was in favor of free institutions, and the only question

was whether this was a favorable opportunity for entering upon the proposed change. There was only one other matter he would draw the attention of the House to, and that also was a rather important consideration. If the hon. member who brought forward this motion was the mouthpiece—as he thought he was to a large extent—of the members in that House, and of the party in the country, who were in favor of Responsible Government, he must say the sentiments which the hon. member had uttered that night struck him as being in no way in advance of the opinions of those who were opposed to a change; on the contrary, he thought they were retrograde sentiments, and he might say illiberal sentiments. The hon. member might be able to explain in his closing remarks what interpretation he wished to be put upon the expression which he made use of more than once—“Western Australia for Western Australians.” He took it that what the hon. member meant was that he wished to confine the colony to its present population. [Mr. PARKER: No, no.] If that was the hon. member’s intention all he could say was, it indicated a very narrow-minded policy, and it boded very ill for the policy which was to guide the destinies of this colony under Responsible Government, when the hon. member assumed the position of Prime Minister. He had always understood it was the desire of that House to increase our population as much as possible, and he believed this was one of the reasons which were likely to induce hon. members to accept the recommendations of the select committee with reference to the initiation of the important scheme of public works now before the country. If he had misunderstood the hon. member he hoped he would pardon him, but it certainly had appeared to him that the hon. member was advocating a very narrow policy when he talked of Western Australia for Western Australians, if, by Western Australians the hon. member meant the present population of the colony. That, however, appeared to him a reasonable interpretation to put upon the hon. member’s sentiments. He would only add he thought the hon. member must of late have been studying the science of apologetics, as his whole speech was in the main an apology

for bringing the motion forward at all.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said that when this motion was brought before the House it had not been his intention to take any action upon it, or speak upon it, but the amendment submitted by the hon. member for the Swan had altered the aspect of affairs, and he thought it was only right he should offer a few remarks. The hon. member for the Greenough had, in his quaint and witty manner, enumerated some of the small inconveniences which he said the people in this colony sometimes experienced under the present form of Government. The hon. member had represented the light in which the people viewed this constitution when they are subject to these small disappointments. But he should like to know whether the hon. member conceived for a moment that if we had Responsible Government the public would be better served in any way as regards these petty details. These disappointments arose from no fault in the present constitution; they simply arose through the force of circumstances,—the scattered character of our population, distance from the seat of Government, the smallness of our public staff, all of which combined necessarily prevented the machinery of Government from working perfectly in all its parts. So far as circumstances admitted, he maintained that the people of this colony were as well served, so far as the public service is concerned, as the people of any colony, whether under Responsible Government or under any other form of Government. It appeared to him, with regard to the hon. member for Perth, who was the prime mover in this irritation which had been going on for some years, that the hon. member showed a lamentable want of tact as to the way in which he had marshalled his forces on this occasion. It was only three or four months ago that the same hon. member brought forward a proposition that an inquiry should be made as to the precise terms upon which Responsible Government would be granted to this colony; and now, before there had been a possibility for any reply being received to his inquiry, the hon. member came forward and asked that House to demand the

right of self-government regardless of result. The hon. member for Swan and the hon. member for Albany had pointed out with great force that, so far as the country was concerned, the country viewed this so called "burning question" with remarkable equanimity and indifference. He challenged anyone to show that the present constitution had not worked satisfactorily, or that it had not worked successfully. They had now served a pretty long apprenticeship under it, and year by year the constitutional machine had worked more perfectly. No doubt occasionally it wanted a little oil here, or some trifling repair there, to make all its parts work smoothly; but, on the whole, the machine worked with less friction now than it ever had done. Yet the hon. member wanted to come forward and upset the whole concern, and set up a much more intricate and much more expensive piece of machinery in its place,—machinery in the working of which we were altogether inexperienced. Hon. members were aware that he had always been animated by a desire to push this colony ahead by every possible means, and he thought we had not done so badly with the means at our command. He really saw no utility in a few enterprising spirits keeping up this agitation in the face of the fact that the country itself was perfectly indifferent, and viewed the whole matter with the utmost unconcern.

MR. GRANT said he did not like to give a silent vote on this subject. It had been before the House on two or three occasions since he had a seat in it, but he had not yet expressed any opinion upon it. For his own part he might say at once that he intended to vote for the original motion, and he did so for this reason: they were told that one of the conditions upon which Responsible Government would be granted us was that the North should be separated from the South. That being the case he would vote with the hon. member for Perth, if only for the purpose of hastening that separation. He thought the North had everything to gain and nothing to lose by such a step. Why, then, not let them go? Why not cut the apron strings which bound them to the South without further ado in the matter? The North at any rate was quite prepared to accept

this responsibility, whether the South was or not. The North was certainly quite capable of looking after her own affairs, and he should vote for this motion in order to give her a chance of doing so.

MR. SHENTON said the hon. member who had last spoken was certainly very candid in the expression of his views on this subject, and he thought it was a matter which deserved their very serious consideration indeed whether the proposed change would not entail a separation of this part of the colony from the North. At any rate, until we were in possession of the terms and conditions upon which the Colonial Office would be prepared to allow us to take this step, he thought it would be imprudent on their part—however desirable the step might be—to precipitate it. A general election would have to take place in the course of another eighteen months or so, and, by that time, the country would be in possession of the conditions upon which this change could be entered upon, and we should then be able to take the step with our eyes open, instead of making a leap in the dark, as it was now proposed we should do.

MR. BROWN regretted to find that the majority of hon. members who that evening were opposed to the introduction of Responsible Government did not seem to have the courage of their convictions. He should have been pleased if these hon. members had given a direct negative to this proposition, instead of sheltering themselves behind an amendment. It appeared they were of opinion that the time had not yet arrived for the adoption of this change, and, instead of boldly facing the question, and giving it a direct negative, they had resort to this amendment, so as to enable them hereafter to say on the hustings that they did not actually oppose the adoption of Responsible Government when it was brought forward in the House, but merely thought it was advisable to wait just a little longer. Let hon. members either affirm the proposition or reject it, so that the country may know their views on the question, and that there may be no mistake about it.

MR. CAREY merely rose to say that, notwithstanding all the sophistry with which it had been endeavored to conceal

the real meaning and intention of hon. members, this amendment would not in any way have the result which some hon. members fondly hoped,—it would not throw dust in the eyes of the electors. For his own part, he was very glad the question had been again brought before the House, as it was a test question, and those who voted against it would, when they came before their constituents, and were weighed on the balance, be found wanting. There was one remark made in the course of the debate, by the hon. member for Plantagenet, which was calculated to create an erroneous impression. The hon. baronet said that Fremantle, in returning the hon. member Mr. Marmion, and Perth, in returning His Honor the Speaker, had declared themselves in favor of the existing constitution; but the hon. baronet forgot that Fremantle had also returned another hon. member (Mr. Higham), and that Perth returned another hon. member (Mr. Parker), both of whom went to the electors on the Responsible Government platform; and, if numbers were any test,—so far as Perth was concerned, the electors had decidedly declared in favor of a change, for the poll was headed by the candidate who came forward in support of that policy.

MR. McRAE did not consider the colony, although no doubt it had made much progress of late, was making that progress under the present form of Government which under freer institutions it might have done, and would have done; and although he did not suppose the present motion would be carried, he was glad it had been brought forward, as it enabled him to show which side he intended taking in the matter. He thought it was high time the people of this colony claimed their political birthright.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he was surprised any hon. member should have twitted him with not having brought forward any arguments in support of his motion, and with not having entered upon the merits of the whole question; he said he was surprised, because when he commenced his remarks he told the House that he had no intention of entering into the merits or demerits of the question, as he had already done so on former occasions, and as he thought the whole matter had been thoroughly

threshed out. He proposed however now to deal with some of the arguments which had been put forward that evening in opposition to the motion. The hon. member for the Swan, referring to the resolution which he (Mr. Parker) submitted in April last, said it was inconsistent on his part to bring forward the present motion in view of that resolution; but the hon. member seemed to forget that there had been ample time for the Secretary of State to have answered these very simple questions, if it was intended to answer them. It was not the first time this question of Responsible Government had been brought under the notice of the Colonial Office. It had been talked about and written about for years past, and no doubt the Imperial Government had made up their minds long ago as to the terms and conditions upon which this colony should be allowed to govern itself. His own opinion was that the Home Government had determined not to reply to the questions put to them, until they had before them the fact that this House had actually affirmed that a change in the constitution was desirable. It appeared to him there was a great deal in what his hon. friend and supporter who had seconded the motion had said as to hon. members not having the courage of their convictions. What did they want to shelter themselves behind this amendment? The motion he had brought forward simply affirmed that it was desirable the colony should adopt Responsible Government; did they mean to say it was not desirable? If so, let them have the courage of their convictions and give a direct negative to this proposition. Oh, no; they would not do that. They were afraid to face the question boldly and let the country see who was in favor of Responsible Government and who was not. They wanted to leave some loophole which they would creep out of, when they had to face their constituents. They had not the courage to say that in their opinion it was not desirable we should have Responsible Government, and therefore they sought to get out of it by expressing no opinion at all. Referring to the various statements which had been put forward this evening, he would first deal with what an hon. member (Mr. Steere) had said with reference to a remark which he had made on a former

occasion with reference to the question of two Chambers. The hon. member would lead the House to believe that he (Mr. Parker) had shown some inconsistency on that point; but the hon. member should have read the whole of what he had said, instead of reading a portion only. What he said was this: that the question of one or two Houses was no doubt an important question, but it was one upon which he did not express any opinion that evening. Yet the hon. member twitted him with having changed his opinion, although he had never expressed an opinion. If that was the style of argument which hon. members resorted to in that House, he really began to think there was some reason why the Press should doubt their honesty. If hon. members wished to deal honestly and straightforwardly with this question, why did they seek to fence with it in this way? Simply because, as he had already said, they had not the courage of their convictions. As for his own constituency, if he thought for a moment he did not represent their views on this question, if he thought there was on desire on their part for Responsible Government, he only hoped they would tell him so. He had no desire to represent them, unless they did. He had no desire to retain a seat in that House, if he thought he was not in accord with their sentiments on this question. He was sick and tired of going on like this, and if the electors of Perth were satisfied with the existing constitution, if they were satisfied with the present form of Government, he hoped to goodness they would send somebody else to that House to represent them. He had no wish to do so. The hon. member for Fremantle said he believed the majority of the electors of Perth, if he (Mr. Parker) were to consult them on the subject—in an honest and straightforward manner, the hon. member said—he would find that most of them were now opposed to a change in the constitution. He (Mr. Parker) was under the impression that it was otherwise. Perhaps, however, the hon. member knew the feelings of the Perth electors better than he, their representative, did. The hon. member talked about being honest and straightforward in this matter, by which the hon. mem-

ber would imply that he (Mr. Parker) was not always "honest and straightforward." The same hon. member also talked about his throwing dust in the eyes of the country, and of the members of that House. That certainly was not an "honest and straightforward" thing to do, and, as no doubt the country looked upon him as a fair specimen of the representative members in that House, it was hardly to be wondered at that the Press of the colony—and especially the Press in the town which the hon. member himself represented—should be of the opinion that they were not very honest representatives. If the hon. member himself thought so, and if the hon. member represented public feeling in his own constituency, it was no wonder that the Press, which was also supposed to represent public feeling, should be in accord with the hon. member. The hon. member also told him that he had failed in his duties in that House. It certainly was a matter of regret to him if such was the case. He admitted that if attention to one's parliamentary duties meant making windy orations upon every question that cropped up, if it meant indulging in long speeches upon subjects of which he very often knew nothing at all about, or next door to nothing—if that was the hon. member's ideas about attending to one's parliamentary duties, he admitted he had been inattentive to his duties. If to refrain from speaking unless he thought he had something to say that would throw light on a subject, if to refrain from talking for mere talking's sake, if that was the hon. member for Fremantle's ideas of neglecting one's parliamentary duties, he (Mr. Parker) must admit he was inattentive to his duties. The hon. member for the Swan said he had not given any reasons for asking the House to agree to this motion. When he brought forward a similar motion before, he gave a great many reasons why the House should agree to it, and he was indebted to the hon. member for the Swan himself for those reasons,—in fact, he relied almost entirely upon the reasons which had been put forward by the hon. member himself in favor of the immediate adoption of Responsible Government. He would remind the hon. member of one of those reasons. It was this:

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

The hon. member for Fremantle said he would support the motion if he saw more unanimity shown on the part of the public in favor of it. He would read for the hon. member what he subscribed to, on that very subject, eight years ago. It was this:

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

That was what the hon. member said eight years ago. Perhaps the hon. member had forgotten it now. The hon. member for the Swan said, although we may have men of sufficient ability to carry on a system of ministerial government, he did not think we had men with sufficient means and sufficient leisure to do so. That was the hon. member's opinion in 1883. The hon. member's opinion in 1875 was as follows—he would give it in the hon. member's own words:

"While fully aware that the opinions so ably expressed in Lord Carnarvon's despatch are such as would naturally be formed by members of a large community looking upon the population of a small colony as that of a country village, this Council ventures to express somewhat confidently an opinion that,

"small as is the population of Western Australia, there are in it, in proportion to the numbers of that population, as many men who, by education and social standing, are capable of, willing, and prepared to take active part in public life, as can be found in any similar number of people in any of the Australasian colonies."

The hon. the Colonial Secretary said he did not think this was an opportune time for adopting Responsible Government, because the constitution was working well now and everything else was going on harmoniously. It was very strange that this was the very reason which the same hon. gentleman, eight years ago, urged in favor of the immediate adoption of Responsible Government. He would read what the hon. gentleman then said:—

"This Council submits, with respect, that it is far better that Responsible Government should be introduced at a time . . . when there is no difference of opinion between the Government and the people, when no spirit of disaffection exists, and when there are, notably, men of different opinions ready to assume office, than at a time when, as in all probability may shortly be the case, changes may occur which may cause the introduction of a different class of population who may not be so easily governed, when causes of disaffection may arise, when a change of constitution may be literally forced on the country, and power be possibly placed in unworthy hands."

A change seemed to have come over the hon. gentleman's dream since then. The hon. member for the Greenough said he failed to see how a change in the constitution would be likely to induce immigrants to remain in the colony, if we got them here. The hon. member said we could not retain them now, and he could not understand how it was supposed we were likely to do so under Responsible Government. He would tell the hon. member why, and he would do so in the hon. member's own words:—

"Standing alone, as this colony does, among the Australasian group, as the only colony not possessing Responsible Government, its inhabitants are looked down upon as unfit to be trusted with those privileges which have been else-

"where accorded to their fellow-countrymen; and the consequent result is, that the working classes of the Eastern Colonies, no matter what inducements may here offer, will not settle in Western Australia and lose those privileges which they prize and must in such case give up. No matter what public works may be undertaken, or what terms may be offered, it is found impracticable to induce laborers in any number to come to Western Australia, even temporarily; and the few who have been induced to come have left, satisfied with their prospects in regard to work and remuneration, but dissatisfied at the absence of those institutions to which they have been accustomed."

The hon. member must have forgotten that. The hon. member for Albany said there had been no expression of public opinion in favor of the proposed change, and that country people at any rate thought more of their roads and bridges than of Responsible Government. That might be so with the hon. member's own constituency, who probably thought more about their blessed Sandpatch than about the privileges of self-government, and who if they got their jetty lengthened would be satisfied with any form of Government. He hoped the hon. baronet did not imagine that other constituencies were like his own constituency in this respect. It was a libel upon the intelligence of the community to say that they thought more of a broken culvert or a bit of bad road than they did of their constitutional rights. The hon. member Mr. Randell had altogether misunderstood his meaning when he talked of "Western Australia for Western Australians." He never meant to convey the idea that he wanted the whole colony for its present population. He was not so foolish as to imagine that this vast territory should be the home of only 30,000 people. What he meant to say, and what he thought was obvious to everyone was, that he wanted Western Australia to be governed by its own people, and not by strangers. What he wished was to see Western Australians themselves doing for themselves and their country what was now being done for them by outsiders, twelve thousand miles away. He would say no more. He noticed that those hon. members who

had twitted him with not having brought forward any arguments, had, the moment he had proceeded to do so, left the House. He noticed the hon. member who had challenged him with being so inattentive to his parliamentary duties (Mr. Marmion), and who was so anxious to have some good reasons assigned for the proposed change, was so very attentive himself that when he (Mr. Parker) proceeded to assign his reasons the hon. member walked out of the House. The fact of the matter was, hon. members had no wish to listen to reason or argument; they preferred remaining in ignorance, and voting in ignorance, sheltering themselves from all consequences hereafter behind an amendment which pledged them to no particular course, and which committed them to nothing.

The House then divided upon the motion, with the following result:

Ayes	8
Noes	11
			—
Majority against	...		3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Brown	Mr. Burges
Mr. Carey	Mr. Burt
Mr. Grant	Sir T. C. Campbell
Mr. Higham	Mr. Crowther
Mr. McRae	Mr. Glyde
Mr. Venn	Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Wittenoom	Mr. Marmion
Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller).	Mr. S. S. Parker
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. Shenton
	Mr. Staere (Teller.)

The amendment was then put and carried.

INTESTATE ESTATES BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved the first reading of a Bill to provide for the better administration of the Estates of Deceased Persons.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

RABBIT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved the first reading of a Bill to provide for the Destruction of Rabbits.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

CLEARING LINE OF ROAD BETWEEN CHIDLOW'S WELL AND NEWCASTLE ROAD.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. SHENTON moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place on the Estimates a sum sufficient to clear a line of road from Chidlow's Well to the Newcastle road. The hon. member said it was expected that the second section of the Eastern Railway, from Guildford to Chidlow's Well, would be opened for traffic in about two or three months time, and if the Toodyay settlers were to derive any benefit whatever from that line of railway it would be necessary to clear a line of road from the terminus at Chidlow's Well to Newcastle, otherwise they would be deprived of railway communication, and, on the other hand, the traffic receipts on the railway itself would suffer correspondingly. The road would only require clearing, as it went through ironstone country.

MR. STEERE, in seconding the motion, said it must be obvious that the clearing of the proposed road was a work of absolute necessity.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he could not see the utility of adopting this address. The subject was one which would be dealt with when the vote for "Roads and Bridges" was under consideration, and he failed to see what was to be gained by discussing it now, so long as it was understood that the clearing of the road in question should be included in that vote.

MR. SHENTON said, so long as it was definitely understood that the work would be undertaken and carried out, he was quite satisfied to leave the matter as it stood.

MR. STEERE moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at half past twelve o'clock, a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 23rd August, 1883.

Coastal Mail Service: Branch of Contract—Report Select Committees on Kimberley Land Regulations and Prior Claims Lessees—Reserves for Schools and Educational purposes—Exemption from Sale of Lands near routes of proposed Railways—Transfer of Fremantle Lunatic Asylum—Married Women's Property Bill: motion for third reading negatived—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

COASTAL MAIL SERVICE: BREACH OF CONTRACT.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary what arrangements had been made for bringing up the colonial mails from Albany, which had been detained there since Monday, owing to the failure of the contractors to have a steamer in readiness for the conveyance of the mails, in accordance with the conditions of their contract; and whether it was the intention of the Government to take any steps to enforce the penalties incurred for any breach of the contract?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the colonial mails had been despatched by the s. s. "Menmuir," and were expected to arrive at the General Post Office that day. With regard to the latter part of the hon. member's question, as to enforcing any penalties, the Government had the matter under their consideration, but had not yet decided upon any course of action.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEES ON KIMBERLEY LAND REGULATIONS AND ON PRIOR CLAIMS OF CROWN LESSEES.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor informing him that the Council approves of the report of the select committee appointed to consider and report upon the subject of the proposed amendments in the Land Regulations for the Kimberley District and the prior claims of lessees of Crown lands to a renewal of their leases, and prays that His Excellency will be pleased to take such steps