

for that hereafter, and I only trust that hon. members opposite will be merciful on this occasion, and that we shall not be detained long and have a repetition of the same arguments as we had on a former occasion in the debate on the Address-in-Reply. I think the country is to be congratulated on the very prosperous condition of the colony, as indicated in His Excellency's Speech. There is only one dark spot on our horizon apparently, and that is at the North. With regard to that, I am sure that not only the members of this House but the whole country at the back of them will fully sympathise with our brother settlers at the North. There has been some reference made to the action of the Government with regard to the Midland Railway. For my part, I am glad to think that this colony has a Government that have the courage of their opinions, and who are not afraid to accept the responsibilities of their position. It has been stated that they have gone outside their proper prerogative, and been unconstitutional in what they have done in this matter; but I am certain that the country at large will back them in the action they have taken. They have done that which will prevent any stoppage of the works on the Midland Railway, and there is no doubt that a stoppage of those works at the present juncture would have been a serious blow not only to that important undertaking but I believe also to the credit of the colony, particularly at this time, when in the London money market there is a tendency to discredit Australian investments. I feel sure that when the British public see that the Government of this colony are not afraid to come forward to assist this important work, and thus show to the world their faith in the future of this railway, and that they have the country behind them in their action—when all this becomes known to British investors it cannot fail to have a good effect. I believe it will not only give an impetus to the colony, but also enhance the credit of the colony in the London market. I will say no more on this occasion. I merely rose to second the Address-in-Reply.

MR. CANNING: I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned until Wednesday night.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 4 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 9th December, 1891.

Address to the Queen: Reply to—Vote of thanks to Sir F. N. Broome: Reply to—Eradication of "Stinkwort"—Address-in-Reply: adjourned debate—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

### PRAYERS.

### ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN: REPLY TO.

THE PRESIDENT: I have to inform hon. members that I have received the following Despatch, addressed to Sir W. C. F. Robinson by the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reply to the Address to Her Majesty the Queen adopted by the Council on the 22nd January last:—

"Downing Street,  
"13th March, 1891.

"SIR,

"I duly laid before the Queen the "Addresses from the Legislative Council "and Legislative Assembly of Western "Australia, on the occasion of their first "meeting under Responsible Government, "which accompanied your Despatch No. "15, of the 4th ultimo.

"I am commanded to request that you "will convey to both branches of the "Legislature Her Majesty's thanks for "the good wishes expressed in their Ad- "dresses, and Her appreciation of the "loyal sentiments which they contain.

"I have, &c.,

"KNUTSFORD.

"Governor Sir W. C. F. Robinson,  
G.C.M.G.,

"&c., &c., &c."

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

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

“Government House, Barbados,  
“SIR, 31st March, 1891.

“I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd of January last, communicating a Resolution and the thanks of the Legislative Council of Western Australia with reference to my action in the matter of the Constitution Bill.

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

“I have, &c.,

“F. NAPIER BROOME.

“The Hon. the President

“of the Legislative Council,

“Perth, Western Australia.”

ERADICATION OF “STINKWORT.”

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

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ment has been reorganised, and I agree that the Government cannot be too particular in this branch of the service, even at an increased expense in having first-class and experienced officers to superintend the spending of public money. There have been alterations in the details of contracts which, I venture to say, if carried out, will save the salary of the Engineer-in-Chief eight or ten times over. As to the importation of a Traffic Manager, we are a small community; we have not a very large Railway Service, and I should have thought that the gentleman who at present occupies the position would have been sufficient. We shall, however, I presume, have some information given us as to why this appointment was necessary. We are told in the Speech that the railway to the Eastern Goldfields is to start from Northam; and whether this be the proper starting point or not will be for hon. members to say when the Bill comes before them. For my part I think York should have been the terminus, but I presume we shall have the reasons given us as to why the Government have chosen the other route. As to the goldfields themselves it is most satisfactory, week after week, and fortnight after fortnight, to be informed of a regular flow of gold coming down. Last session there seemed to exist a doubt whether the yields would keep up; but now there can be no question about the permanency of the fields. As to Harbor Works, I am glad to find that the Government, instead of putting the country to the enormous expense which would have been involved in carrying out Sir John Coode's large breakwater scheme, intend to make use of what Nature has given to us. Garden Island is in itself a natural breakwater, and we have now only to take advantage of what Providence has supplied in order to become possessed of one of the finest harbors in the world — one that will not only be safe during storms, but also in the time of war. To carry out the proposed improvements on the Eastern Railway, I find the Government have had to resume some land; and in future, when it is necessary to resume land for railway purposes, it will be as well not to overlook the future and take plenty while they are at it. I trust that the country will be able to make use of the informa-

tion contained in Messrs. Richardson and Paterson's Report. If we could dam the Avon up in certain sections it would confer a great boon on portions of the Eastern Districts, and would lower the temperature in a naturally dry locality. I notice that the Crown lands comprised in the Hordern area are to be thrown open, and I may say that I should like to see some clause inserted in the Land Regulations by which any person coming to the colony could go to the Lands Office and by at once paying the maximum price take up 1,000 or 2,000 acres. A good many people do not like the conditional purchase system, and we are now forcing cash buyers to go to syndicates. As to paragraph 17 of the Speech, I should like to have more information as to the Agent General. I trust that the gentleman who is appointed will not only be one who knows the colony well, but one who is acquainted with the colonists. The Hon. Mr. Leake referred to the question of an Opposition in this Chamber. I maintain that this House has no right to have an Opposition at all. We sit here as umpires and examiners of certain work done in another place rather than anything else. We should, I think, support the Government as far as possible, and when we see anything wrong point it out, and give the reason why it is not right. Clause 18 of the Speech is one I regret to see. I do not pretend to be an old politician, but I do think in this case constitutional principles have been drowned by a wave of sentiment. The first reason which induced the Government to guarantee this advance of £60,000 to the Midland Railway Company is stated to be that it would keep 400 men from being thrown out of employment; another reason is that it will give confidence to the investing public; a third is that it will help local financiers; and the fourth that the Government is amply secured. Take the first reason: Here is a colony doing all it can to induce men to come here, and yet at harvest time it is said that we can afford to have 400 men thrown on the labor market. I am sure these men could easily have found work, if not with the farmers, certainly on the goldfields. The price of labor shows that 400 men would not be a very great trouble to dispose of. As to giving confidence to the investing public, we have

to remember that this company which has been helped is an English company. We are on the London market to borrow, and so are they. Those interested in the company reside in London, and have their head-quarters there, and yet have not been able to get what they want, and we here take up what the Englishmen themselves will not take up. This company has one of the best concessions in the world, and I do not think, when we go to the London market again, we shall get much credit for lending money to companies they will not support at Home. Then it is put forward in the Press that another reason is that it helped the local financial houses. Now, in my opinion, if local men identify themselves with concerns that fail, I say the Government has no right to use public money or public credit to bolster them up. As to the Government being amply secured, let me point out, in the first place, that the £10,000, with accrued interest, referred to is already held by the Government as security for the completion of the work. How much, then, is that worth? If the work failed, that money would have been ours anyhow, but now we shall have to pay £60,000 for it. Then it is said we have security over 200,000 acres of land; but surely we have plenty of land, and, except by way of lending money on improved freehold land through the Savings Bank, the Government has no right to make advances in this way, especially when they themselves want to sell as much as possible. This land cost the company 5s. an acre, and under this guarantee we hold it as security for 6s. 8d. Besides this, there is a prior claim by Mr. Bond for 13,000 acres on every 20 miles of line completed before the Government can come in. Another benefit is said to be the withdrawal by the company of any claims it may have to select on town-sites and common-ages. Why should the Government have acknowledged any such claim? The only benefit I see we have gained is the non-insistence of the terms of the award made by Mr. Justice Stone as to the company's right to select land north of Walkaway, some of which has been sold by the Government. I do not wish to insinuate that the Government has acted on anything but from the best motives, but I think they acted with a lack of

knowledge of the facts. Before concluding the agreement I hope the Government made themselves fully acquainted with the previous history of the Company from the time it was transferred from the original syndicate. I hope they have got a list of the past and present shareholders, as well as a list of the debenture holders for Sept. 1st, 1890, to the present day. I should also like to know who were the holders of the founders' shares; also the total amount paid up by the shareholders and debenture holders, for if the Government are going into a companionship business they should be careful as to who are their companions. I hope they have found out the actual amount subscribed and how that money has been expended. The Government say that they believe half-a-million of money has been spent on the works. I am not engineer enough to go into that matter closely, but I very much doubt whether so large a sum has been *bond fide* spent on the works—on 120 miles of railway. The whole 294 miles at £3,500 per mile would only cost £1,029,000, and I doubt if the amount stated has been spent. I have already indicated that I disagree with the Government in this matter. I think the proper course for the Government to have adopted would have been to have said to the company, "You have done so much work, and you are unable to carry out the rest; we will take it over and finish it and make you an allowance according to the value of the work done." That would have been an amicable and equitable arrangement.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I don't see where the amicable part comes in.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I think the Government has found the means to make things more complicated than they are, and I do not think when they did it they had any idea of how complicated things are. I consider that now, perhaps, the best thing would be for the Government to appoint a commission to inquire into the whole matter of this company. I say this because I know as a fact that, on the 9th November last the promoters of this company, who purchased the original concession, had not paid one penny for it. The original members of the syndicate were promised payment by 1st February last, and nothing on 9th November last was paid. The Company

may have paid the promoters, but the promoters have not paid the others. On principle, too, the sooner this method of doing things is checked the better for the Ministry. To revert to a more pleasing matter—the visit of the Auxiliary Squadron to this colony—I am sure it has conduced to the pleasure and pride of all who have Australia at heart. I hope that this Squadron will be the nucleus of a superior class of boat. The sad clause in the Speech is that referring to the drought at the North. The Hon. Mr. Amherst said there was a cloud over the runs. I wish there was. The seriousness of the situation, however, is no fault of the settlers, and therefore it will be for the Government to see what can be done to assist them. In the past we have always helped distressed districts, and I hope on next year's Estimates to see some portion of the surplus devoted to helping those over whom this calamity has passed. I have now said what I had to say, although, perhaps, I may be allowed to add that I do not sit in this House in opposition to the Ministry. I believed in them when they started, and I believe in them now, but I should not be doing my duty if I did not point out to them where I thought they were wrong.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I propose to say a few words on the Speech with which His Excellency the Administrator opened this House, as also upon the remarks of the hon. member who has just sat down. As to this guarantee to the Midland Railway Company, I think the Ministry did quite right, and in acting as they did I have no doubt but that they took every possible precaution in the interest of the country; although, at the same time, I think it would have been better had they said that they had acted on principles of policy rather than of expediency, by reason of its being greatly to the benefit of the country to have the work completed as soon as possible; for really I do not see that we have now any greater security than we previously held. According to their lights the Government have, during the past year, done all they could to advance the progress and prosperity of the country. One of the things they do not agree with is the adoption of Federation, and in this, I think, they are correct. By federating, we have everything

to lose and nothing to gain. We should have to throw in our lot with the Eastern Colonies, or in other words we should be giving up the tutelage of Downing Street to accept, with our eyes open, the domination of the greater colonies, which might necessarily be antagonistic to the interests of this colony. May I ask what we are to gain by joining the confederation? I say there is nothing. We should have to hand over our revenue; and after the Dominion Parliament had spent what it required we should have handed over to us our share of the balance, and I leave it to hon. members to estimate what this would amount to. The next important question in the Speech relates to the amendment of the Constitution Act. To reduce the franchise, in my opinion, is nothing more or less than offering a direct insult to the honest working man. It is not really the *bonâ fide* working man that desires any change; it is asked for on his behalf by delegates and agitators over whom he has no control. The working man who cannot afford to pay £10 a year for a house is not worth calling such; besides which it is opposed to his own interest, for he would be giving to the lazy and indolent, who cannot pay, the privileges he himself now possesses. Referring to the policy of Public Works, the first question is that of the Bunbury Railway. I now state again what I have already said—that I consider this line should have been the last work undertaken. Bunbury has the advantage of a good road, and has the sea, by which its traffic can be carried on. Our chief object should be to advance the colony, and this could the better have been done by taking the railway there first. A line to these fields is an absolute necessity, while that to Bunbury is a luxury. I hope this Yilgarn Railway, wherever it starts from—either Northam or York—will be taken in hand and advanced as fast as possible. The question of the route can only be properly decided after we have the estimates and plans before us; for at present we do not know the reasons which have led the Government to adopt Northam as the starting point. For my own part I have every confidence that the Ministry has done right. Still we are entitled to assure ourselves that such is so. In clause 12 Ministers say that to improve the Eastern Railway

a considerable outlay will be necessary. I perfectly agree with them. A very considerable sum will be required—more than they estimate. At the present time the railway costs the colony every day more than sufficient to have made it a proper line in the first instance had the surveys been properly done; and besides this if the line had been starved from its inception to the present time, Ministers would not now have to say what they do. I can only state that the Ministry have my fullest confidence, and I believe if the colony is left in their hands for some time to come (although at the same time I think a wholesome Opposition very essential) we shall continue to progress and become more and more prosperous.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I shall not, sir, on this occasion detain the House with any prolonged remarks; but shall confine myself to referring to one or two items only out of the ample bill of fare which His Excellency placed before us last Monday. Perhaps the House will permit me for a moment or two to refer to a personal matter. In the interval which has elapsed since last session, as hon. members may know, I tendered my resignation. The chief reason for taking that step was that I discovered that according to a possibly technical interpretation of the Constitution Act certain arrangements which had been made between the firm with which I am connected and the Government, might have been construed as coming within the definition of a contract. My partner and myself, therefore, took the course which was dictated by honor, and placed our resignations in the hands of His Excellency the Administrator. I may say that we were led into this by the Constitution Act being so strangely drawn, and so strangely worded, and so full of pitfalls, that even when you discover them you do not know whether they are dangerous or innocuous. I hope that before long these defects will be so remedied that any unlearned man may know what are the clear and explicit instructions of that measure. I was also led into taking this step by the fact that the pressure upon my time was so great as not to enable me to do that ample justice to public matters which I should like to; and this arises from the fact that our meetings here usually take place at midsummer. In winter

time I can work all day and half the night; but I have not been born in a semi-tropical climate, and I feel the excessive strain of both my private and public duties in the summer months. When, however, it was put to me that it would be an advantage to the colony that I should continue to hold my seat, I felt that I could do naught else than accept the course suggested. Passing from this purely private matter—for referring to which I apologise for troubling the House—let me say that I hope both the Government and Parliament will allow me to congratulate them on the very favorable condition of public affairs compared to the existing state of things twelve months ago. Hon. members will remember that when we assembled here last a certain spirit of confidence prevailed. But it was then the confidence of hope; but now we feel something more, and which is better than the confidence of expectation; it is confidence founded on experience. Never has this colony before had such a twelve months of prosperity, and this in spite of the absence of any unusual stimulating course. On the contrary, we cannot forget that our most important industry has suffered severely; for the pastoral, although the mining industry is fast coming up to it, still holds the foremost place among our industries. Nor can we forget that very little of the loan money has been put into circulation, although a number of other causes have conspired together to raise this colony up to its present point—a point which has never been touched before. One or two facts only are necessary to show the striking advance that has been made during the last twelve months. Not only has trade and commerce advanced by leaps and bounds; but the revenue for this year will amount to nearly £50,000 over the estimate of the Treasurer. Take the case of the goldfields. Since we last met we have had evidence of another rich discovery—one promising to be the richest in Australia, and the field at Yilgarn has begun to distribute £20,000 to £25,000 a year in dividends. Such circumstances as these should not only fill us with pride, but should also inspire us with confidence in the country and in the Government whose policy has introduced this state of things, and given a stimulus to everything



such as all Governments in the past have failed to give. I shall not go at length into the numerous paragraphs of this Speech, as most of the matters referred to will come before us hereafter. Still there are one or two which will drop out of notice with this debate. The first is that to which my hon. friend and colleague, the Hon. J. A. Wright, has referred—Federation. Perhaps it will be thought necessary that the two gentlemen who had the honor of representing this House at the great Convention held in Sydney should give some account of their stewardship. My hon. friend has expressed himself, as the result of his labors, as opposed to the acceptance of any scheme of federation at the present moment, and in his rough conclusion I agree with him. Before I say why, I would like, in the name of this House, to express the gratitude of both my colleague and myself at the heartiness of the welcome we received during that trip. When we took our places at that Convention we were treated as brother Australians, and a strong spirit of conciliation pervaded everything connected with the meeting. I believe that not one rash word was uttered, and so strongly did the feeling which existed impress me that I came away with the conviction that whatever the result might be hereafter, the interests of Australia would be perfectly safe in the hands of such men. If Federation were carried on in this spirit, Western Australia would never have cause to regret that she joined. It is unnecessary for me to go into the details of the Bill, because no doubt hon. members are familiar with them. The Draft Bill will be laid on the Table ; and I cannot help remarking that if ever federation becomes an accomplished fact, any measure that will give satisfaction must be drawn more or less on the lines of that Bill. From the first the smaller colonies—those inferior in population and revenue—at once saw it was to their interest to stand together, and I believe that compact, tacit rather than expressed, was well understood, and we saw at once that the key to the situation in our interests was the Senate. Every endeavor was made to obtain adequate representation and to obtain adequate powers for that body. It was agreed that all the States should be represented in the Senate on equal terms, each hold-

ing seven votes and the members to be elected by the two Houses of each colony jointly electing them ; and it was also agreed that with regard to all measures the Senate should have full powers of amendment or rejection. Under these circumstances I felt that the Senate would give us all we wanted. I will not dwell on the subject further now, especially as I hope another opportunity will be given us of discussing the matter. It may, however, be asked why I say I agree with my hon. friend in saying that it is not expedient to proceed further now. Many things have happened since the Convention, and it will be wise for us to wait and see what course the other colonies take, what form their amendments will assume, and what will be the duty of the colonies generally as expressed in their individual Parliaments. From what I can learn the cause of Federation is not making much progress in the Eastern Colonies. On the contrary, a line seems to have been drawn across the path, and other measures seem to have more interest taken in them. South Australia is indifferent to the Bill and so is Tasmania. South Australia is involved in a serious land question, which, if decided in the way the advanced party wish it, there is little doubt that a severe blow will be dealt to Australian credit, and, by parity, to the Commonwealth of which that colony would form part. In New South Wales they are measuring forces and are marching on to one of the most fearful battles ever waged in the political arena. For the next year or two the fiscal fight there will occupy all the energies of New South Wales. Then in Queensland, also, there are more serious matters still to be settled. In Victoria the fight now is being confined to the one-man-one-vote question, and which must inevitably and before long bring the two Houses into conflict, and in which, for the first time in the history of Australia, the Legislative Council will prove victorious. Under these circumstances, it is well that we should pause before proceeding further with this measure. Then as soon as we left Sydney a new phase came over this question. A most remarkable man, coming from the far-distant colony of New Zealand, sprang up, and for whose wonderful talents and energies I desire to express my most profound respect. I

mean Sir George Grey. I believe his presence has done a great deal towards postponing the question of Federation for an indefinite period. Sir George Grey had made a name for himself in many colonies, and after a time he entered into practical politics; but the people of New Zealand placed him aside. They allowed him to experiment, and after they got tired of it they relegated him to private life. He came over to Sydney, and he supplied the members of the popular party, as it is called, with what they wanted—a cry. All the other great questions that had to be settled were not enough. Something was wanted which appealed to enthusiasm and roused the sentiments of the masses. This Sir George Grey supplied. At the Convention he was generally regarded as a nuisance, for on every conceivable occasion he tried to enforce his one plea—one man one vote. This same question will arise here on the amendment to the Constitution Act; but although I hope to see the qualification for members done away with, I earnestly trust that with regard to the franchise we shall never see that fatal principle of one man one vote introduced. Sir George admitted that he valued this principle highly, because it was a weapon against capital, and although looked upon at the Convention as a nuisance, outside he found himself a hero. We now find Victoria fighting the question; the New South Wales Government has adopted it, and so has the Government of Queensland, but I should be very sorry to see it introduced here. For these reasons I urge delay, and I should also urge it for the reasons given by Ministers, namely that we require, at the present time, practical legislation and the actual development of our resources without bringing about another period of turmoil and agitation such as existed during the three or four years preceding Responsible Government. I do not wish to detain the House, but I should just like to say one word on the guarantee given by the Government to the Midland Railway Company. It seems to me to have been one of the most statesmanlike strokes I have ever heard of in these colonies. If the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Morrison are to be taken literally, one would be led to suppose that the Government had actually

handed over to this Company £60,000 to carry out of the colony and spend. But what are the actual facts? In the first place, the Government advanced no money at all. They have only given the ordinary surety, and have provided themselves with ample security to meet any claim that may be made upon them. Putting aside the question of the £10,000 deposit, the bonds of the Company which the Hon. Mr. Morrison did not refer to, although, perhaps, they may not be worth their nominal value they are worth a certain amount of money, their main security is the land. The Hon. Mr. Morrison puts this down at 5s. per acre, although the Company, represented by my hon. friend, asks and receives 15s. for the same thing. If we take it at half that value we shall be well secured. And instead, it must be remembered, of this £60,000 going out of the colony, every farthing of it goes towards adding to the national assets of this colony, for it is to be all spent here. Even suppose the Company to fail, this is such a national work that the Government must finish it, and in this way we shall have £60,000 worth more of the work done. What the Government did by their action was to prevent a large quantity of labor being thrown, in spite of what the Hon. Mr. Morrison says, upon what many people considered a congested market. In the next place they secured that which might prove embarrassing and expensive in the future—a settlement of the issues as to townsites and commonages, and lastly they produced a moral effect on the capitalist world in London. They showed that instead of looking upon the capitalist as an enemy we are prepared to treat him generously. I do not intend to occupy the time of the House any longer. I can only, in conclusion, congratulate the Ministry in regard to their work, and I may say that if they only carry out half of what they propose, I believe they will be a Ministry to be looked back to as worthy of imitation and probably with a great deal of envy. I have great pleasure, sir, in supporting the Address-in-Reply.

THE HON. R. W. HARDEY: I, too, sir, agree with the Ministry that the time is not ripe for us to consider this question of Federation. With regard to the amendment of the Constitution Act,

I think we should abolish the qualification for members; but I am opposed to any extension of the franchise, and I hope the day is far distant when we shall have manhood suffrage. I see we are to have a Mineral Lands Act; but I also hope the Government will bring in a Bill to protect our game, which is being wantonly destroyed. With regard to the Yilgarn Railway, last session I was rather doubtful as to whether this would prove a successful enterprise; but there certainly can no longer be any doubts on the subject. I am sorry the Government propose to start from Northam, as, in my opinion, York is the proper place. I am very pleased indeed to see that the Government have seen their way to utilise Owen's Anchorage for a harbor at Fremantle; but before the work is carried out I hope the plans will be laid on the table, for I am under the impression that the natural channel might be utilised rather than cut an artificial one, which may be liable to silt up. We have been told of the destruction of the telegraph wires at the North by natives, and I hope the Government will take immediate steps to prevent this in future. The appointment of a Crown Agent is spoken of, and I think the sooner some gentleman occupies the post the better. With regard to the guarantee to the Midland Railway Company, it has been said that this was given to prevent a number of men from being thrown out of employment; but I am credibly informed that a large number has already been discharged, and therefore I fail to see the force of this argument. On the subject of irrigation I think we have been very fortunate in getting two such practical men as Messrs. Richardson and Paterson to give us a report. There is great cause for gratification all round. There have been the gold discoveries all over the colony, and the coal at the Collie, so near as it is to a port, is equally valuable. I support the Address, sir.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton), in reply, said: I thank hon. members for the expression of confidence they have given in the policy of the Ministry; but there are one or two points which have been dealt with to which I may refer, in order to show more clearly what has really been done by the Government. In the first place the Hon.

Mr. Leake went fully into the proposed improvements to the Fremantle Harbor, and concluded by saying he wished for further information. Now, if the hon. member will refer to the Speech he will find that the Government promise to lay the interesting and valuable reports on the subject on the table, and these will be accompanied with plans, from which hon. members will be able to judge of the way Sir John Coode proposes that the work shall be carried out. Another matter which has been referred to is the inability of persons coming to the colony to go to the Land Office and select lands. I may say that the Government are doing all they possibly can to bring this about. We are opening up agricultural areas wherever we can, and we shall shortly be able to throw open one of these areas at Katanning. The land has been surveyed and marked out; so that intending settlers will be able to see it for themselves before taking it up. The Hon. Mr. Morrison has dwelt at some length on the question of the guarantee to the Midland Railway, and the subject being so important a one, it is, perhaps, as well that I should state more fully than has been done the reasons which actuated us in giving this guarantee. At the time the application was made to us by the Company the Perth Water-works had just been completed, consequent upon which a large number of men were thrown out of employment. The Government were aware that the Bunbury Railway could not be commenced until December, and we felt that if the Midland Railway stopped work for only a short time it would throw a large number of men on the market, for whom it would be difficult to find employment; because, although a large amount of money has to be spent, it is important that proper plans and estimates should be first prepared. We are all aware of the mistakes which have been made in the past through proper plans and proper information not being obtained before works were undertaken, and the present Government did not wish to repeat these errors. Now, before the Government would consent to entertain the matter at all, we insisted that certain matters in dispute should be settled, more especially that which had arisen at Walkaway, in consequence of the Government having sold lands which

they considered were outside the area of selection, and for which they were said to be answerable to the Company as having trespassed on their reserves. Then the Company contended it had a right to select within two miles of the Eastern Railway, and also urged its claims to select on townsites and commonages along their line. These positions the Government disputed, and declined to negotiate as the company wished unless they gave up all claims under these three heads. They did so, and no doubt this will save a great deal of trouble in the future. As hon. members are aware, the Government guaranteed the Company £60,000 on condition that it is to be spent at the rate of more than £12,000 a month. The money is to pay for the work actually done in the future; not for past work, and it will only be paid on the monthly certificate of the Engineer-in-Chief. This guarantee will enable the Midland Company to complete 156 miles of railway, which will be more than half the total length. Some reference has been made to the value of the land over which the Government has taken security. The schedule to the agreement shows the block over which the lien has been taken. No one knows the Upper Irwin better than the Hon. Mr. Moore, and if he will refer to the numbers of those blocks he will find that the Premier has taken the precaution of picking out 135,000 acres, which are the pick of the country, and are certainly worth 20s. per acre. The Government also get £90,000 worth of the Company's bonds as security, so that if the £60,000 has to be paid, or the company falls through, the Government of this colony will be in a perfectly safe position. In acting as they have, I maintain that the Government has done the best thing possible, in the interests of the colony, in coming forward at the time it did to assist this Company. When the matter was under consideration the Government was aware that a larger quantity of rolling stock was coming out, which would help to bring up the Company's assets in the colony. We also thought that as we had raised only a small portion of our own loan, a guarantee such as this showed that the Ministry had faith in the colony. If we had refused it, we might, when on the London market ourselves, have been met with the statement that the Govern-

ment could have but very little faith in their lands, otherwise they would have guaranteed this paltry £60,000—for it is paltry in comparison with the work that has been completed. The Hon. Mr. Wright has referred to the policy of the Government in commencing the Bunbury Railway before the Yilgarn Railway. Our reason for doing this was that we were anxious to get on with our public works, and as we were already in possession of the preliminary surveys we thought that final surveys could be completed more quickly than those for any other line, and hence it was the better line to begin with. I feel certain if the hon. member will look at the surveys he will find them to be a credit to the Railway Department, and I am sure the colony is to be congratulated on the low price at which the first section has been let. With regard to the Yilgarn Railway there was a further difficulty which did not present itself in the matter of the Bunbury line. There was a difference of opinion as to where the line should start from, whether from York, Northam, Newcastle, or Beverley. The Bill for this line will have to come before both Houses, and it will be for hon. members to decide the starting point; although, as is well known, the Government recommend Northam. In six months after the Bill is passed we hope to have the work of construction commenced. It has been said that in laying out this line the Government should have taken into consideration the probability of a transcontinental railway; but I think whenever that is brought about it will be quite independent of the Yilgarn line. In the first place it will have to be on the broad gauge, so that we can connect with South Australia and Victoria; and in the next place I think that instead of starting from York it will be taken along the Chittering Valley, which is now generally believed to be the easiest way of getting over the Darling Range. We have not, however, to consider the transcontinental railway at the present time; we have to do our utmost to get a railway to the goldfields at Yilgarn as quickly as possible. The Government have expressed their views in reference to the question of Federation in the Speech; and, considering that the other colonies have not arrived at any decision yet, this, the

smallest colony as regards population and income, can well afford to wait until our greater neighbors have fully determined upon the course they intend to pursue. At the present time there is no necessity for this colony to be in any great hurry in the matter. In clause 5 of the Speech the Government state that in their opinion the qualification for members should be abolished and also that the franchise should be extended. Under the present Act many cases of hardship occur owing to the loose wording of the franchise sections, and we are willing to take steps to remedy these defects as soon as public business will admit. We are all aware of the state of stagnation that was brought about during the time we were endeavoring to bring about a change in the Constitution, and the Government do not wish at the present juncture to involve the country in a further state of non-progression, which must be the consequence of a change and a general election at the present time. We say, "Let us give our public works a fair start, and do not let us do anything to retard the rapid strides we are now making." We agree that these alterations should be made, and when the state of public business permits we shall be prepared to bring in the necessary measure; but I think everyone will agree that it would be unwise now to involve ourselves in a general election, for it would interfere with the raising of the loan, and would consequently stop the carrying on of our public works. At this late hour of the evening, I shall not dwell upon the other points which have been raised. The only cloud that seems to be hanging over us is the drought at the North; but against that we have a golden lining in another direction in the development of the Yilgarn fields. The output of gold from there is now very large, and with the new machinery that is being taken to the fields, other properties will soon be yielding returns and giving more employment to labor. The telegraph line, which will shortly be completed, will give a still further impetus to the fields. The Murchison fields are also opening up well, and machinery is already being ordered for them, so that in a short time we may find these northern fields as successful as those at Yilgarn. With the gold in all directions and the coal in the Bunbury

District we may look forward to a high state of progression for the colony in the very near future. The finances of the colony have been carefully attended to, and the revenue has exceeded our most sanguine expectations. In fact everything is prosperous with us now, and it will be the endeavor of the Government to do all it can to help this colony in making still further strides on the road of prosperity.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. the Colonial Secretary will perhaps pardon me if I follow him with a few remarks. I do not wish to follow the Speech which gives such a satisfactory account of the stewardship of the Government; but I ask hon. members to allow me to address to them a few words, as this will probably be the only occasion I shall have of putting myself right on a particular point with regard to the proposed alteration of the Constitution Act. Ever since the present Constitution has been introduced an agitation has been carried on to reduce the franchise and to do away with the qualification for members. In the Press and on the public platform, one of the principal arguments used in favor of an alteration is that the delegates from the old Legislative Council whom you sent home pledged your colony that as soon as the change was made the qualification for members would be abolished. These statements have always been a source of annoyance to me; and as hitherto I have not had an opportunity of refuting them, perhaps the House will bear with me if I now give them a most unqualified denial. I found that immediately after my arrival in London, when in communication with Mr. John Morley, who was one of the best friends we had in assisting us with our Bill, that this qualification for members was regarded with the utmost disfavor, not only by the Liberals, but by the Conservatives also. They said that in the House of Commons it had been found to be absolutely useless, and that it did not keep out the description of persons aimed at; whereas it did keep out others who were desirable, but who had scruples the others had not. It was pointed out to us that there could be no proper representation unless electorates were allowed an absolutely free choice in the matter of their members. But the delegates

pledged the colony in no way, although we did say that we believed at no distant date the qualification would be done away with. That was the utmost we did, and I think it is desirable that the public should know, that not only did we not pledge the colony, but that it was impossible for us to do it, having, as we had, distinct instructions not to depart from the terms of the Bill. The question was well fought out here, and the majority of elected members favored the striking out of the clause, and I certainly agree with the Ministry that before the next general election the qualification should be done away with. With regard to the question of the franchise my opinion will not be shared by many other hon. members. It was only a night or two ago that one of our most moderate, trusted, and able public men reminded me that when the present Constitution was being drafted he and I agreed that, in Conservative interests, we should not commit the mistake which had been made elsewhere. We should begin, we thought, where we are going most certainly to end, and not give opportunities for those constitutional struggles which have taken place elsewhere. I think, however, that the Ministry are acting wisely in delaying this matter, for the reason that some little time hence, when further consideration will have been given, we are more likely to arrive at some decision which will give a greater amount of finality than there would be if it were forced on now. I say, in the interests of Conservatism, we should alter the franchise, as there is no doubt the Act as it now stands is simply intolerable; and whatever be the nature of the change it should be in the direction of finality as far as possible. I do not intend to say anything further on the Speech, except that I am glad to notice that the hon. the Colonial Secretary has taken an early opportunity of showing us that the Government is willing to give this House a fair share of the work of the session. Of course we have not yet reached that stage in our political history when the advantages of an Upper House are so manifest as they are in the other colonies. It is generally in times of trouble, or where there is a strong opposition in the House below against a weak Government, or where, perhaps, the Lower

House is out of touch with the constituencies that the Upper House proves to be of so much use. Another advantage in an Upper House is that the measures of the Government can be considered with more quietude than in the more stormy atmosphere of the other Chamber. I trust the Government will acknowledge this, and will give us every opportunity to further the interests of the colony.

Question—put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 10:30 p.m. adjourned until Friday, 11th December, at 3 p.m.

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### Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 9th December, 1891.

The establishment of Agricultural Bureaux—Rain-producing experiments in the Northern Districts—Sessional Orders—The Address-in-Reply: Adjourned Debate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUREAUX.

MR. RICHARDSON: I wish to ask the Premier, Whether the Government propose to take any steps with a view of establishing Agricultural Bureaux similar to those existing in the other Colonies?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government has not yet arranged or done anything in the matter, but I may add that I shall be glad to consult with the hon. member on the subject.

#### RAIN-PRODUCING EXPERIMENTS AT THE NORTH.

MR. RICHARDSON: I desire to ask the Premier, Whether, in view of the great drought prevailing in the Northern