

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

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

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 7th December, 1891.

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

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

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

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR.

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

MINERAL LANDS BILL.

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

THE ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

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

position to float the balance of the loan that was sanctioned by this House last session, and upon satisfactory terms to the colony. The fifth paragraph of His Excellency's Speech deals with the question of the amendment of the Constitution Act. These amendments, sir, I think, everybody admits, are very necessary; at the same time, I think it would be unwise to attempt to make any alteration in the Constitution Act this session, in the face of the great delay that would arise in the prosecution of public works, as the amendment of the Constitution would necessitate a dissolution of the House, and, following upon that, a general election; and, taking all things into consideration, I think the Government have acted very properly in deferring that matter until some future occasion. The Public Works Department, I am pleased to hear, is now in a thoroughly re-organised position,—a statement that will give satisfaction to everyone. The seventh paragraph of His Excellency's Speech deals with many important matters upon which it is proposed to legislate during this session. It mentions, among other bills, that there are no less than four new bills to be introduced authorising the construction of railways. Perhaps the foremost in importance amongst these Railway Bills is that of the Yilgarn line, and I am very pleased indeed to see that the Ministry, according to His Excellency's Speech, propose that this line should be constructed from Northam. Upon this question of route there is some little difference of opinion, and I have no doubt it will elicit a considerable amount of discussion in this House; but, as I have said, I think the Government have acted wisely in adopting Northam as the starting point of this line. It is the most central line; it passes through the very centre of the best agricultural land we have in Western Australia. It is also a shorter line than the other, and I believe is in every respect a more suitable one. I am sorry to say that I have read lately, in one of the newspapers, some very one-sided articles upon this subject, containing some very highly-colored and exaggerated accounts of the advantages that would be derived by selecting the more southerly route of the two; and I must say that I think this was very unfair towards those who are interested

in the other line. I think that in such an important matter as this, the construction of a line of railway 200 miles long, all little local interests should be left outside, and that the question to be mainly considered is that of the general welfare of the colony. It is pleasing to note in paragraph 9 of His Excellency's Speech that the long-felt difficulty of providing a safe and commodious harbor for Fremantle appears to be at length solved. Whether or not the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out will suit people generally, and particularly the people of Fremantle, I am not in a position to say; but I trust that in this case, as in the case of the railway route, people will leave out of the question, as far as possible, all local interests, and try to do the best they can for the colony. It is a difficulty and a want that has been long felt, and it is an absolute want, this question of a safe and commodious harbor at Fremantle; and now it appears we have a chance of getting such a harbor, and at a cost that is within the reach of the colony. In paragraph 12 of His Excellency's Speech I notice that some improvements are about to be made in connection with the Perth Railway Station. This is a very great necessity, and I may say that the same necessity exists for improvements in the stations of all our country towns, where the accommodation is quite inadequate to meet the traffic, which is rapidly increasing. Allusion is also made in His Excellency's Speech to the fact that an estimate is now being prepared as to the cost of lowering the heavy grades on the Eastern Railway at York Greenmount. When that estimate is before the Government and the public, it will be for them to consider—providing the cost of improving these grades will be a very high one, which I gather from His Excellency's Speech is likely to be the case—it will be then for us to consider whether it would not be advisable to abandon the present line altogether and endeavor to find a better one; whether it would not be better to adopt some other line that would not have such heavy grades, rather than incur a large expenditure in lowering the grades on the present line. It must be admitted by everybody that the present line from Guildford very nearly to York passes

through the very worst belt of country that we have in this colony. I have frequently heard passengers travelling in the train with me remark on the poor character of the land, and they have asked, "Have you no better country than this?" I have replied that it is the very worst belt of country that we have in Western Australia—the country through which this railway runs between Guildford and York. Now, sir, that we have the Midland Railway constructed a certain distance, it would be found that it would only be a very short distance from one point of that railway to Newcastle; and now that it is decided to take the Yilgarn line from Northam—as I have no doubt it will be taken—would it not be worth while for our Eastern Railway to follow the Midland line through the fertile valley of the Avon, connecting it with the other line at Northam? With regard to the action of the Government in guaranteeing an advance of £60,000 to the Midland Railway Company, I think, though there may be a difference of opinion on the subject, the general verdict is that under the circumstances they were justified in doing so. The sudden stoppage of that important work just at this time would, I think, have been a very considerable blow to the colony, and, altogether, I think the Government did perfectly right in acting as they did. There are many other important matters alluded to in His Excellency's Speech, upon which I do not propose to make any remarks at present; it would occupy too much of the time of this House. They are all important matters which by-and-bye, during this session, will come before us in due course, and will no doubt receive a full and fair discussion. In concluding, sir, I would state that I quite agree with His Excellency the Administrator that there is a bright and prosperous future before this colony. Notwithstanding the exceptionally dry season we are experiencing, particularly at the North, and which is very unfortunate for the Northern settlers, but which is not going to last for ever; notwithstanding this dark cloud, I quite agree with His Excellency that there is a prosperous outlook in the immediate future for this colony. We have valuable mineral resources; we have goldfields

which have already proved a source of wealth, and I believe, as stated in His Excellency's Speech, we are only on the fringe of this belt of goldfield country yet, for precisely similar country as that at Yilgarn extends right across to the Murchison; and I have no doubt that, as prospecting extends, gold will be found over the whole of that area. We have also a rising revenue, and population is being attracted to our shores by our gold mines, and tin mines, and coal mines. And last, but not least, we have a Government in whom we and the people of the colony have very great confidence; and I trust, and fully believe, that the future of the colony is well assured. I shall only, in conclusion, express the hope that the only dark cloud on the horizon—the drought in the Northern portion of the colony—will soon pass away, and I join with His Excellency in the hope that our labors on behalf of the colony will be such as will redound to its progress, and to the happiness and prosperity of its people. Sir, I now beg to read the formal Address, which I move in reply to His Excellency's Speech:—

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

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

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

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

MR. COOKWORTHY: I rise, sir, to second the Address-in-Reply. It is not my intention to review the various matters referred to in His Excellency's Speech; there will be time and occasion

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."