

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,  
Wednesday, 22nd July, 1874.

Jetty at Busselton: in committee—Busselton Mechanics' Institute—Smelting Works—Railway to Eastern Districts: in committee—Responsible Government—Post Office Savings Bank Ordinance Amendment Bill: second reading: in committee—Perth City Council Bill: second reading: in committee.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 6 p.m.  
PRAYERS.

JETTY AT BUSSELTON.

Mr. CAREY, in accordance with notice, moved that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to consider his notice of motion that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates the sum of £1,000 for the extension of the jetty at Busselton.

In Committee.

Mr. STEERE moved that the motion be postponed.

Question put and passed.

BUSSELTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

Mr. CAREY, with leave, withdrew his notice of motion that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates the sum of £50 to complete a building which had been partly erected at Busselton for a mechanics' institute.

SMELTING WORKS.

Mr. LOGUE in accordance with notice, moved, that, with a view to encourage the development of the mineral wealth of the colony it is desirable to offer a bonus of £5,000 to the first person who will erect smelting works, (on a site to be reserved by the Government, contiguous to the line of railway between Geraldton and Northampton) and who shall smelt at such works, within three years from that date, 1,000 tons of metal in one year. The necessity for affording some encouragement that would tend to the erection of such works as he alluded to was manifest, when it was borne in mind that a very large proportion of the mineral ore ready for shipment in its crude state was left on hand, notwithstanding the fact that all the tonnage available for removing it had been taken advantage of, and when every vessel had loaded to its utmost capacity. This, of course, would be obviated if

smelting works were erected and in operation, and such works would, beyond doubt, prove an immense stimulus to the development of our mineral wealth, and contribute, to an appreciable extent, towards the augmentation of the revenue. A concession of land had already been made to a company conditionally upon their erecting smelting works but nothing has resulted from it, and it was believed that a bonus of the nature he proposed would result in such works being established without much delay, and would conduce not only to the prosperity of the mineral districts, but to the welfare of the whole colony by stimulating the development of our mineral industries and the consequent increase of revenue arising from the exportation of ore.

Mr. CROWTHER seconded and supported the motion.

The SPEAKER thought the erection of smelting works was a question of private enterprise rather than of public interest. The cost would not exceed £12,000, and he certainly was averse to voting £5,000 out of the public funds for such a purpose, especially believing as he did that such a speculation would prove very remunerative if carried out by private enterprise.

Mr. PADBURY agreed with the Hon. the Speaker to a great extent, and certainly would not be inclined to vote more than £1,000 as a bonus for the object in view.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) reminded the House that the select committee appointed, during the first session of 1873, to consider and advise upon the expediency of making concessions for the encouragement of new industries, has recommended that no concession should be twice made for the same object. Of the desirability of erecting smelting works in the neighborhood referred to there could be no doubt, and had there been a general expression of opinion that the motion should be affirmed he did not think the Government would have offered any objection to the bonus being granted. He might, however, state with reference to the company to whom the concession of land for the erection of smelting works had been granted, that the secretary of the company had informed the Government that although hitherto they had not been able to carry out their original intention they were fully determined to achieve success. Moreover, he was firmly of opinion, and he had strong grounds for the belief, that once it had become known out of the colony that a railway was being constructed through our mineral districts, there would be a large influx of capitalists anxious

to enter into mineral speculations; and smelting works, if deemed a remunerative investment of capital, would very soon be erected. He would suggest to the hon. member for Geraldton the desirability of the motion being withdrawn, and postponed until another session.

Mr. LOGUE, under the circumstances, made no demur, and the motion, with leave, was withdrawn.

### RAILWAY TO EASTERN DISTRICTS.

In Committee.

Mr. MONGER moved that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place on the Estimates for the ensuing year the sum of £5,000 or such lesser sum as His Excellency may deem fit, to be expended on the construction of a railway from the port to the eastern districts, terminating at York.

Debate ensued.

Progress reported.

### RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution that stood in his name:—That the time has now arrived when it would tend much to the future progress of the colony to establish here a system of Responsible Government; and that a select committee be appointed to draw up a Constitution and bring up a Bill to carry out that object; such committee to consist of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. P. Barlee), the Acting Attorney General (Hon. G. W. Leake), Mr. Logue, Mr. Birch, Mr. Burt, Mr. Dempster, and the Mover. He approached the consideration of the question imbued with a feeling of its momentous importance, and he was sure that every hon. member would feel the responsibility cast upon the Council in dealing with it. He was equally sure that one and all would give a conscientious vote with regard to the question before the House, big as it was with the fate of the colony. It was well known to many members that personally he had always been in favor of the adoption here of the system of administration known as Responsible Government, but heretofore he had never felt that the time for entering upon that form of Government had yet arrived nor that the general tenor of public opinion warranted us in taking the leap. When last year he proposed in that House a modification of the existing form of Government, so as to assimilate it to some extent with a system of more

responsibility, he did not think that at that period public opinion was ripe for a more radical change. But he was free to confess that a great change had come over that opinion since then, and he believed he might now venture to say, and without fear of contradiction, that a vast majority of the people of this colony were in accord with him in thinking that the time had arrived when it would tend much to the future progress of the colony to establish here a system of responsibility. Certainly, so far as concerned the district which he represented, there existed there an almost unanimous opinion that the period had come when the change ought to be made, and he was much strengthened in the position which he then assumed by that unanimity of feeling and general concurrence of opinion on the question before the House. There were many reasons which induced him to believe that the present was an opportune time for adopting the contemplated change. The public mind was not disturbed by any question of vital or even exciting interest upon which there was any wide divergence of opinion; while, in that House, a feeling of cordial unanimity rendered an amicable solution of the question not only possible but probable. That was one reason why he thought the present an opportune season for entering upon the change. Another reason was the fact that the affairs of the colony are at present administered by a Governor who had seen the system he (Mr. Steere) proposed to establish in operation in another colony, and had assisted in working it, and seen its advantages, so that in adopting the change we would have the advantage of his experience and knowledge of the working of the system; and he (Mr. Steere) was quite sure that if the colony entered upon a form of Responsible Government during the regime of the present Governor, His Excellency would conscientiously, and to the utmost of his power and ability, endeavor to carry out the system in a spirit of fairness. That, in his opinion, was a very strong reason why the present might be deemed an opportune time for entering upon the proposed change. He did not think it would be advisable now to take any intermediate step, or accept any modification of the existing, or of a responsible, system of Government. The change must be a radical one, and we must be prepared to adopt self-Government in its integrity. Of that he was convinced by the result of the motion he brought before the House last year. The only colony that he was aware of where an intermediate form of Government existed was in Natal, and there it was condemned as worse than useless—mischievous. He had recently read a letter in the *Times*, emanating from a

member of the Legislature of that colony, describing the system of Government in operation there as the worst possible system of Government in the world. There existed in this colony a general feeling of opinion that the form of Government at present in force here had not answered the expectation formed with regard to it, any more than it had done elsewhere where a similar system had been in operation, and he thought no other change would be acceptable but a change to a system of entire responsibility. What, then, he would be asked, were the advantages which the colony would derive from such a change? He replied, that probably the greatest advantage would be the fact that under Responsible Government we would be enabled to deal with the colony's capital, that capital being its land, which was now almost entirely locked up. Until we were in a position to do this we could never hope to offer such inducements to emigrants as were presented by colonies who had the entire control and disposal of the Crown lands in their hands. Nor until we were in a position to deal with our land as we thought fit, could we ever hope to utilise it, as it might profitably be utilised, in making concessions for carrying out public works of necessity and importance. Another advantage accruing from the adoption of a system of self-Government would be the fact that we should be able, with greater facility he believed, to contract loans for the prosecution of public works by the colony itself—and the colony, to a man, was crying out for the introduction of public works of magnitude and acknowledged utility and necessity, works which could not be initiated and carried out by means of the current revenue of the colony. He did not think he was far wrong when he said that we were not likely, under our existing form of Government, to obtain such a loan as would enable us to undertake such works as the colony demanded. He was perfectly well aware that there were people, as there always had been and always would be, opposed to the contemplated change in our form of Government, and he respected their opinion. In all communities there were people constitutionally averse to any change. When the present system of Government was adopted those people maintained it would be a change for the worse, and that it would be much better for the colony to remain as it was. Many of those who were of that opinion, then, entertained very different views now, and acknowledged that the change had wrought an improvement. In the same manner, those persons whose conservative tendencies rendered them averse to the change at present proposed, would in the course of a year or two

after that change came about, find and acknowledge that, after all, it had been a step in the right direction, and that the change had been a change for the better. One of the reasons adduced by those who were opposed to the adoption of a system of responsibility was that we have no men of ability and leisure to carry on such a system. He himself never was of that opinion, and he did think it was a libel on the intelligence of the people of this colony to urge such an argument against the assumption of Responsible Government. He thought we had many people amongst us who could and who would honestly conduct the affairs of the colony under a system of self-Government. There were no complex difficulties attached to the administration of the affairs of a country like our own, no difficulties at any rate that could not be overcome by the ability and intelligence available, especially when he bore in mind that the hon. gentleman on the opposite bench who was now conducting and had heretofore conducted the public business of the colony, would, in all probability be the very first Minister called upon to administer its affairs under the system which he advocated. No doubt the change would involve some extra expense to the colony; we could not expect to derive all the advantages he had alluded to, and which would accrue under Responsible Government, without some increased expenditure. But there was yet another reason in favor of the change and that was the possibility of the existence of so wide a divergence of opinion between the head of the Government and the Executive officials as to bring affairs to a deadlock. This was not at all an improbable contingency, in the event of the Government of the colony being administered by a Governor inexperienced in the working of representative institutions. He had now enumerated some of the reasons that induced him to advocate the change from the existing system to one of responsibility, and he asked hon. members to well weigh the matter in their minds before they recorded their vote that evening. He asked them, and he hoped they would one and all ask themselves, whether, in the event of the contemplated change being carried out, they were prepared to make some sacrifice in bringing it to a successful issue. If they could not answer the question honestly in the affirmative, he thought they should not accord their vote in favor of the motion before the House. He believed there were a great number of people in the colony by no means averse to the change provided the transition from one state to another could be staved off for another brief period and who would be quite

prepared to adopt a system of self-Government in the course of two or three years' time. Now he did not think it possible, if the House affirmed the motion this session, that the change should come about before 18 months. In the first place the assent of the Home Authorities would have to be obtained, and he believed it would be necessary for an Imperial Act to be passed by the British Parliament confirming the local enactment, as had been the case with the other colonies which had adopted the change. Therefore, at least 12 months must elapse before the new system came into operation, and possibly a longer time. Moreover, in adopting the change, we were not after all going to make such a leap in the dark as had been taken by the sister colonies, inasmuch as we had their varied experience as precedents to guide us; we could avoid the errors they committed, and adapt their Acts to the peculiar circumstances of our colony. He had always looked upon the system of Government now obtaining as a mere stepping-stone to that of responsibility; and he did not think any hon. member could have contemplated that the existing form of Government was to last for ever, but must have regarded it as an intermediate step between the old nominee system and a system of self-Government—as a school, in fact, for the training of our future legislators. He would not trespass on the patience of the House any longer, especially as he understood that it was proposed to submit an amendment, of a friendly nature, on the motion that stood in his name, and with which amendment he would be able to concur.

Mr. CROWTHER said the question before the House was the most important that had been brought forward since the foundation of the colony, and by affirming the amendment he had in his hand the House would simply be going slightly another way to attain the same end. He would therefore not reiterate the arguments adduced by the hon. member for Wellington in favor of the proposed change. It must be apparent to nearly every hon. member that the postponement of Responsible Government could not be for a longer period than one or two years, and it was also equally apparent that if the House affirmed the principle involved in the change during the present session that period must elapse before a system of responsibility came into operation here. He was free to confess that he was a fresh convert to the idea of Responsible Government, and his conversion was dated from his arrival in Perth to attend the business of the session. When he left home he was by no means inclined to advocate the change, but he was now firmly of opinion that

a system of self-Government had become essential to the future welfare and advancement of the colony; and if the amendment he had to propose was affirmed by the House,—and he had reason to believe that such would be the case—it would, to use a nautical phrase, be the act of “cutting the painter,” and the colony would either sink or swim. He, therefore, hoped every hon. member would earnestly consider the question in all its bearings before recording his vote in favor of the amendment he had to submit to the House, and which was as follows:—“That, although the representatives of the people have confidence in the integrity and ability of the present Government, they consider the time has now arrived when the change to Responsible Government might be introduced with benefit to the country; and that this House is of opinion that an Address should be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to introduce a Bill for that purpose, and to recommend Her Majesty to approve of the same.” (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BIRCH, in rising to propose an amendment, said that upon the decision of the House that evening hinged the future of Western Australia. He believed the time had not yet arrived for the colony to take that step which it had been proposed she should take. The advocates of Responsible Government had exhibited one side of the picture in a very favorable light, but there was another side which it would be his duty to exhibit to their gaze. Many reasons had been urged why the colony should adopt the change, but there were many reasons likewise why it should not adopt it. There were various interests which the change would seriously affect, none perhaps more so than—people's pockets. Our adult population last census only amounted to 8,000 or 9,000 souls, and he would ask the House how, with that handful of population, scattered over an immense area, it was proposed to carry on a system of self-Government? True, the whole population amounted to about 25,000, but the greater portion of that consisted of women and children, and surely it was not proposed that they should take any part in the administration of public affairs under a system of responsibility? Admitting that the colony possessed men of ability and leisure to conduct the Government under the proposed system, he maintained that it did not possess them in sufficient number, not exactly to form a Ministry but to constitute two Houses, which he apprehended would be necessary under a system of Responsible Government. Hon. members now complained of time wasted, when a legislative session only lasted a few

weeks; how would it be when a session extended over so many months? Then again in case of a dissolution of Parliament what would be the result? We had no distinct political parties holding diametrically opposed opinions on questions of public interest, and an appeal to the country would most probably eventuate in the very same member being returned under one Ministry as under another; and in the event of another dissolution the same result would be the case. Allusion had been made to the example afforded us by the neighboring colonies, and we were told that we might profit by their experience. Judging from the reports he had read of the proceedings in the Legislatures of some of those colonies, Responsible Government was decidedly no improvement upon our own system. What disgraceful scenes were not enacted in their legislative chambers, which had often been the arena of pugilistic encounters and of wordy conflicts equally vulgar. Were these among the advantages of Responsible Government? Were these the precedents we were recommended to follow? Then again there was the possibility of our having some unprincipled dodger at the head of the Ministry, who would sacrifice the interests of the colony to his own aggrandisement. We should not always have as Premier a man like our present Colonial Secretary, a man of honor and integrity. True the Ministers would be responsible to the people, but the people might not discover their peccadilloes until too late, and it would be poor satisfaction to dismiss them and relegate them to the obscurity of private life when they had succeeded in carrying out their own schemes of self-interest in public. Moreover, Responsible Government and increased taxation were convertible terms, and the expense of carrying on the affairs of the colony would swallow up all the revenue now devoted to public works of utility. Pensions, also, to the amount of £4,000 or £5,000 would have to be provided, as well as that portion of the Governor's salary now paid by the Imperial Government. For these and other reasons he was altogether opposed to the adoption of the proposed change, in the present condition of the colony. He was however not averse to the number of members under the existing form of Government being increased. He would abolish nominees (hear, hear, and laughter); well, he would abolish nomineeism, and would increase the number of official members, so that every department of the public service should be represented in the House. Such a plan, if carried out, would train a larger number of politicians by the time the colony was really in a position to assume the responsibilities of a system of

self-Government. As an amendment upon the amendment before the House, he would move—"That in the opinion of this Council an immediate change to the system of Responsible Government would tend to impede the progress of the colony, and that an Address should be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to take such steps as would be necessary to amend the present form of Government by increasing its powers and the number of members, so as to approximate as nearly as possible to Responsible Government without all its attendant evils."

Mr. BICKLEY believed that the form of Government most suitable to the Anglo-Saxon race was that form known as Responsible Government. That was the ideal system of the British people, and, though it had its disadvantages as well as its advantages, the inhabitants of this colony were evidently anxious to adopt it, and for that reason he was prepared to support the amendment of the hon. member for Greenough. He questioned, however, whether we had a sufficient number of men of ability and leisure disposed to take part in the administration of public affairs, and capable of successfully working a system of self-Government. He had not the slightest doubt, looking at the opposite side of the House, that every hon. member on those benches was fully imbued with the belief that he was possessed of the qualities necessary to conduct the affairs not only of a colony like this, but to administer the affairs of an empire and members formed that opinion of their abilities because they had been successful in their own private pursuits. But he would remind hon. members that the qualities necessary to make a man of business were by no means the qualifications essential in a statesman. However, as it was the evident wish of the people that a system of self-Government should be established, he would not oppose the motion, believing as he did that the present season was opportune for entering upon the change.

Mr. MARMION said it was apparent, from events passing inside and outside that Council that the time had arrived when some change in our present Constitution had become expedient. His former opinions on this question had differed somewhat from what his present views were. Other hon. members who had spoken that evening had confined their remarks to the proposed system of Government; he, for the most part, would confine himself to a review of that now in operation,—a system for which he entertained the utmost respect, believing as he did that under it the colony

had made rapid strides on the road to advancement, and that it had fulfilled the predictions of its most sanguine advocates. Having dilated at considerable length on the manifold signs of progress presented in connection with the various industries of the colony, fostered and encouraged since the introduction of the existing form of Government, and directed attention to the benefit it had conferred on the colony by the extension of the telegraph, the introduction of steam on our coast, a railway to our mines, and other adjuncts of civilization, Mr. Marmion referred to the political advancement the colony and the colonists had made under the existing system of Government. It was the development of progressive ideas, under the influence of representative institutions, that had prepared the colonists for the adoption of self-Government, which had no terrors to them now. Formerly, the colony might be compared to a weakly bantling clinging to the apron-strings of the Mother Country; but today it presented the appearance of a prosperous gentleman, with strength in his arm, joy in his heart, vigor in his step, and prospective happiness and prosperity in store—results attained, in no small measure, by the advice, assistance, and encouragement afforded by the system of Government which might now be said to be passing away. Peace be with it, he would say; he would always bear it in grateful remembrance. In this spirit, and with these sentiments, he looked upon the advent of that other form of Government which it was now proposed to adopt. He had no desire for a change, believing as he did that the colony had not a sufficient number of men of ability, with leisure, means, and inclination to devote themselves to the duties appertaining to a system of self-Government, which he, also, feared would be an expensive change. Public opinion, however, was manifestly in favor of the change, and he felt that there was no chance of diverting it from the channel in which it now flowed. Were it not so, even now he would be inclined to oppose the change at present; but he felt that opposition would be in vain, and opposition for the mere sake of opposition would be simply useless—it would be worse than a crime, a blunder. The feelings of a very large majority of the representatives of the people in that House were evidently in favor of the contemplated change; he therefore waived his own personal objections to the scheme and went hand in hand with the advocates of self-Government, believing that in doing so he was assisting to carry out the general wishes of the community.

Mr. PADBURY would support the amendment of the hon. member for Greenough,

though had he (Mr. Padbury) not been blessed with a somewhat strong nerve, the speech of the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Birch) would have frightened him. But he was one of those for whom Responsible Government never presented any terrors; and although he was free to confess that the colony had progressed, and progressed with rapid strides, under the existing form of Government, he was yet of opinion that under the system contemplated in the amendment before the House the progress of the colony would be still more marked. All he wanted in our legislators was honesty of purpose. With honest men, he cared not much what form of Government a country possessed, and it would be the people's own fault if, under a system of self-Government, the administration of the colony was not entrusted to honest men.

No other hon. member rising, the amendment of the hon. member for Greenough was put to the House; and affirmed without a division.

#### POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill was read a second time.

#### PERTH CITY COUNCIL BILL.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill was read a second time.

#### POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee.

The Bill passed through Committee without discussion.

#### PERTH CITY COUNCIL BILL.

In Committee.

Clause 1—

The ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved that the words "said Perth City" between the words "the" and "council," in the first line, be struck out; that the words "and use" be inserted between the words "remove" and "the" in the eighth

line; that the words "and to view, inspect, repair, or alter" be inserted between the words "land" and "the" in the 10th line; and that the words "said city" and the words "or the persons aforesaid" in the 10th and 11th lines be struck out.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2—

The ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved that the words "whereby such land is injuriously affected," in the third line, be struck out and the words "or proper" inserted in lieu.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—

The ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved that the words "said city," in the second line, be struck out; that the words "or owners" be inserted between the word "owner" and "of" in the third line; that the words "or a" in the third line be struck out and the words "thereof or such" inserted in lieu; that the words "in money of any such land or such part thereof," in the third and fourth lines, be struck out; and that the word "they" in the fourth line be struck out and the words "the council" inserted in lieu.

Mr. STEERE moved, as an amendment, that the Bill be reprinted.

Amendment agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

The Council adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Thursday, 23rd July, 1874.*

Responsible Government.—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act, 1872, Amendment Bill: select committee report.—Swan River Bridge Petition: select committee report: in committee.—Harbor Improvements: Message from the Governor, No. 2.—Floating Dock at Fremantle: in committee.—Responsible Government.—Floating Dock at Fremantle: in committee.—Responsible Government: Message from the Governor, No. 3.—Floating Dock at Fremantle: in committee.—Removal of Timber.—Immigration: select committee report: in committee.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 12 noon.  
PRAYERS.

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), with leave, moved that the Address to His Excellency the Governor, embodying the resolution of the Council, relative to the establishment of Responsible Government, be presented by the Speaker and other members of the House.

Question put and passed.

## WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT, 1872, AMENDMENT BILL.

Select Committee Report.

Mr. MARMION brought up the report of the select committee appointed to consider the Bill and moved that the same be read.

Question put and passed.

Report read, and ordered to be printed.

## SWAN RIVER BRIDGE PETITION.

Select Committee Report: In Committee.

A short conversation ensued, resulting in the House agreeing to further consider the motion when the Estimates were under discussion.

## HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS.

Message from the Governor—No. 2.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Governor concurs in the opinion embodied in the Report of Your Select Committee on the Harbor Works question, and adopted by Your Honorable Council, that "no work should be commenced until a competent engineer has given an opinion by a personal inspection of the site for a proposed breakwater;" and bearing in mind your further recommendation, in reference to Your Committee's plan, that you "would not advise its being carried out in detail till further information is obtained," he also concurs with you in thinking that "should it be impossible to secure the services of an engineer from Victoria, that then, without further delay, a commencement should be made in accordance with such detailed plan as may approve itself to Government;" and he observes that a subsequent resolution specifies four months as the term which suggests itself to your Council. This recommendation will fall in with the course