

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 15th July, 1878.

Responsible Government: Resolutions relative to—
Clearance of Strangers' Galleries—Salaries of
Officers of Postal and Telegraph Department—
Salaries of Clerks to Magistrates (Guildford and
York), and of Clerk in Public Works Office—Game
Act, 1874, Amendment Bill, 1878—Improvement of
Navigation of River below Fremantle Bridge—
Public Park, Fremantle—Salaries of Clerks to
Magistrates—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT—RESOLUTIONS RELATIVE TO.

MR. S. H. PARKER, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolutions:—

"1. That the members of this Council have carefully considered the Despatches and correspondence that passed between the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies and His Excellency Governor Robinson, relative to the proposed inauguration of a system of Responsible Government in this Colony.

"2. Nearly three and a-half years have now elapsed since the Council, after carefully considering the matter in all its bearings, and after an exhaustive debate, by an overwhelming majority adopted a series of resolutions fully and emphatically setting forth their views on the question of the proposed change of constitution, and urging Her Majesty's Government to assent to their wishes.

"3. In his Despatch of the 5th August, 1875, acknowledging the receipt of these Resolutions, Lord Carnarvon stated that he regretted he had been unable to arrive at the conclusion that the circumstances of the Colony were then such as would justify His Lordship in recommending that the Governor should be authorised to take the necessary measures for carrying out the desired reform; and, solely in deference to His Lordship's opinion, the Council have, up to this time, refrained from further agitation in the matter.

"4. The Council, however, after this lapse of time, and after again calmly and dispassionately considering the whole question, and the objections raised by the Secretary of State and His

Excellency Sir William Robinson to the proposed change, feel that they would be wanting in their duty to the country, and unworthy of the trust reposed in them, were they to allow another Session to go by without declaring their adherence to the Resolutions of the 25th January, 1875, and the views therein expressed.

"5. The Council also are aware that the feeling in favor of Responsible Government has during the past four years gained very considerably in strength throughout the entire length and breadth of the Colony, and that the minority have dwindled to those persons opposed to change of any kind.

"6. Believing, as they do, that delay in the inauguration of Self-Government is 'simply delay in the progress of the Colony,' the Council would respectfully urge upon Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies the desirability of instituting a system of Responsible Government in this Colony, at the earliest possible period."

MR. PARKER said it had been his intention,—after the result of the division on his motion for leave to introduce the Bill—to have abandoned these resolutions; but in compliance with the wish of the hon. member for Geraldton, who had framed certain amendments based upon the resolutions, he had consented to move them this evening, in order to afford an opportunity to the hon. member for Geraldton to bring forward his amendments. The Attorney General, the other evening, had accused him of putting the cart before the horse, in moving for leave to introduce the Bill to establish a Constitution before resolutions affirming the expediency and the necessity for a change had been adopted by the House; and the hon. gentleman had also twitted him with want of discretion in the selection of the horse he had thought proper to enter for this race—alluding probably to his (Mr. Parker's) well-known predilection for the turf. But, keeping up the metaphor, he might reply that in his opinion he had selected the stronger horse to do the running, but unfortunately the stewards—or, rather, the House—would not allow that horse to run, believing probably that it would carry all before it. He had therefore been compelled to

bring forward the feebler horse, and it was no fault of his if the popular colors of the Reform stable did not show in front. The first of the series of resolutions which he had submitted for the affirmation of the House, was a very simple one, and merely affirmed that the Council had carefully considered the despatches and correspondence that had passed between the Secretary of State and Governor Robinson, relative to the proposed inauguration of a system of Responsible Government in this Colony. The second resolution merely embodied a statement of facts, namely, that a period of three and a-half years had elapsed since the Council, after an exhaustive debate and by an overwhelming majority, had adopted a series of resolutions urging Her Majesty's Government to assent to their wishes in this respect. The Secretary of State, however, did not think that the circumstances of the Colony were then such as would justify the change, and the next of the resolutions now before the House affirmed that it was solely in deference to His Lordship's opinion that the Council had, up to this time, refrained from further agitation in the matter. He could not help thinking, however, that those who voted for the hon. member for Wellington's resolutions in 1875, and who had previously voted for the second reading of the Constitution Bill (in 1874), were bound to have revived the question in 1876,—if they were really in earnest—seeing that the resolutions had not had the desired effect in inducing Her Majesty's Government to accede to the wishes of the colonists. It certainly appeared to him that to allow another Session to pass without re-affirming the desirability of a change in the constitution was to treat the whole question as one of no consequence, and of no public interest or importance. A great deal was said in the course of the debate on Friday evening with regard to the question of inconsistency,—although he had never alluded to the word throughout his speech on that occasion. He had no objection to, nor did he blame any man for changing his opinion, if he did so honestly; but he could not help thinking that, if a member was elected on the distinct understanding that he should support a certain policy, he was bound to give that policy

his support, or to resign his seat. He did not consider, like the hon. member Mr. Burt, that a man was fully justified in renouncing his pledges to his constituents, whenever he thought the circumstances of the country warranted it. If that was to be the morality of that honorable House, all he could say was—constituencies would be poorly represented in it, indeed. The hon. member for Toodyay, the other evening, had charged him (Mr. Parker) with inconsistency on this very question. He admitted that when contesting the Pinjarrah election in 1874, he had incidentally, in the course of his address to the electors, spoken strongly against the introduction of Responsible Government; but that question was not then before the country, nor did the election in any way turn upon it. At that time, he was free to confess, he had not given the subject that careful consideration to which it was entitled; but had he been returned on that occasion, he would have felt bound, in pursuance of his pledge to the electors, to have voted against Responsible Government, or resign. Some few months afterwards, the question did come before the country, after it had been thoroughly discussed in the Council, on the eve of a dissolution. On that occasion, he contested the representation of Perth and came forward as a strong advocate for constitutional reform, and ever since his conduct with reference to the question had been thoroughly consistent. He did not pretend to say that Responsible Government was a perfect form of Government, or that it would prove a panacea for all evils. Nothing of the kind. He was aware it had many imperfections, but the question for consideration was whether, compared with the present form of Government, it was not the lesser of two evils? He firmly believed that it was. In the amendments of which the hon. member for Geraldton had given notice, it was admitted that the present constitution had worked prejudicially to the interests of the Colony, consequent upon the privileges which it was intended to confer being practically nullified by reason of Her Majesty's Government insisting upon reviewing and deciding the details of every important measure passed by that House. In the course of the debate on Friday evening, the hon. member for

Fremantle said he was astonished that, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill to establish a constitution, he (Mr. Parker) had not come forward with any arguments in support of the motion? Had the occasion been the proper one to do so,—which it was not—he would have been quite prepared to furnish reasons in favor of the proposed change. No stronger reasons, in fact, could be adduced than those which were set forth in the resolutions affirmed by that House, in 1875, and which the hon. member himself had subscribed to. Among those resolutions he found the following:—“Standing alone, as this Colony does, “among the Australian group, as the “only Colony not possessing Responsible “Government, its inhabitants are looked “down upon as unfit to be trusted with “those privileges which have been elsewhere accorded to their fellow-countrymen; and the consequent result is, “that the working classes of the Eastern “Colonies, no matter what inducements “may here offer, will not settle in Western Australia and lose those privileges “which they prize and must in such case “give up. No matter what public works “may be undertaken, or what terms may “be offered, it is found impracticable to “induce laborers in any number to come “to Western Australia, even temporarily, “and the few who have been induced to “come have left, satisfied with their prospects in regard to work and remuneration, but dissatisfied with the absence “of those institutions to which they have “been elsewhere accustomed.” Could a stronger argument than that, and others embodied in the resolutions referred to—and to which he had directed the attention of the House on Friday evening—be wanted in support of the proposed change? Had the circumstances of the Colony altered since then? Had the present constitution worked so well during the past three years that it could be fairly stated that the proposed change was now premature? On the contrary, was it not admitted by all hands that since the passing of those resolutions, the constitution had worked worse than ever? In 1874, when the Constitution Bill was first introduced, the Colony was then administered by a Governor (Mr. Weld) who had worked the present constitution to its utmost

advantage, and who was also a statesman of most progressive views; and in the then Colonial Secretary (Mr. Barlee) they had a most able man. And if ever the existing constitution worked well it was when those two gentlemen governed the Colony. When Governor Weld was promoted to Tasmania, the administration of this Colony was assumed by Governor Robinson, and he did not think he was saying anything derogatory to that gentleman—he certainly in no way wished to cast any reflections upon him—when he stated that Governor Robinson’s political views were not so advanced as those of his predecessor. It had always appeared to him that Governor Robinson’s only mistake was, that his whole and sole object in life was to serve the Imperial Government rather than the Colony whose affairs he was called upon to administer. For that reason, he was most conservative in all his actions as regarded the introduction of any progressive measures calculated to promote the interests of this country, unless he were satisfied they were such as would commend themselves to the undoubted approval of the Secretary of State. For that reason, little or no progress was made by the Colony during his administration, as regards the introduction of public works of national importance and necessity. As an instance of the conservative instincts of Governor Robinson, and of the non-progressive policy of his administration, he need only refer to the Fremantle and Guildford Railway, a project which came before His Excellency’s Government soon after his arrival in the Colony, but which, practically speaking, did not advance one iota during His Excellency’s administration. His Excellency did not care to take upon himself the responsibility, and, on the other hand, the Home Government, no doubt, did not care to give him any great length of tether. When hon. members bore in mind that this very project had been before the public and under the consideration of the Imperial authorities for a period of over three years, and that we had not yet passed a Bill for its construction, would it be said, could it be said, that the present constitution was one calculated to advance the prosperity of the Colony, by the introduction of public works of admitted

necessity? The fourth of the series of resolutions which he had submitted for the affirmation of the House was certainly couched in very mild language. It affirmed that hon. members after a lapse of three years, and after again calmly and dispassionately considering the whole question, felt that they would be wanting in their duty to the country, and unworthy of the trust reposed in them, were they to allow another Session to go by without declaring their adherence to the resolutions passed in 1875, and the views expressed therein. Hon. members who affirmed those resolutions, could not consistently object to the adoption of the resolutions now before the House. In submitting them for the approval of the Council, and in his actions generally with reference to the question of constitutional reform, he would like to say that he had no intention whatever of casting any reflections upon the present Administration. On the contrary, he sincerely believed that His Excellency and the members of his Executive were animated by an earnest desire to promote and advance the best interests of the Colony. He believed that in our present Governor we had a man perhaps of more liberal and independent views than any Governor we were likely to get for some years hence. But hon. members must bear in mind that we could not depend upon His Excellency remaining here. He might be removed at any time, and the only thing that surprised him (Mr. Parker) was that Governor Ord should have come here at all. We might next have a Governor who would decline to take any responsibility whatever upon himself, and the Colony would then be in the same position as regards delays in the undertaking and carrying out of public works as it had already experienced with regard to the proposed railway from Fremantle to Guildford. With respect to the fifth resolution which he had submitted for the affirmation of the House,—that the feeling in favor of Responsible Government had during the past four years gained very considerably in strength throughout the length and breadth of the Colony, no one would venture to controvert that statement. It was even admitted in the amendments about to be proposed by the hon. mem-

ber for Geraldton. And if the feeling in favor of a change had thus gained in intensity, who, pray, were responsible for it? Were not those hon. members who voted for the resolutions of 1875, in a great measure responsible for it? If the men chosen by the constituencies as their representatives in that House deliberately and strenuously advocated the necessity of a change, was it a source of wonder that the less well-informed members of the community adopted the views of their representatives? If hon. members had changed their views on this question—if any member had changed his views, and now thought the present form of Government was all-sufficient for our requirements, and that a change was now premature, he (Mr. Parker) could not help saying that that member—that those members—were responsible for leading what he might call these unhappy people astray. The sixth and last resolution was in a great measure a literal transcript of one of the resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority of the House in 1875, and in adopting which it was affirmed—what must be the honest conviction of every colonist—that delay in the inauguration of self-government was “simply delay in the progress of the Colony.” If any hon. member of that House was of a different opinion,—if those hon. gentlemen who entertained that opinion four years ago, had changed their views as to the expediency of adopting that form of Government which in 1875 they regarded as absolutely essential to the progress of the Colony, it was due to their constituents, it was due to the country, that they should now come forward and fully explain the reasons which had led them to change their opinion, or otherwise to support the resolutions now before the House.

MR. MAITLAND BROWN: Sir,—I rise, I may say with a great deal of trepidation, to deal with this subject, in consequence of the magnitude of the interests it involves to the Colony, and, not only in consequence of that, but also in consequence of the very admirable manner in which the hon. member for Perth has dealt with the subject, from his point of view. I may state that, in my opinion, the hon. member has put forward the strongest possible case which could be put forward in favor of Responsible

Government, and the strongest possible reasons why those members who voted for the resolutions adopted by this House in 1874 and 1875 should again vote with him to-night. The hon. member has made out a most plausible case indeed. Sir, in dealing with this subject I think it is my duty—as I conceive it to be the duty of every other member of this House—to give, in general terms at any rate, the reasons which actuate us in adopting the course which we propose to pursue in this matter, and in doing so I may have to speak somewhat at length, for I conceive that on an occasion like this, when dealing with a question of vital and national importance, I do not address myself to the hon. members of this House alone, but—as all of us trust, with the aid of the reporters—to the country at large. In dealing with the subject of Responsible Government, it will be necessary I think to take a retrospective view of the history of the Colony, as well as a comprehensive view of the circumstances which should form an element of this debate in arriving at a just conclusion as to the question at issue. In order to enable me to deal with the subject retrospectively, and more exhaustively than I otherwise could have done, I have adopted a course which is very unusual with me, of making somewhat copious notes, in order that my address this evening may, as I trust, be more concise than it is on general occasions. Sir, I will first of all draw the attention of the House to the form of Government which obtained in this Colony prior to 1870, when the present constitution was adopted. Under the form of Government referred to, the Legislative Council consisted solely of members who were the nominees of the Imperial Government, so that it may fairly be said the people of this Colony were in no way represented in that Council, and that the Imperial Government took upon its own shoulders the sole responsibility of governing Western Australia in those days. Inasmuch as the Imperial Government had the whole voice in the management of the country, they were of course solely responsible for the measures which were adopted by its nominated Legislature. Under these circumstances, it was clearly the duty of the Imperial Government to exercise a zeal-

ous supervision and jurisdiction not only with regard to the principles of legislative measures but also as to the details of those measures. And they faithfully performed their duty in this respect. Time wore on, and the people of the Colony found that it would be desirable for them to have at least a considerable voice in the legislation of their country. They therefore craved that privilege, and it was accorded them, by the introduction of the constitution under which hon. members now hold their seats. When the privilege of holding two-thirds of the seats, and of having a corresponding voice in the work of legislation, was extended to the representatives of the people of this Colony, I assume that two-thirds of the responsibility of the Government of the Colony was imposed upon us, and that to that extent the Imperial Government was absolved from its former responsibility. Such having been the case, I maintain it was the duty of the Imperial Government to relax to a corresponding extent that amount of vigilant supervision over the proceedings of the Government of this Colony which it was justified in exercising under a purely nominee constitution. If, however, the Imperial Government do not relax any of that right of supervision, but still require to review the details of every important measure adopted by the local Legislature, I say that, practically, the powers and privileges which this constitution was intended to confer are nullified. No one I think can gainsay that. How did this constitution work during the first few years after it was introduced? Under what I may term the Weld-Barlee administration, I have always asserted that it worked admirably: it was found to be exceedingly well suited to the circumstances of the country. We find that, under it, every measure of progress with regard to which the people of the Colony were agreed upon as necessary to the material welfare of the country was granted to the Colony, and not only granted to it, but adopted and put in force with promptitude. That is a mere general statement of the effects of the working of the constitution under the *régime* of Mr. Weld; but I have before me a list of some important measures to which I propose to allude, in proof that pro-

gressive measures were adopted under the existing constitution, during the first four or five years following its introduction, and under what I have already referred to as the Weld-Barlee administration. These measures are as follows: (1) the liberalisation of our land laws; (2) the extension of telegraph communication throughout the Colony—true the electric telegraph had been previously introduced, but a very feeble commencement only had been made; (3) the opening of telegraphic communication with South Australia and, by means of South Australia, with the whole civilised world; (4) the development of the timber trade—hon. members will bear in mind that very large concessions of land, not, properly speaking, under the control of this House, were made by the Weld Government, and were necessary to be made if the timber trade was to spring quickly into reality: it has done so, and the Colony I am happy to say is now coming into note as an important timber-producing country, solely in consequence of the measures adopted by the Administration whose proceedings I am at present reviewing; (5) the establishment of steam communication on our coast, of the advantages of which we are all practically cognisant; (6) the provision made for the construction of the Geraldton and Northampton Railway, and the actual commencement of the work. Sir, the benefits of these measures have already been sensibly felt, and we may fairly look forward to their bearing good fruit in the future. These are some of the measures which I think may be fairly characterised as progressive, and which were initiated during the first few years of the present constitution. Sir, at this juncture, in 1874, a very strong effort was made by the representative members of this House, supported, if not instigated, by the Executive members, to do away with that constitution, which had up to that time served this country so well, and to substitute in its place a system of Responsible Government. A Bill for that purpose was passed by this House—passed, I think, with only one dissentient voice—that of the then member for Perth (the late Mr. Birch). The action taken by the Legislature on that occasion came, I may say, like a thunder-clap upon the Colony.

[The Attorney General: The hon. member is in error, the Bill did not pass through all its stages; it did not go beyond its second reading.] At any rate, the fact remains that the House affirmed the principle of the Bill, and it passed its second reading, I may almost say unanimously, strongly supported as it was by the Administration of the day. Following what I believe to be constitutional precedent, the Governor (Mr. Weld) thereupon dissolved the Council, in order to afford the country an opportunity of expressing its views with regard to the contemplated change in the constitution, and with regard to other matters of less vital importance. That change which the members of this Council, in 1874, pledged themselves to advocate and support, was a movement which in 1875 I declared in this House as one in no way warranted by the then circumstances of the Colony, nor by any failure in securing, under the present constitution, the sanction of the Imperial Government to any measure of progress with regard to which this Council and the Local Government were in accord in believing that it was a measure calculated to promote the welfare and advancement of the Colony. On the occasion I allude to I challenged the members of this House to deny the assertion I then made—and which I repeat to-night—and they were unable to do so. I asked then, as I ask now, what is the nature of the change we were asked to ratify? A change which would have had the effect of taking away from those who had beneficially exercised the supreme power under the existing constitution, and have placed it on the shoulders of those who had proved themselves to be rather a drag than otherwise upon the constituted authorities in the way of their carrying out their progressive measures. I say that the Weld administration actually led the people of this Colony forward in adopting measures of progress, and an immense deal of credit is due to them for it. Had the contrary been the case—had we found the people of the Colony through their representatives in this House actively moving in the van of progress, and the Government of the day seeking to thwart their aspirations, and to retard the advancement of the country—there would have been good

grounds indeed for demanding that the supreme power should be taken away from an anti-progressive Administration and placed in the hands of the people, by entrusting to them the rights of self-government. A great deal of capital has been made by the hon. member for Perth to-night—and, perhaps, properly so: I do not blame him for it—out of the fact that certain hon. members who voted in favor of the Previous Question on Friday night had previously given their adherence to the now memorable resolutions, introduced by the hon. member for Wellington in 1875, in favor of Responsible Government; and the hon. gentleman argues that those who voted for those resolutions then are bound to-night to vote for the resolutions which he has brought forward. I think, Sir, it is our duty to consider under what circumstances hon. members voted for those particular resolutions. I have already called the attention of the House to the fact that a Bill, somewhat suddenly introduced, for the adoption of Responsible Government passed its second reading without the country having been appealed to in any way on the subject. In fact, the majority of hon. members were then pledged against the introduction of self-government. But what were the circumstances in which they found themselves placed, in the Session referred to? They found that the members of the then Executive Government, and the hon. member for Wellington—the acknowledged leader of the elected party, and who had ever shown himself to be the leading spirit in the cause of Responsible Government—were quite in accord as to the desirability of the immediate introduction of that form of Government. And seeing that they had such men as those to whom I have referred strongly favoring the introduction of a change, and having every faith—as I would have had, myself,—in the ability of those gentlemen to carry on the Government of the Colony under a system of ministerial responsibility, I do not wonder at the course adopted, under the circumstances, by those hon. members who supported the Bill introduced to establish a new constitution. Next year, the advocates of change came forward with a series of resolutions, and hon. members were led to believe by

those who were in a position to be far better able to judge than themselves, that the cost of adopting the proposed change would have been a mere nothing compared with what subsequent events have shown it would have been. With reference to the Imperial grant towards maintenance of the magistracy and the police, were hon. members not told that a commission had been appointed to decide as to what would be a fair and reasonable concession on the part of the Imperial Government, and that the commission had fully dealt with the subject, and made a proposition to the Home Authorities which would be extremely advantageous to this Colony? Were they not told and justified in believing, that this proposition had been, practically, assented to? I say they were; and I say that every hon. member who voted for the resolutions of the hon. member for Wellington voted in the firm belief that this was the case—a belief which has proved to have been altogether fallacious. Another important element in the consideration of the question was the transfer of the Convict Establishment, with reference to which were not hon. members told that the commission had also reported in terms favorable to the Colony, and were led to believe that the question of transfer had been practically settled, once and for all, to the advantage of this country? Sir, what has become of this arrangement? We find at the present day that the recommendations of the commission were set aside altogether, and that the transfer of the Convict Establishment is offered to us on terms which all agree it would be ruinous to the country to accept. Then, Sir, I ask, did not those hon. members who voted in favor of the proposed change vote under an erroneous impression altogether? And such being the case, I further ask is it not their duty now to re-consider the course of action they should adopt in dealing with this subject? Those who, on that occasion, advocated the introduction of Responsible Government, one and all pooh-poohed the idea that the cost would be anything excessive. Even the hon. member for Wellington, whom I have referred to as the leading spirit on the occasion—and who everyone will admit was indeed a strong antagonist, and a worthy antagonist, of those who

disapproved of the contemplated change—even he repeatedly said in this House he would not think of voting for it “at any cost.” And I have no hesitation in saying that had he then foreseen that the cost of it would have been so great as it is now made clear it would be, he would have said, “Under these circumstances we will not, we cannot, have it, because indeed we cannot afford it.” Every hon. member who advocated the change did so under the same impression. One hon. gentleman who voted for it said to me in the street on the very day these resolutions were brought forward, “Look here, Brown, if I thought Responsible Government was going to cost the Colony £1,000 a year more than the present form costs, I would vote against it”—so well indeed had they been schooled to believe it would not. Sir, I have said that prior to 1875 this constitution proved admirably suited to the circumstances of the Colony, and it becomes our duty now to ask whether the interests of the Colony have, or have not, been well served since that time. It is a very serious question, and one which should be dealt with in serious earnest. I say unhesitatingly and unflinchingly that the interests of the Colony have not only been not well served during the period between 1875 and the present Session—they have been vexatiously retarded. Let us enquire what has been the cause of this: is it attributable to any inherent defects in the constitution itself, or is it fairly attributable to those who worked it? I say it again, and I say it unhesitatingly, that the cause of it has been those who worked the constitution, and not the constitution itself. I would ask, how otherwise do we account for the wonderful progress made under it during the four years prior to 1875? Will any one be inclined to controvert the assertion I have made, namely, that the Colony did make unprecedented progress during that period? And that not one single progressive measure, of national importance, remained to which people could point as an indication that Her Majesty’s Government were not prepared to make to us such concessions as were essential to the welfare and advancement of the Colony? In case any one should be inclined to do so, I would like to read an extract from an address passed by

this House and presented to Governor Weld on the occasion of his leaving the Colony. It was in these terms—that the Council had much pleasure in testifying to the fact that during His Excellency’s administration the progress of the Colony had been unprecedented. That, taken in connection with the works I have already enumerated, proves, I think, what I have asserted—that the constitution up to that time had shown itself to be admirably suited to the requirements of the Colony, and that, so far as the constitution itself was concerned, there was no reason why it should not have subsequently proved itself equally adaptable. Setting aside the initiatory steps taken this Session in the way of progressive measures, I would like to ask what measures of importance were introduced and adopted since 1875? I unhesitatingly say, none! And that is an answer not only discouraging but humiliating to those who, in 1875, reposed every confidence in the present constitution, expressed that confidence, and fought for it with an allegiance which has been unworthily rewarded. But, sir, it was not the fault of the constitution. And it is not to-day I have for the first time expressed that view, and affirmed that conclusion. If hon. members will look over *Hansard* they will ascertain that last Session when the Order of the Day for the consideration of the Estimates in Committee was moved, I brought forward an amendment to the effect that this House would resolve itself into that Committee when the Government were prepared to authorise the commencement of the railway to connect the Eastern districts with Fremantle. I then referred to the grievous delay which had occurred in commencing that work, and to the whole history of it, and I stated that my object in moving that amendment was to use the only power we possessed to push forward that undertaking—the power of the purse. I pledged myself that if the result was unsatisfactory, and that if this House should not be called together at an early date to adopt measures for carrying out this work, I would join with the advocates of constitutional change in endeavoring to force it upon the Government—if I may use the term. I was then only supported by the hon. member

for the Williams and the Murray, and I never was so proud of that hon. gentleman as on that occasion. And why was it I was only supported by him? Because other hon. members had faith in the assurances of the Government that we should be called at an early period to consider the measures necessary to carry out that railway. Month after month have passed away since then, and justified the want of faith which I then expressed, and which was engendered by the action of the Government—I do not say the Local Government, but between them and the Imperial Government. Sir, I came down to this Council, I may say, a disappointed man—disappointed at finding what I may term no proof whatever of sympathy on the part of the Imperial Government with the aspirations and desires of the people of this Colony. I came down to find that our views, and our wishes were, practically, ignored. It was exceedingly disappointing to me, when the despatches of the Secretary of State were presented to this House, to find that the whole question of railway communication between Fremantle and Guildford had been settled in a manner which showed that the wishes of this country had been ignored. Sir, I came down with a firm resolve to advocate the adoption of Responsible Government on two conditions. If, on the one hand, I found that this work was refused to us—a result which, in the face of the telegram received by His Excellency from the Secretary of State could hardly have been anticipated, but which was nevertheless within the range of possibility—or that it would be unduly delayed, I was prepared to support the movement in favor of a change in the constitution; if, also, I found that in this House there were to be found the necessary constituent elements out of which a Ministry commanding the confidence of the country could be formed; then would I have been prepared to join in the cry for a reform of the constitution. But the first condition was that relating to the railway. Well, Sir, we have received the assent of the Imperial Government to undertake that work, and that, too, without undue delay; therefore one of the conditions upon which I came down to this Council resolved to advocate a

change in the form of Government has been removed. Let me next deal with the other condition. All right-minded persons, who are animated by a spirit of loyalty and patriotism, are, generally speaking, prepared to sacrifice personal considerations in view of the public good, and I will say that the members of this House have made large sacrifices in giving up their time, their attention, and their purse, to the work of legislation, in the hope that they may prove of some benefit to the country. But, Sir, all private persons have private duties claiming their attention, some of which are of paramount consideration, so that there is a limit to which a man may sacrifice his private interests to the public good. And I found it was impossible among the members of this House to form a Ministry of the character to which I have alluded. I could find no hon. member who was prepared to undergo that amount of personal sacrifice which the acceptance of a ministerial office would entail—unless indeed it were the official members, of whose views I know nothing. But possibly it may be contended that although there were no members in the House who were prepared to make this sacrifice, there are those outside who would be ready to do so, and who would be perfectly qualified to accept office as ministers and to conduct the Government of the country. I know that a section of the Press declares that we only require the introduction of Responsible Government to cause such men to spring into existence, as if by magic. But I would ask hon. members, where are these philanthropic and patriotic individuals now? What have they been doing, whilst the present members of this House have been dragging the Colony into a slough of despond? Why have they remained content to live in modest retirement while the best interests of the country are being sacrificed by a set of imbeciles, such as a section of the Press delights to present the unfortunate members of this House to the public gaze? Surely these noble and disinterested patriots of whom we hear so much must after all be a myth, otherwise they would come forward to save this unhappy country from impending ruin. Sir, if such men really exist amongst us, depend upon it if they come forward at all to

take an active part in public affairs it will be for the sake of the loaves and fishes—for the sake of self-aggrandisement—for the sake of the social status which they think it would give them, or from pecuniary considerations. Such men when once they got into power would take good care, if I may use so homely an expression, to feather their own nests, while at the same time the country would be asked to regard them in the light of pure and disinterested patriots. Sir, I have already shown the reasons which induced hon. members in 1874 and 1875 to support the proposal for a change in the constitution, and I will now proceed to show to the House some of the sacrifices which that change, if adopted, would entail upon this country. Let hon. members look at the despatches which have passed between the local Government and the Secretary of State relating to Imperial expenditure in this Colony, with regard to the grant in aid of magistrates and the police. What do we find there? In a letter addressed from the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to Lord Carnarvon, dated 6th April, 1877, I find the following paragraph: "I am to request you to bring before Lord Carnarvon the letter from this department of 21st December, 1864, stating that in view of the growing prosperity of the Colony, the then Board of Treasury had intended to propose a reduction of the police grant from a proportion of two-thirds to one-half, but that as transportation was to cease in 1876, their lordships would postpone making any such proposal until that time, when it would be necessary to reconsider the division of charges between convict and colonial funds. It is indisputable that the Colony has been receiving a good deal more than its due, under this head, ever since transportation ceased, and my lords have only to consider on what scale the grant-in-aid should be now reduced and ultimately extinguished. Governor Robinson proposes a scale upon which the grant will continue at £15,000 for 1877-8, and thereafter sink by slow degrees until 1893, with which year it will wholly expire. On the other hand Assistant Commissary General Thompson recommends an immediate drop of the grant to £10,000,

"and a future annual reduction of £1,000, so that it would be extinct by the end of 1886-7. My lords wish to adopt a scale which will be liberal to the Colony, and will not insist on any large immediate reduction. But they request that the following scale may be accepted finally, as representing the utmost amount which they will feel justified in asking Parliament to contribute for magistrates and police in Western Australia, viz.:—

For 1877-78	...	£14,000
1878-79	...	13,000
1879-80	...	12,000
1880-81	...	11,000
1881-82	...	10,000
1882-83	...	9,000
1883-84	...	8,000
1884-85	...	6,000
1885-86	...	4,000
1886-87	...	2,000
1887-88	...	Nil.

In the same despatch we find the following concluding paragraph, which I commend to the serious attention of the advocates of constitutional change: "My Lords have only to add, with regard to both these grants-in-aid—for magistrates and police, and chaplains—that payment of them will depend, absolutely, upon the Colony not being given Representative or Responsible Government. If such a form of Government be insisted upon, all payments cease." It will thus be seen that were the Colony to enter upon a change of Government now, it would have to sacrifice, in this item of Imperial expenditure alone, a sum of £89,000. In addition to this we should have to make provision to certain officers for loss of office, which at the lowest computation may be estimated at £13,000, (calculated at the same rate as was accepted by this House, when the Constitution Bill of 1874 was read a second time). Here, then, we have a sum of £103,003 as a portion of the price to be paid for the proposed change. Is it worth it? Nor is that all, for, in addition, we must bear in mind the Imperial expenditure on account of the convict department and also the military, which may be estimated at £40,000 more. All this expenditure, it may be fairly concluded, would be withdrawn on the assumption by this Colony of the rights and pri-

vileges of self-government. Sir, I need not enter upon the various other arguments which may be adduced in opposition to the introduction of the proposed change, in the present state of the country, but I may be permitted to read one or two of the counter resolutions which I brought forward in opposition to those of the hon. member for Wellington in 1875, and which I think fairly set forth the difficulties in the way of Western Australia entering as yet upon Responsible Government. One of these resolutions was as follows: "The population of this Colony is distributed in 'isolated groups from Eucla on the 'South coast to the DeGrey River on 'the North, a distance by the sea board 'of some 2,500 miles, and the means of 'communication between the various 'centres of population and the seat of 'Government are infrequent, expensive, 'and, in many instances, irregular; and 'it is notorious that, unlike its sister 'Colonies, Western Australia possesses 'but few men of sufficiently independent means to enable them to devote 'their thoughts and personal attention 'to Legislative duties—a fact which has 'been clearly demonstrated by the difficulty experienced in obtaining representatives even under the existing 'constitution." In another resolution I affirmed—and who will gainsay it?—that at that time, at any rate, the question of a change to Responsible Government was not before the electors of the Colony for a sufficient period prior to the elections to enable them to judge fairly of its merits or demerits. I do not mean to say that such a condition of things may never exist as would necessarily force the country to adopt self-government as the lesser of two evils. I do say, and I say it earnestly, if our desires and aspirations are to be ignored by the Imperial Government as they have been from 1875 up to the present, no community of Englishmen could brook such treatment much longer. At any rate, I myself should be sorely tempted to take that leap which I fear too many are now ready to take in the dark. But what do we find the condition of affairs during the present Session? We find that this House, through the instrumentality of His Excellency the Governor, has been able

to carry through some highly important measures, involving a contemplated expenditure of £200,000 for investment on public works, and I believe His Excellency is in a position, and prepared, to give effect to the wishes of the country in this matter. But should the Colony determine upon taking on its own shoulders the responsibility of self-government, is it to be imagined for a moment that Her Majesty's Government will allow us to proceed with these works when such a change in the constitution is contemplated? I think it is uncommonly likely it would refuse, and, in my opinion, very properly refuse, to identify itself in any way with this loan and with the works upon which it is proposed to expend it. On the other hand, if no radical constitutional change takes place, it is not unlikely—I think there is every reason to suppose—that His Excellency the Governor will himself assent to this Bill. Sir, although in common with the rest of the community I feel exceedingly dissatisfied with the treatment which this country has during the past few years received from the Imperial Government, I have been exceedingly pleased and satisfied with the proof which His Excellency the Governor has given us that he himself does not regard this House as a legislature in name only—an institution ethereal as the shadow of a shade, but on the contrary a substantial reality, and as such possessed of substantial rights, and entitled to honorable consideration. The course of action which His Excellency adopted with regard to the proposed railway must convince this House that in Governor Ord at any rate we have an administrator who is prepared to recognise the rights and privileges of this Council, and one who will hold the balances evenly between the Imperial Government on the one hand, and the Colony whose affairs he has been called upon to administer, on the other. Is it not possible that under these circumstances we may, not unreasonably, expect a modification of the relations which for some years past have existed between the Imperial authorities and the local legislature, and that Her Majesty's Government may be induced to relax that course of absolute control which it has exercised of late years in reviewing every important measure adopted by the Colony?

Should that be the case, I feel, myself, that with an administrator such as Governor Ord has already shown himself to be, we shall find it vastly more to our benefit to remain under the present constitution than to adopt that of Responsible Government. If, however, it is found that the Home Government is not prepared in any way to relax this supervision over the legislative measures of the Colony, I do think it will be our duty to the country to re-consider the whole subject, and do our best to ascertain if we cannot in some way or other take the entire management of our affairs upon our own shoulders. Sir, I now formally move the following amendments upon the resolutions before the House, and in doing so I beg to thank the hon. member for Perth for his courtesy in not, at this stage, carrying out his expressed intention of abandoning the resolutions upon which these amendments are based :

"1. That the members of this Council having been called upon to declare their adherence to the resolutions adopted by the Legislature on the 25th January, 1875, urging upon Her Majesty's Government the desirability of the immediate inauguration of a system of Responsible Government for Western Australia, are of opinion that the desired change in the constitution might be still further deferred with advantage to the Colony.

"2. This conclusion has, however, been arrived at, solely in the hope that Her Majesty's Government may, in the future, see fit to grant to its representative in this Colony, greater discretionary power to carry into effect such measures as the Legislature may deem conducive to the welfare of the Colony, than has been accorded to that officer in the past.

"3. The lack of this discretionary power has acted so prejudicially to the interests of the Colony, since the adoption of the resolutions before mentioned, that public feeling in favor of the early introduction of a change in the constitution of the Colony is now stronger and more general than it has ever been; a fact and result which the members of this Council deem it their duty to bring under the notice of Her Majesty's Government.

"4. The members of this Council would respectfully submit, for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government,

that the privileges intended to be accorded to the people of this Colony by means of two-thirds of the votes in the Legislature, which under the constitution now in force are conferred upon their representatives, must remain practically nullified if Her Majesty's Government continues to insist upon reviewing and deciding the details of every important measure which the Governor, with the approval, or at the desire of the Legislature, may wish to carry out."

MR. CROWTHER seconded the amendments—not so much on the grounds referred to by the hon. member for Geraldton, or because of what had fallen from the hon. member for Perth; but because he considered the present juncture of affairs an inopportune time for entering upon Responsible Government pure and simple, while at the same time the existing machinery was not such as he would select for working out the destiny of the Colony to a successful issue.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: I have an amendment to propose on the amendments of the hon. member for Geraldton. Those amendments certainly do express in very clear language the meaning which we wish to convey, but I think the wording of the resolutions might perhaps be so altered as to be more likely to lead to the result which we have in view. Before I move my resolutions I should like to state, as shortly as I can, the reasons why I cannot vote for the resolutions of the hon. member for Perth, and which that hon. gentleman thinks I ought—having voted for the resolutions adopted by this House in 1875—to support. I have not since then, on any public occasion when addressing my constituents, advocated Responsible Government, and for these reasons: Four years ago, before the dissolution of the late Council, I was induced in consideration of certain circumstances to waive the strong objections I had always entertained to the introduction of Responsible Government in this Colony, very strong arguments being brought to bear upon us why we should adopt this change. Hon. members are cognisant of the whole case. The hon. gentleman who was then the leader of the Government in this House took a very strong view of the question, and

used arguments which were very weighty to show that at that time it would be well if we adopted this change. He pointed out that it was true that everything had been going on very well hitherto, but Governor Weld would not always be with us, and how the affairs of the Colony would progress after his departure no one could tell:—his anticipations in this respect were certainly fulfilled. There is no need for me to recapitulate the reasons which on that occasion induced hon. members to vote in favor of the proposed change. I only did so, as hon. members know, and as others did, in the belief that we should be able to form a ministry which would carry on the Government in a very able manner. The then Colonial Secretary, who took a leading part in the movement, must be admitted to have ranked amongst the foremost statesmen in the Australian Colonies. And there were other gentlemen of some experience in public affairs who we know were willing to assist in the formation of a ministry. Besides that, there was a very respectable Opposition, with the hon. member for Wellington at its head, who no doubt after a time would have been able to form a ministry which might have taken office if the necessity had arisen. Under these circumstances, feeling that, with Mr. Barlee as leader of the Government, assisted as he would have been by gentlemen who would have had the confidence of the House, there was very little doubt on my mind that the affairs of the Colony would have been more successfully administered than under the present form of Government. Impressed with this belief, I strongly advocated Responsible Government at that time, and I must say that the experience of the ensuing three years has not led me to the conclusion that I was wrong in so doing. That party, however, was disbanded (our leader left us) and my advocacy of Responsible Government from that time ceased. I never looked at Responsible Government as an un-mixed good—as a thing that was to bring us every good gift and no evil—nor did any other hon. member, that I am aware of. We knew it would entail very considerable sacrifices, and that we should have many dangerous influences to contend against. And I must say

that those who have advocated Responsible Government since that time, and the manner in which they have advocated it, have not removed the apprehensions of danger which I always entertained. When we find a single chamber advocated, universal suffrage advocated, and what I may call the mob of the Colony crying out for Responsible Government—and we know what especially dangerous elements a Western Australian mob contains—then I think it should lead us to pause and hesitate before we enter unprepared upon this change. If a weak ministry did give way to this external pressure, all I can say is that the last state of the Colony would be worse than the first—given over to mob rule, insecurity of property, waste and corruption of all sorts. It is not to be supposed for one moment that those who advocate this change, and who ridicule the present Council, and do all in their power to bring it into contempt with the public—I say, it is not to be thought that those who do this intend that the power we exercise at present should remain in our hands, and in the hands of those we now represent. No sane man can suppose that those who speak with contempt of this House, and endeavor to lower its dignity, and who clamour for another constitution, contemplate that under that constitution we should be invested with greater power than we now possess. On the contrary, their intention must be that the very class of persons we wish to see excluded from this House should be brought into it, and that the power should be vested in very different hands from what it is at present. The first ministry would almost necessarily be formed out of elements supplied by this House—and such being the case, I think it is highly desirable that we should be sure before entering upon this change to be able to form a ministry sufficiently strong to resist that pressure from without. What is the fact of the case, at the present moment? Is it not a fact that no member here is prepared to undertake the formation of a ministry? Ask those hon. members in whom the House would be willing to place confidence—ask the hon. member for Geraldton, the hon. member for Greenough, the hon. member Mr. Burt, or any other hon. gentleman, if he is prepared to come forward and

accept that responsibility which is the very essence of the form of Government contemplated by those who advocate a change in the constitution. Ask those hon. members if, in the event of the change being brought about, they are prepared to undertake the task of forming a ministry, and to carry on Her Majesty's Government in this Colony, and I think they will tell you they have no such intention. Who does the hon. member for Perth look to, to help him to carry on the Government if he became Premier? I do not think that hon. gentleman has ever thought of anything of the kind. It therefore does appear to me, under these circumstances—before we have even thought how the constitutional machinery proposed to be introduced is to be worked—that it would be extreme folly to adopt the contemplated change, and great responsibility rests upon those who seek to bring it about. My position therefore is this: when I considered that there was a possibility, a probability, nay almost a certainty, that Responsible Government could have been carried on without any danger to the interests of the community, at that time I voted in its favor, and sincerely I wish that we had obtained it, for I believe we should now be in a better position if we had. But seeing that now such a possibility no longer exists, and that out of the present elements constituting this Council we should be unable, I am afraid, to form a ministry sufficiently strong to carry on the Government of the country without injury to the interests of the community at large—under these circumstances, I say, I shall not advocate a change until such time as we may, in my opinion, do so with safety. As to what fell from the hon. member for Perth with respect to hon. members being pledged on this question, and their duty to redeem their pledges or resign their seats, I think it will be quite time for me to do so when my constituents ask me to resign,—which they are at liberty to do, if they think I no longer deserve their confidence. There is one reason, referred to by the hon. member for Geraldton, which to my mind is conclusive as to the inexpediency of the present agitation in favor of constitutional change. I allude to the fact that at last we seem likely to be able before

long to inaugurate a system of public works, and to agitate now for Responsible Government might jeopardise that work which hon. members have all declared by their votes to be of paramount importance to the welfare and prosperity of the Colony at this time, and cause the whole question to be shelved for years to come. It must, however, not be supposed that I consider the present constitution a desirable one, or a good one. I fully expressed my views on this point when the subject was under discussion in 1874, and I need not now repeat them: I can only say, as I said before, that the experience of the ensuing three years has not changed those views as to the present constitution, in the abstract. But I do think that, under existing circumstances, and for the reasons I have set forth, and which have been so ably set forth by the hon. member for Geraldton, it would be well that this House should pause, and wait to see whether Her Majesty's Imperial Government may not be induced to some extent to modify the method of procedure hitherto adopted, so that we may be able to get along until the time arrives when we shall be able to adopt a system of self-government with safety to ourselves and with advantage to the interests of the Colony at large. No doubt it is very discouraging to hon. members of this House to observe the delays which occur and the obstacles put in the way of our advancement; but I must say that I often regret to hear hon. members talking about resigning their seats because they feel they have no power. I cannot see that this Council is so very powerless as many people make it out to be. It cannot but be admitted that it largely influences the policy of the Government, and that its action has often directly led to the initiation of measures of importance to our welfare. We have also very large powers in the matter of preventing the enactment of any thing we may consider detrimental to the interests of the Colony. Even if hon. members think they have not much power for good,—that I deny—those who have had some experience in the work under this constitution have the power to prevent much that is evil. And if hon. members give up their seats to those who have had no experience in such

work, they will be likely to precipitate the crisis which we desire to avoid, and bring on Responsible Government when we are less prepared for the change than at present. With regard to my amendments—which hon. members have already had an opportunity of perusing—I think there are several reasons why the meaning of the hon. member for Geraldton may be conveyed in a way which may have more effect with the authorities at home. I think it would be better not to make any specific charges, to which they may pin us down, but to formulate our complaints in a more general form. I think also it would be wise to abstain from pointing out so specifically the precise nature of the change we desire, but leave it to Her Majesty's Government to decide in what manner they can meet our difficulties. Hon. members will observe that my amendments do not pledge them to vote for Responsible Government in the event of our desire in this respect not being gratified, but simply state that, if such be the case, it is not unlikely that the force of public feeling will so gain in intensity that, however much against our own inclination, we shall not be able to resist the pressure from without. Sir, the amendments I have to propose are as follows:

"This Council having been called upon to declare its adherence to the resolutions adopted by the Legislature on the 25th January, 1875, urging upon Her Majesty's Government the desirability of the immediate inauguration of a system of Responsible Government for Western Australia, resolves as follows:—

"1. It is clear that the feeling in favor of Responsible Government has steadily gained ground throughout the Colony, and is now expressed by a large proportion of the community; but the Council is disposed to consider that there are circumstances in the case which should induce it at the present time to abstain from taking steps to obtain its immediate introduction.

"2. The Council would desire, however, to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the fact that the constant delay in the passing of important measures, and the initiation of important works, consequent upon Her Majesty's Government insisting upon reviewing and deciding such matters in

all their details, is prejudicial to the interests of the Colony, and largely augments that feeling of irritation which manifests itself by the strong movement in favor of Responsible Government above referred to.

"3. That the continuance of Her Majesty's Government to insist upon delaying any measure, no matter of what importance to the interests of the Colony,—and notwithstanding the fact that the Governor and Legislature may be in thorough accord as to the absolute necessity for its speedy adoption,—until it has had an opportunity of considering and determining, not only the main principle, but even the minor details of such measure, involves in many instances a waste of time disheartening, and grave in its consequences, to a Colony such as this.

"4. That while this Council is fully aware of the difficulties that may stand in the way of any modification of the principle on which Crown Colonies, such as this, are governed, it yet desires to assure Her Majesty's Government in the most earnest and emphatic manner, that unless Her Majesty's Government can find some way of meeting the difficulties of the present position, which it has had the honor to point out, this Council will be irresistibly compelled, notwithstanding that it is fully alive to the gravity of the step which it would take, to follow in the wake of public opinion, and claim that system of self-government which has been granted to the other colonies of the Australian group."

MR. MARMION said he had further amendments to propose on the amendments submitted by the hon. member for Plantagenet, and they were as follows:

"1. That this Council having been called upon to declare its adherence to the resolutions adopted by the Legislature on the 25th January, 1875, urging upon Her Majesty's Government the desirability of the immediate inauguration of a system of Responsible Government for Western Australia, is of opinion—(1) That it is inadvisable that the proposed change in the Constitution should *now* take place; inasmuch that, since the above named resolutions were passed, this Council has, by the despatches of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, (laid upon the table of this

House) been made definitely aware of the views and intentions of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the penalties the Colony will be called upon to suffer immediately upon the adoption of a Responsible Form of Government, viz.—the withdrawal of all Imperial aid to Police and Magistracy, the disbandment of the Enrolled Pensioner Force, and other material losses. That the Colony, in its present financial position, its Revenues prejudicially affected by the continued drought and adverse seasons, can ill afford to suffer the loss which would be entailed upon it through the Imperial Government carrying into effect the expressed resolution of visiting the Colony with the aforesaid penalties, which, with the necessarily increased expenditure consequent on a change in the Constitution, would (in the opinion of this Council), counterbalance the advantages to be derived from the immediate adoption of Responsible Government, and postpone, if not virtually preclude, our entering upon the construction of Railways and other large Public Works now in contemplation, from which the Colony expects to derive so much benefit.

"2. That the Members of this Council, whilst expressing the above opinion, and proclaiming their unbounded loyalty to the throne and person of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, would most respectfully urge upon Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies their earnest desire and hope, that he will see fit to reconsider the whole question, and recommend the removal of the penalties before set forth, which tend so materially to increase the difficulties attending the adoption by the Colony of a system of Responsibility, and to prevent the realisation of the ardent aspirations of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Colony, who consider that the principle of Self-Government which has been accorded to all the other Australian Colonies is that best adapted to this community of British people. This large proportion of the colonists are convinced that Western Australia, if entrusted with the responsibility and management of its own affairs, would soon show evidence of increased vitality, and steadily advance to that material prosperity which it must be the

desire of Her Majesty's Government that each and every British Colony should possess.

"3. That so strong is this feeling, and so steadily is it increasing, that the adoption of Responsible Government, despite of the obstacles to its attainment, cannot much longer be deferred, unless some other means can be devised by which much more advantage can be derived from the present system of Government, and by which the Governor of the Colony will be granted greater discretionary power, such as will enable him to carry into effect, without delay, measures that the Legislature may deem conducive to the welfare and progress of the Colony.

"4. That the lack of this discretionary power has acted so prejudicially to the interests of the Colony, since the adoption of the resolutions in favor of Responsible Government, in 1875, as to increase materially the number of advocates for the proposed change; a fact and result which the Members of this Council deem it their duty to bring under the notice of Her Majesty's Government.

"5. The members of this Council would respectfully submit, for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, that the privileges intended to be accorded to the people of this Colony by means of two-thirds of the votes in the Legislature, which, under the present constitution, are conferred upon their elected representatives, must remain practically nullified if Her Majesty's Government continues to insist upon reviewing and deciding the details of every important measure which the Governor, with the approval or at the desire of the Legislature, may wish to carry out.

"6. That this Council respectfully requests that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to transmit the above resolutions for the information and consideration of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies."

Mr. MARMION, continuing, said it would be observed that in some of the foregoing amendments he had adopted the wording of some of the resolutions put forward by the hon. member for Geraldton, and that as regarded others of them, though not exactly adopting the phraseology of the resolutions referred to, the meaning conveyed was somewhat

analogous. But the amendments which he proposed went somewhat further than those of the hon. member for Geraldton, and more fully embodied the reasons which induced hon. members who had voted for Responsible Government in 1875 to come forward now and oppose the change. If these reasons were not clearly set forth, the Secretary of State would naturally regard those hon. gentlemen as men of a very unstable character indeed—men to whom it would be altogether inexpedient to entrust the management of the country's affairs. In speaking at this advanced stage of the debate he labored somewhat under a disadvantage, inasmuch as the hon. member for Geraldton and the hon. member for Plantagenet had addressed the House at such length and with such ability that much of what he had intended saying had already been said by those hon. gentlemen, and he was thus prevented from making what he had intended to make on the present occasion—a very brilliant speech. The hon. member for Geraldton had stated some of the benefits which the Colony had derived under the existing form of Government in the early days of the present constitution, and had enumerated various progressive measures which had been adopted and carried out under Governor Weld's *régime*. He (Mr. Marmion) also would like to refer to some of the measures for which the Colony was indebted to the liberal and progressive policy of that Administration. Under the existing constitution—municipal institutions were established, local roads boards were formed, giving the colonists the privilege of managing their own local affairs; telegraphic communication was established throughout the length and breadth of the Colony, and by means of the Eucla line (projected and partly carried out under the Weld *régime*), linking us with the outer world; steam communication was introduced on our coast, and thereby more closely uniting us, by means of the mail steamers, with the neighboring Colonies; and, lately, by a majority of that Council, direct steam communication with these Colonies had been authorised. These were some of the measures which had been carried out under the present constitution. Railway construction had also been

approved and undertaken, with a view to develop our mineral resources, and, during the present Session, they were engaged in passing a Loan Bill for £200,000 to be expended on other public works, the principal of which was a railway to unite our chief seaport with our chief city and an inland town, with a view to its extension to the producing districts. Notwithstanding all that had been said in depreciation of the existing Legislature, in spite of the efforts made by some persons, by every possible means in their power, to cast contumely and obloquy upon the present constitution,—persons who had not hesitated to asperse the character of the hon. members of that House, and to endeavor to lower the dignity of the House itself in the estimation of the outside public; in spite of all this, the fact remained that the country had derived immense benefits under the existing constitution, and— if another form of Government were not introduced—it would, he believed, if vigorously and judiciously administered, accomplish still more. The development of the timber trade, enormously increasing our export of the same and raising its reputation, and the liberalisation of the land laws with a view to the encouragement of settlement, were other measures which had been carried into effect under the present constitution, and if the result, as regarded the land regulations, had not been as successful as the liberal provisions of those regulations warranted the House in expecting with respect to the influx of population, it was no fault of the Council but rather of the Colony itself, which, notwithstanding all that might be fairly said in its favor, did not offer so attractive a field for immigration as some other Colonies. One of the advantages of the present form of Government which the hon. member for Geraldton had not referred to, one of its greatest advantages, was the fact that it had created a feeling of independence and self-reliance throughout the length and breadth of the Colony that did not exist before the present form of government was inaugurated.

GALLERIES CLEARED.

[At this part of his speech, the hon. gentleman was interrupted by a remark from the strangers' gallery, and the

House was cleared and the doors locked. The reporters however were not excluded.]

MR. MARMION, continuing his remarks, said, another great advantage which the present form of government had conferred upon the Colony was the fact that it had assisted to educate, so to speak, a number of gentlemen who occupied seats in that House, in the work of legislation, and fit them for the serious responsibilities attached to a system of self-government when the time for adopting that form of government arrived. But for the present constitution, the hon. member for Perth for instance would not have had an opportunity of delivering the brilliant speech which he had made on Friday evening on the constitutional question, and the still more brilliant one which he had just treated the House to, and the hon. gentleman would not have been in a position to instruct the House how to undertake a task which no doubt *he* felt competent to accomplish, namely, to take the command of the vessel of state and guide it safely through the breakers into a haven of prosperity. It had been said outside that House,—and, on some occasions, inside the House—that the present form of Government was essentially obstructive to progress, and inimical to the advancement and prosperity of the Colony. With a view to show and prove the fallacy of this proposition he would direct the attention of the House to certain figures illustrative of the condition of the Colony eight years ago, when the present form of Government was inaugurated, as compared with its present condition, more particularly with regard to its revenue and expenditure and its imports and exports. This he could not do better than by giving in tabular form a comparative statement showing the exact position of the Colony in the two years named, and which he found to be as follows:

	1869.		1877.
Revenue ...	£103,662	...	£165,412
Expenditure	103,124	...	182,959
Imports ...	256,729	...	362,706
Exports ...	205,502	...	367,897

It would be observed that the exports had nearly doubled in the period given, and he thought that these figures were

quite sufficient to completely refute the statements made in some quarters that the present constitution was inimical to progress. They showed, incontrovertibly, that in spite of adversity, in spite of drought and bad seasons, and at a period when it had, in consequence, to import almost all food consumed by man and beast, the Colony had steadily advanced and not retrograded under the existing form of Government. How, in the face of these figures, the hon. member for Perth, and those who were opposed to the present constitution, could maintain that under it the Colony did not and could not make any progress, he, for one, certainly did not understand. In referring to the resolutions adopted by the House in 1875, affirming the desirability of adopting a system of self-government, the hon. member for Perth laid great stress on the fact that he (Mr. Marmion) and other members had supported those resolutions; but he would draw the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that in affirming those resolutions the House only affirmed the broad principle which they embodied, namely, that at that time, under then existing circumstances, and in the belief that the cost which the proposed change would involve was by no means as great as they now found it would be—under these circumstances it was that the House affirmed the resolutions in favor of self-government, on which the hon. gentleman seemed to lay so much stress. It could not be said that hon. members had committed themselves to the details of these resolutions and admitted that every statement in them was correct; they had simply affirmed the broad principle that at that time the proposed change was no doubt desirable. One of the resolutions quoted by the hon. member for Perth was to the effect that the inhabitants of this Colony were looked down upon as unfit to be trusted with those privileges which had been elsewhere accorded to their fellow-countrymen, and that the consequent result was, that the working classes of the Eastern Colonies, no matter what inducements might here offer, would not settle in Western Australia and lose those constitutional privileges. This was all very fine, no doubt, and it sounded very well; but did the hon. gentleman really imagine for a

moment that it was the absence of Responsible Government which operated in preventing people emigrating to this Colony from the neighboring settlements? Was that, in reality, the reason we were looked down upon? Hon. members were well aware it was nothing of the kind, and it was therefore quite unnecessary for him to point out why it was the Colony was not in favor as a field for immigration, and why there was a tendency on the part of our neighbors to look down upon us. When supporting the resolutions so frequently referred to by the hon. member for Perth, the House, as had been already pointed out, was not then aware what pecuniary losses the Colony would sustain were it to adopt a system of self-government. Hon. members were led to believe that the only cost it would entail on the country would be the provision necessary to be made in connection with the Civil List, and the other ordinary expenses incidental to the introduction of that form of Government. That, at any rate, had been the impression created on his mind, and that on the other hand this increased expenditure would be more than counterbalanced by the advantages which would accrue to the Colony from the proposed change—for he was quite prepared to allow, then as now, that there are advantages to be derived from the adoption of Responsible Government. That was the reason why he had voted for it, and had he been then aware, as he was now, what the real cost to the Colony would be, he would have adopted the same course as he now intended to adopt, and vote the change should be still further deferred. What that cost would be, what the penalties are which the Colony would immediately suffer, had already been pointed out, and he need not recapitulate the various charges which the change would involve, but it was evident that the annual loss to the Colony could not be less than between £20,000 and £25,000. Was the Colony in a position to bear that loss? Was it prepared to accept this penalty as the price to be paid for Responsible Government? Could the Colony in its present circumstances afford to lose £20,000 a year? This sum, he might point out, represented the interest upon a loan of £400,000, and when they considered the

benefits the Colony would derive from such a loan and its expenditure upon railways and other public works of utility at the present critical time, were we prepared to forego these advantages in order to at once adopt Responsible Government? Were the advantages likely to accrue from the adoption of self-government commensurate with the material losses which its adoption would inevitably entail? These were questions which he commended to the serious attention of the House and of the country. They were questions which he did not think could be answered affirmatively, and for that reason he asked hon. members to support the resolutions he had brought forward that evening. On looking at the second and third of these resolutions, some persons might possibly be led to believe that he was altogether in favor of Responsible Government. He was now, as before, in favor of the principle, if it could be secured at a cost commensurate with the advantages likely to be derived from its adoption—if the Imperial Government would relieve us from the serious disabilities which threaten us in view of the assumption of self-government, and leave us free to act in the matter. Hon. members would observe that the resolutions which he had submitted for their affirmation adopted this view of the case, and rendered the question of change entirely dependent upon the action of the Imperial Government. There was no doubt that with a very great number of people the feeling in favor of Responsible Government was steadily increasing in intensity, whatever might be said for or against it, and he thought the views of that large proportion of the community were certainly entitled to consideration at the hands of the House. As he had already said, he had voted for self-government when he thought it would not entail such penalties as would more than counterbalance the advantages which the change would secure, and he would do so again, under similar conditions. It appeared to him that the objection set forth in the fifth paragraph of his amendments was one which the Imperial Government might fairly be asked to consider, and that it might reasonably be expected, in view of the proposed alternative, to relax its course of action with

regard to the exercise of the right to review and determine the details of every important measure which the Governor of the Colony, with the approval or at the desire of the Legislature, might wish to carry out. Unless this were done,—unless greater discretionary powers were granted to the administrator of the Government, so as to enable him, without undue delay, to carry into effect measures which that House might deem conducive to the welfare and progress of the Colony—he was afraid there would be no resisting the feeling which was daily growing in strength, and steadily increasing,—that there was nothing for it but the adoption of a system of self-government, despite of the obstacles which existed to its attainment. The hon. member concluded by formally moving his amendments.

MR. SHENTON said he had opposed Responsible Government on a former occasion and he intended doing so now. One of the reasons which the hon. member for Perth had put forward in support of the proposed change was that under the present constitution the Colony was not progressing, but rather retrograding. [Mr. Parker: I did not say that.] So far from that being the case, it had been clearly shown that, notwithstanding a period of great adversity, in the face of drought, in the face of the low price of our staple products, and in spite of many difficulties which it had to contend against, the Colony had steadily advanced in material prosperity. No doubt, however, the colonists had occasion for complaint by reason of the great delays which had interposed by the Imperial Government during the period of the last administration in the initiation of public works: but as had been clearly and forcibly pointed out by other speakers, this was a drawback which was attributable to no inherent defects in the present constitution, but to the abandonment of the liberal and progressive policy inaugurated and carried out under the Weld-Barlee administration. Of course the last Government may have had difficulties to contend against of which hon. members were not cognisant, but there was no doubt that one of the main causes of the present agitation in favor of Responsible Government was due to the delay which had taken place in the

introduction of public works since the departure of Governor Weld. At the present time, however, we had a Government which not only expressed its readiness and intention to carry out a vigorous public works policy, but had proved to the House that in this intention they were thoroughly in earnest. Therefore the cause for complaint, and the ground for dissatisfaction with the present form of Government might be said to have been removed. As they now had an Administration which had thus shown its readiness to co-operate with the people in this respect, and to gratify, so far as lay in its power, the desire for the introduction of public works, he did think it was but fair to the present Administration that the colonists should manifest their confidence in them, and give them a fair chance to carry out their progressive policy. It had already been pointed out to the House what serious penalties the Colony would have to suffer, by the withdrawal of the Imperial grants on account of the magistracy and the police, the disbandment of the pensioner force, and the withdrawal of the convict expenditure,—being an annual loss of close upon £50,000—and this was an item which, in the present position of the Colony, was one of no mean importance. The House during the present Session had advocated the raising of a loan of £200,000 for public works purposes, and he would like hon. members to consider what would be the result, as regarded this loan, were the motion of the hon. member for Perth adopted this Session? The Home Government would naturally say "If you wish for a change in the constitution, then this loan must stand over until you can raise it yourself, for we shall not saddle ourselves with the responsibility." He need not point out what delays this would occasion. The question of a change in the constitution of a country was not a question which could be settled in a day; it might be many months, nay years, before the agitation in favor of the change was carried out into fruition, and during all that time the Colony must remain in a state of stagnation, and the question of public works continue at a standstill. This, surely, was a matter for very serious consideration in the present depressed condition of the trade and commerce of the Colony.

Another fatal objection to the adoption of a system of self-government with ministerial responsibility was the fact that—as had been pointed out already—we had not the elements out of which such a system of Government could be formed and successfully carried out. We had an immense area of territory, but sparsely populated—a country which had not inaptly been described as a huge skeleton. Where, among a population such as ours, would they find men of sufficient leisure and means to carry on a system of party government, for it must be borne in mind that party organisations were an essential element of that system of Government advocated by the hon. member for Perth. Without an efficient Opposition such a form would be a most despotic one. The administration of the Government would fall into the hands of men who would seek office merely for the sake of the emoluments attached, and not with any desire to promote the interests of the Colony. Looking at the example they had recently seen of the working of ministerial Government in the Colony of Victoria, and the great depression in business and trade caused by the political disturbances that had recently agitated society in that Colony, he thought this country would do well to pause before it entered upon a form of Government which produced such distressing results—results which should act as a beacon for Western Australia, warning us to keep clear of the dangerous, though alluring, shoals of Responsible Government.

MR. BROCKMAN said he was opposed to the amendments before the House, and did not believe in the utility of wasting any further time in asking for concessions which we were not at all likely to get; consequently he would support the original resolutions. He had been returned to that House pledged to advocate Responsible Government for the Colony, and certainly nothing had occurred since he entered the House to alter his views in any way as to the desirability of the proposed change. It was universally admitted that the public feeling in favor of the change was unmistakably gaining strength, throughout the whole Colony; and that, it appeared to him was a very strong reason why it should be supported in that House. The disad-

vantages attendant upon Responsible Government—for no doubt it had its disadvantages, and nobody contended it was a perfect system—had been sought to be shown in the course of the debate, and also the cost its adoption would entail; but there was a great deal to be said on the other side. He did not propose to enter into the many advantages which self-government would afford—they all knew it would at any rate enable the country to borrow money when required for public works, and, what was still better, to spend it, without having occasion to refer to Downing Street, or to the Crown Agents for every little screw and bolt required for a railway. Another advantage which the Colony would derive from the adoption of the change would be the right and privilege to dispose of our Crown Lands, which, of itself, would go a great way to make up any loss which the Colony might sustain by the withdrawal of Imperial expenditure. He did not consider he would be doing his duty to his constituents, or to the country, did he not vote for the resolutions of the hon. member for Perth, and support the proposal that this Colony, like its neighbors, should claim and exercise the right to govern itself.

MR. CAREY said that, like the hon. member who had just resumed his seat, he also had pledged himself to support Responsible Government, and he had seen nothing, or heard nothing, in the course of the present Session to induce him to change or modify his opinions on that question in any way, unless indeed it was that his feeling in favor of a change had become more deep-rooted than ever. It appeared to him that the opponents of self-government had endeavored to make a great deal too much capital out of the fact that we had received the sanction of the Imperial authorities to raise a loan; for the House must not forget the serious delays that had from time to time occurred in connection with this matter, and the many delays which had been interposed in the way of our attaining this concession,—for unfortunately we were not in a position to claim it as a matter of right. The same delays would always occur, the same difficulties would ever be experienced, under the existing form of Government,

and the sooner this was changed the better would it be for the Colony. Over three years had elapsed since the subject of a railway to connect Fremantle with Perth and Guildford had been on the *tapis*, and they had not yet passed a Bill to raise the money for its construction; nor was our past experience in railway construction, under the present form of Government, calculated to inspire much confidence in the public mind as to the expenditure of money, under an irresponsible ministry, upon public works. It appeared to him that, while all the more weighty considerations and arguments were in favor of the proposed change, there was nothing but vague apprehensions on the other side—baseless as they were vague. It could not be denied that the vast majority of the settlers of the Colony were in favor of a thorough reform. Even the metropolitan constituency, noted heretofore for its conservatism, had at the last election unmistakably shown that the feeling in favor of a constitutional change had possessed the electors, and the Secretary of State could no longer point out to this important constituency as one averse to the proposed reform. So strong indeed had been the reaction which had of late taken place in the metropolis that he did not think any candidate, however popular he might otherwise be, would have the slightest chance of being returned again if he did not make Responsible Government his platform. The cry for a change had been made by a louder and more potential voice than any that House could give expression to—the imperious voice of necessity. They had been told that evening, that, occupying two-thirds of the seats in that House, two-thirds of the responsibility of Government rested with the representatives of the people: but they had, a few nights ago, a fair instance of the responsibility that rested on their shoulders when they were told they had no right to enquire into the working of a public department. It had been said that the circumstances of the Colony had differed from what they were when the House previously affirmed the desirability of adopting self-government, but he failed to see in what respect the Colony's circumstances had changed beyond that they had lost Mr. Barlee. He did not think that, undoubtedly able

as Mr. Barlee was, it was fair to assume that the Government of the country could not be carried on without the aid of that gentleman. There were other members in that House who had had no inconsiderable experience in parliamentary work, and in the work of administration:—the Commissioner of Crown Lands, for instance, who was an experienced politician: and, on the other hand, they would soon have amongst them again the hon. member for Wellington, who, if he would not make a good Premier would at any rate be able to form a very formidable Opposition. It had been said that the progress of the Colony had been retarded during the administration of Governor Robinson, and, if so, what security or guarantee had they that the same thing would not occur again under another administration? No doubt that under the present *régime* we might get along very well, but Governor Ord might be removed any day. The hon. member for Geraldton had spoken of the liberalisation of our land laws as one of the cardinal features of the Weld administration,—liberal enough, no doubt, so far as one class was concerned, but certainly not such as to induce immigration and settlement. If they had Responsible Government, and had—as they would then have—the management and control of the Crown Lands, they could make the land regulations a great deal more liberal than they were now.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy): I cannot do otherwise than rise to say a few words on the present occasion, not however with a view to bring the debate to a close, for I hope my hon. colleague on the right (the Attorney General) will have something to say on this question. My own opinion is—as I said the other day to the junior member for Perth, in view of this very question—that it is “Better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.” The hon. member alluded to has certainly succeeded in making a very eloquent speech in moving this House to adopt his resolutions, and I give him credit for having done his best, I think, of a very bad case. I do not, personally, think that the Colony is yet prepared for the proposed change, and those who advocate it have not, in my

opinion, given sufficient consideration to the peculiar circumstances of the Colony, with its enormous territory, sparse population, and the poverty of the material at our command for forming ministries under Responsible Government. It must be borne in mind that under the constitution which the hon. member for Perth and those who support him propose to confer upon the Colony, we would require a relay of ministries, and also a regular parliamentary Opposition. Have we amongst us the elements out of which party Government could be formed, and carried out successfully? I look around me and see several hon. gentlemen who certainly can speak by the hour, and speak fluently; but ask these hon. gentlemen if they are prepared to undertake the responsibilities of office under ministerial Government, and they will candidly tell you they are not prepared to make that sacrifice. Here, then, we have a serious obstacle at the very outset, and it is one which, it appears to me, places the advocates of Responsible Government on the horns of a dilemma, from which it is difficult to see how they are to escape transfixion. You have no Mr. Barlee at the present time—a gentleman who spent the greater part of his life in the Colony, who was thoroughly conversant with its requirements, and who had gained the full confidence of the country. No doubt there are those amongst us who sat with him on these Treasury benches, and who possess the necessary qualifications for efficiently discharging ministerial duties; but, as I said before, you must be prepared for a change of ministries, and the formation of at least two parties. And I would ask any hon. gentleman if he seriously thinks that we have the requisite material for the formation of these parties, whose duty as well as interest it would be to control and criticise their opponents' conduct and measures? If we have not, then I ask the House to pause before it commits itself and the country to a system of Government for the carrying out of which we have not the necessary material.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking): It certainly appears to me, as was said by the hon. member for Fremantle, that if one wishes to make a brilliant speech he ought to take an early opportunity of doing so, for, rising as I

do thus late in the evening, I find that the greater part of what I had intended to say has already been said by others; and, besides, I have to address a scanty and somewhat wearied audience. Nevertheless, I do not like the opportunity to pass without expressing my views upon the important question before us, although it may perhaps appear somewhat presumptuous on my part, after the full discussion that has taken place both inside and outside this House, to think that I can say anything new on the subject; much more that I should venture to hope to influence the House by anything I might say. But there is one matter with regard to which, at the outset, I would like to say a few words, and that is, that a great many people have, as it seems to me, got into the way of viewing the question of this proposed change of Government in a wrong light altogether. They think it quite sufficient to dwell and harp on the imperfections of the present form of Government; and they seem to think that they have nothing to do but to show that the present system does not work well, in order to demonstrate the advantages of the proposed change. I cannot help thinking that the administration of the Government during the past few years has been treated somewhat unfairly in the course of the debate this evening. It is not my intention, and this is not the occasion for me to enter into anything like a vindication of the Administration which has been assailed; but I was grieved to hear one expression which fell from the hon. member for Geraldton, when he said that the progress of the Colony, during the past few years, had been "vexatiously retarded." I do not know whether the hon. gentleman used the words advisedly; if he did, I can only say I regret that such an expression should have fallen from any member of this House; for whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Government during the late few years, it is preposterous to charge it with having vexatiously retarded the progress of the Colony,—which, in other words, is to say that the Governor had set to work, advisedly, to retard the advancement of the country. [Mr. Brown: No.] The hon. gentleman may say "no," but I would ask him what other meaning his

words can convey—"vexatiously" (and not from mere ignorance or incapacity) "retarded the progress of the Colony?" I think it is but just to the memory of Governor Robinson, who appears to have but few friends left in the Colony, that I, (who had an opportunity of seeing more of him than any hon. member of this House), should say this much of him—I do not think you would often find a Governor who would work harder and more zealously than Governor Robinson did for what he conceived to be the good of the Colony. And, I may add, if he was unsuccessful in promoting the progress of the Colony, it may have been his misfortune, but it certainly was not his fault. I only allude to this, in passing, in order to point out what I wish to dwell upon, namely, that a great many people think, and it is the general way of talking, that you have only to point out that we have not done so and so, or that we have not got this thing or that, under the present form of Government, as irrefutable arguments in favor of Responsible Government. Moreover, it has, I think, been clearly shown in the course of this debate—that, however remiss (if you choose to use the word) the Government may have been during the past few years in introducing public works, and however great the difficulties may have been which the Colony has had to encounter in the shape of bad seasons, red rust, the low price of wool, the fall in the price of sandalwood and of pearl shells,—the fact remains that the Colony has made substantial progress under the present form of Government, which therefore cannot be such a very bad system after all. As to the alleged stagnation of the past few years, I would point out to the House, in justice to Governor Robinson's administration, that we cannot every year be inaugurating sensational public works. The House will bear in mind that the public works initiated by his predecessor, Mr. Weld, were only just commenced when that gentleman left the Colony, and it was left to his successor to carry out those works. Not only did Governor Robinson arrive on the scene at an inopportune moment; it was also his misfortune, so far as his reputation in this Colony is concerned, that he left when the railway question was on the point of being

definitely settled, and I think Governor Ord is to be congratulated upon having the *kudos* of inaugurating this work without having the trouble of writing any great number of despatches on the subject. Sir, with reference to the proposed constitutional change, have hon. members thought seriously what that change involves? It has already been pointed out to the House how few men of means and leisure there are amongst us prepared to take part in the work of legislation, and to come forward to undertake administrative responsibility. Among the gentlemen who at present constitute this Council, you would doubtless find many competent, but you would find very few both competent and willing, to help in forming a ministry. It would thus be necessary to reduce, if not abolish, the property qualification—indeed I suppose this change is universally taken for granted. But it must not be supposed that among the class of men who under such a system would gain seats in this House, you would find as many in whom you would be willing to confide as you now find hold seats here. The gentlemen I now see here would have to give way to a different class of men; for, I am afraid they would stand but a poor chance indeed of being then returned. But it is not only among the members that you would find the standard lowered; the same sort of thing would take place among the electors. Can any one doubt that but very few years would elapse before we had manhood suffrage? What has taken place elsewhere? It may be said that those persons who in the House of Commons have been called the "residuum" of the population—the dregs that remain after the electoral body has been strained off—it may be thought that these persons possess little or no influence in elections in this Colony. But it would be a grievous error to think that, because these people had no vote, therefore they could exercise no influence. I would ask hon. members to bear in mind who it was that brought such influence to bear, in England, in the matter of political reform—not the electors only, but the great mass of the people, who were enabled to exert so great a pressure upon the legislature that at last it became a question of compulsion, and

the Government had to give way. Take the case of the Reform Bill of 1867. I was in London at the time, and was most strongly impressed with the force of public opinion as exercised in the form of organised agitation. Let us fancy ourselves landed in Responsible Government; can it be supposed for a moment that the people who now cry out for more liberal institutions would be satisfied with such measures of reform as might commend themselves to hon. members of this House? On the contrary, we should have them clamouring at our door demanding what they would call their rights; and should we be prepared to resist that agitation? To say that such men would have no power if they had no vote is to ignore the teaching of all previous history. Sir, there is another element which must not be lost sight of in dealing with this question. I have no desire to offend the susceptibilities of any class, but I shall speak plainly, and I may at once say that I allude to the convict element. I would ask any hon. gentleman who imagines that in Responsible Government we shall find a refuge from all evils, is he prepared to admit members of the convict class to a seat in this House? I think I should have but one answer to that question. As I said just now, I should be sorry to hurt the feelings of any man—among that class I know there are a great number who have worked hard, and zealously, and successfully, and many of them have achieved positions of which they have reason to be proud: at the same time, I for one have no hesitation in saying I should not like to see men of that class admitted to seats in this House. Many of these persons already have votes—they are not of the residuum referred to, they would not be driven to have recourse to any indirect means, but they would have it in their power to exercise direct pressure upon members, inasmuch as in some constituencies they form a large proportion of the electors. This is a phase of the question which must not be lost sight of, in dealing with this subject of constitutional reform. It is a difficulty which will have to be faced, and the consequences are inevitable. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that, in a great measure, the agitation for a change has proceeded from men of this class, who,

under manhood suffrage, would soon demand admission to seats in this House, and it would not be very long before you would have them administering the Government of the Colony. Some people may say these men have no great influence at elections, and that they congregate principally in the larger towns. That is no doubt true. They are not so numerous and consequently could not exercise so much influence in the country districts; but are the country districts going to govern the Colony? No doubt they are more numerous, relatively speaking, in the towns of Perth and Fremantle than in the provinces; but, after all, it is to these two towns (the one being the seat of Government, the other being in its immediate neighborhood) that we must look principally to supply the members of the two Houses we propose to institute, and still more to those places it is that we must look for persons to take office under the new state of things. The subject is not an agreeable one, but it is the only fresh contribution I feel able to make to the debate. Of course I feel that there are a good many elected members who, for obvious reasons, do not care to speak out on this point, but I think it is one that ought to be brought fully and fairly before the country before we make up our minds to adopt any such change as that contemplated in the resolutions of the hon. gentleman opposite.

MR. BROWN felt called upon to remove an impression which appeared to be on the mind of the Attorney General, that, in speaking of the progress of the Colony having been retarded during the past few years, he (Mr. Brown) had taxed Governor Robinson with having been the cause of that stagnation. Far be it from him to seek to fix that blame on Governor Robinson alone. What he had said was that the progress of the Colony had undoubtedly been retarded during His Excellency's administration; but he asked the House to consider whether this was attributable to any inherent defects in the system of Government, or to those who administered it. He said he thought it was attributable to those who worked the system. And who was it who worked it? Not His Excellency Governor Robinson, but the Government of this Colony and the

Imperial Government combined. It was impossible for him to say whether the Local Government did or did not perform what he conceived to be its duties under the existing constitution, for its proceedings were, and very properly, secret to him. With regard to the amendments of the hon. member for Plantagenet, inasmuch as they embodied all that was conveyed in his own amendments, and were possibly rounded off, and much smoother in every sense, and possibly more likely to attain the object they had in view, he was quite prepared to give his adherence to the hon. baronet's amendments. In doing so, however, he observed that one of the resolutions affirmed that—in the event of Her Majesty's Government not acceding to our request that greater discretionary power be vested in the Governor of this Colony, but, on the contrary, continues to insist upon delaying the progress of measures of importance—the Council would be irresistibly compelled to claim that system of self-government which had been granted to the other Colonies. In giving his adherence to these amendments, he wished distinctly to state that although he should be very much tempted indeed to adopt the contemplated change in the event of our request not being complied with, still, when the time came to decide the question at issue he should regard it his duty to consider the then circumstances of the Colony, before he agreed to the adoption of the proposed change.

MR. S. H. PARKER said the hon. member for Fremantle remarked that when he voted for the resolutions passed by the House in 1875, in favor of Responsible Government, he had simply affirmed a mere abstract principle, and that he was not then aware of the cost which the change would involve. Did anybody for a moment really imagine that the hon. member when he voted for the resolutions was ignorant of their purport, and the statements which they embodied, one of which was that delay in the introduction of Responsible Government was "simply a delay in the progress of the Colony?" Could it be supposed for an instant that the hon. gentleman did not know what he was voting for, and that he simply affirmed an abstract principle? As to not being aware of the

penalties which the change would entail, he would draw the attention of the House to the fact that at the very time when those resolutions to which the hon. member had subscribed were under discussion, a despatch from the Secretary of State was then on the Table of the House, and, in fact, formed the very ground of the discussion. In that despatch Lord Carnarvon said: "Another point on which my information is inadequate, is the probable sufficiency of the colonial revenue to meet the greatly increased administrative expenditure inevitably resulting from the more complex form of Government, it being remembered that the Colony must in such case assume, wholly or in part, various charges hitherto defrayed from Imperial Funds. Some £14,000 a year are at present contributed by this country towards the expenses of the Colonial Government in consideration of the number of convicts who, having completed their sentences, are now at large in Western Australia. I do not say that this payment would of necessity be abruptly and entirely terminated on the establishment of Responsible Government: this is, I may observe in passing, a question on which I shall be obliged to consult the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury before I could announce any decision; but it is obvious that a community aspiring to self-government must be prepared, if not at once, at least soon, to undertake the charges of Government." How, in the face of this despatch, hon. members could say they were not aware at the time that the change would involve an additional expenditure beyond making provision for the Civil List and for the necessary alteration in the administrative machinery of the Government, he failed to understand. As to the withdrawal of the Imperial grant in aid of the magistracy and the police, hon. members were aware that it was proposed, whether we went into Responsible Government or not, that this grant shall be annually reduced until its total extinction ten years hence. The whole amount of the grant between this and then would be £89,000. Now, as in the event of the House agreeing to the resolutions in favor of Responsible Government, two or three years must elapse

before the constitutional change can be effected, and before the Colony entered upon a system of self-government, the amount of the grant payable between this and then would have to be deducted from the total amount of £89,000. He found on reference to the scale fixed upon by the Imperial authorities that the amount of the grant payable within the next three years was £39,000, which sum would have to be deducted from the gross amount, thus reducing the loss which we would entail on this account to £50,000, distributed over a period of seven years. What was that compared with the immense benefits which the country would derive if it enjoyed the rights and privileges of self-government? It appeared to him that the intimation conveyed in the Secretary of State's despatch as to the immediate withdrawal of this grant in the event of the Colony adopting Responsible Government was a mere threat put forward with a view to induce the country to remain, as it is, under the tutelage of Downing street; and were he not already fully determined as to his course of action in this matter, this very threat would make him so. He did not believe in being put down by threats, and he thought the Colony should come forward boldly and stand up for its rights. He quite agreed with Lord Carnarvon that a community aspiring to self-government should be prepared to undertake the charges of Government, and he believed this Colony was fully prepared to do so. As to losing the present convict expenditure, and the further threat that the convict establishment would be removed if we adopted Responsible Government, all he could say was—if they could get rid of their convicts for the sake of £40,000 or £50,000, let them go. What now remained were the scum of the class,—men who had frequently been re-convicted, and who in future years would become a heavy charge and a burden upon the Colony. Any one who took the trouble of analysing the speech of the hon. member for Geraldton must come to the conclusion that that hon. gentleman had, in reality, urged very powerful arguments in favor of a change. The gist of his arguments was this—if the Imperial Government continued to ignore the wishes of the colonists, he would vote for Re-

sponsible Government. If these were the views entertained by the hon. gentleman he was in accord with him (Mr. Parker) to that extent; but the hon. member in making this admission appeared to be oblivious that he was thereby cutting from under his feet one of the strongest arguments put forward by the opponents of change, namely, the allegation that we had not a sufficient number of men of means and leisure to carry on constitutional Government,—for, the simple fact of the Colony continuing to be ignored by the Imperial authorities would not give us any more men of means and leisure than we had now. He really could not help thinking that the hon. gentleman was, in his heart, entirely in accord with himself (Mr. Parker). With respect to what had fallen from the Attorney General, he certainly thought it was very strange that the objections which the hon. gentleman now raised against Responsible Government, and the terrible consequences which he was apprehensive of, did not occur to him when he supported the resolutions affirming the desirability of the proposed change three years ago. The action of the hon. gentleman in this matter was only a further illustration of the fact that the official members, after all, were little better than mere voting machines, bound to support the policy dictated to them by the Governor for the time being. As to the amendments of the hon. member for Albany, they seemed to him to simply amount to this:—we said to the Secretary of State, in effect, "Look here, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, if you don't give us this discretionary power that we seek,—if you don't grant us this model constitution which we desire—it will be a poor look out for you; we shall go into Responsible Government, in spite of you." Really, that was the sum and substance of these amendments, and a more ludicrous bit of bunkum and bumpiousness it would be difficult to conceive. The hon. baronet evidently had great faith in Mr. Barlee, for with Mr. Barlee went the hon. gentleman's faith in Responsible Government. Now with all due respect for Mr. Barlee, and to his undoubted abilities, he really could not bring himself to think that the salvation of the Colony, under a system of self-government, depended upon Mr. Barlee being

at the head of a ministry. Such a proposition was an insult to the common sense and intelligence of the community, and, if anything could be more absurd or ridiculous, it was the proposal of the hon. baronet to invest the Governor of the Colony with a power which was not contemplated in the Constitution Act, and which if vested in him would make a little king of him—an absolute autocrat. Under such a form of Government, the last state of the Colony would be worse than the first.

MR. CROWTHER said that one of the main objections which operated on his mind against the proposed change was the fact—which was undeniable—that the very hon. member who sought to substitute a system of self-government in place of the present constitution, and who, were the change adopted, would necessarily be the very first person called upon to form a ministry, was not prepared to accept that responsibility. He had no doubt that we had men in the Colony quite capable of carrying on ministerial Government, but he doubted very much indeed whether they had the necessary means or the leisure at their command, or whether, if they had, their inclinations would lead them to accept office. It appeared to him it would be very little use introducing a complicated and expensive constitutional machine, unless we were sure of the services of proper men to work it: for, in inexperienced hands, the result might be disastrous. This appeared to him to be one of the strongest arguments that could be brought forward against the introduction of Responsible Government, and, so far as he could see, it was unanswerable. Given the men, let us have the machine, but, without the men to work it, he failed to see what possible use it could be.

MR. HAMERSLEY thought the time devoted to the discussion of the public works scheme of the Government would be time thrown away, if the House adopted the resolutions of the hon. member for Perth, for nothing could be more certain than that, if the Council insisted upon a change in the constitution, and a severance of the Imperial connection, the Imperial Government would wash its hands of the Loan Bill, railway, roads scheme, steam tug and all. It

was true that on a former occasion he had voted for the proposed change, but he had gained a great deal of information since then, and was better aware as to what the cost of the change would be. The Colony, too, had changed very much since then, by being brought into closer connection with the other Colonies by means of telegraph and steam communication, so that we were not looked down so much upon as we were in the days when we were comparatively isolated from our neighbors and the outside world. He believed the Colony would be looked down upon a great deal more than at present if we adopted Responsible Government, in the existing condition of the Colony, with our sparse population and immense extent of territory.

MR. BURT could not help feeling a certain amount of regret that the debate had been carried to such an inordinate length, and that so much of the time of the House had been taken up in a discussion that must prove futile. Could it be seriously thought that a debate which had been brought on at the close of a Session, and on the eve of a dissolution, would have the desired effect with the authorities at home, when it was further borne in mind that it was initiated for the simple reason that the hon. member for Perth had promised his constituents to do so? [Mr. Parker: Such is not the case: I have already stated that I brought the subject forward in order to elicit an expression of opinion on the part of the House, and in deference to the wishes of other hon. members.] The hon. gentleman had twitted those members who had voted for Responsible Government in 1875, with inconsistency and want of earnestness and sincerity; but he would remind the hon. gentleman that it was in the interests of the Colony alone that the scheme of reform put forward four years ago had been left in abeyance. Whatever views he (Mr. Burt) might entertain as to the merits or demerits of that scheme, he did think the present was a very inopportune time to revive it. He could not help thinking that the official members were in a very favorable position to form an honest judgment on the subject, and when the House found that these hon. gentlemen, —who, after all, would derive the

greatest benefit from the proposed change,—counselled delay, he thought hon. members would do well to pay some attention to that counsel. And when he found the very men who were the most zealous advocates for reform, not having the courage of their opinions, but declining to accept the responsibility of forming a ministry, or of taking office, he really did think the House should pause, and not rush into Responsible Government simply because, three or four years ago, they had affirmed some resolutions in favor of a change. A general election was close at hand, and he could not help thinking it would be better to leave the matter in the hands of the constituencies, and if members were then returned to the House, fortified by the conviction that the country really did desire to enter upon self-government, they could then go into the matter heart and soul, and make up their minds to accept the responsibility which the change would involve. Until they were prepared to do this, it certainly appeared to him it was useless to talk about adopting the proposed change.

The amendment on the amendment to the proposed amendment was then put and negatived on the voices; whereupon the resolutions proposed by the hon. member for Albany (Sir Thomas Campbell) were put, and a division being called for, there appeared—

Ayes	13
------	-----	-----	----

Noes	5
------	-----	-----	---

Majority for	8
--------------	-----	-----	---

AYES.	NOES.
The Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy	Mr. Brockman
Mr. Brown	Mr. Carey
Mr. Burt	Mr. Monger
Mr. Crowther	Mr. Pearse
Mr. Glyde	Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller.)
Mr. Hamersley	
Mr. Hardey	
Mr. Harper	
Mr. S. S. Parker	
Mr. Marmion	
Mr. Shenton	
Sir T. C. Campbell	
(Teller.)	

The original resolutions were therefore lost.

SALARIES OF OFFICERS OF POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENTS.

MR. CAREY, in accordance with notice, moved, That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Go-

vernor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates such additional sums as may be deemed advisable to increase the salaries of the Officers of the Postal and Telegraph Department. The hon. member said he need not detain the House with any remarks in confirmation of the claims of the officers referred to: he had already pointed out how inadequately, especially in country districts, they were paid, as compared with officers employed in other departments of the public service; and as he believed there would be no opposition to the motion, he would not trespass further on the time of the House.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said the Government quite recognised the fact that some of the officers connected with the department referred to were underpaid, and their claims would receive the attention of the Government.

The motion was then agreed to.

SALARIES OF CLERKS TO MAGISTRATES AT GUILDFORD AND YORK, AND OF CLERK IN PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE.

MR. HAMERSLEY, pursuant to notice, moved, That the Council do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole, to consider a resolution in favor of increasing the salaries of the clerks to the magistrates at Guildford and York, and also of the Third Class Clerk in the Office of Works.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) suggested to the hon. member that the better course to pursue would be to move a resolution of the same general character, with respect to Clerks to Magistrates, as that which the House had just adopted with regard to the officers of the Postal and Telegraph Department. He thought this would be preferable to recommending the claims of individual officers. A resolution affirming that in the opinion of the House the salaries now paid to magistrates' clerks were inadequate, would meet with the views and receive the consideration of the Government.

MR. HAMERSLEY said he would be glad to accept the suggestion of the hon. gentleman, and, by withdrawing the motion of which he had given notice, leave the matter in the hands of the Government.

The Chairman of Committees was then directed to report, That the Committee had not made Progress.

Report adopted.

GAME ACT, 1874, AMENDMENT.
BILL, 1878.

This Bill was read a first time.

IMPROVEMENT OF NAVIGATION OF
RIVER BELOW FREMANTLE BRIDGE.

MR. S. H. PARKER, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether it is the intention of the Government to expend the sum of money placed on the Estimates for 1878, for the purpose of improving the navigation of the Swan River below Fremantle Bridge?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said the Government had been awaiting the receipt of the report of Sir John Coode on the river and the harbor before expending any money in improving the navigation of the river at Fremantle, and, owing to the nature of Sir John Coode's report, which had now been received, the Government deemed it inadvisable to expend the sum placed on the Estimates for 1878, for river improvements below Fremantle Bridge. It was, however, proposed to utilise the Dredge, if necessary, in keeping open the channel.

PUBLIC PARK, FREMANTLE.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. MARMION, in accordance with notice, moved, That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place upon the Estimates the sum of £100 to assist the Fremantle Municipal Council in the fencing and clearing of the Government Reserve, granted to the town for the purposes of a public park. The principle of assisting municipalities in improving and beautifying public reserves set apart for the recreation of the people had already been acknowledged by the Government and by the House, in the vote made during the present Session, for improving the Victoria Park at Perth, and he trusted there would be no opposition to extend the principle to Fremantle.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said the Government was quite in accord with the hon. mem-

ber on this subject, and he thought the House having voted £200 for a public park at Perth would not begrudge half that sum for Fremantle, a town only second in importance to the capital itself. Motion agreed to.

SALARIES OF CLERKS TO
MAGISTRATES.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. MARMION, with leave, moved the following resolution, in lieu of that contained in his notice (No. 14; page 133, "Votes and Proceedings"): That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to consider the question of salaries of the Clerks to Magistrates in the Colony, with a view to an increase to such salaries, in such cases as to His Excellency may seem necessary. The hon. member said he had altered his resolution in view of the suggestion made by the Colonial Secretary to the hon. member for the Swan.

MR. MONGER pointed out that many of these clerks pursued other avocations, such as store-keeping and farming, and very often when they were wanted on public service were found to be at work on their own account.

Resolution agreed to.

The House adjourned at half-past one o'clock in the morning.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1878.

Messages from His Excellency the Governor—Land Titles Office; working of—Material, plant, etc., for Eastern Railway—House allowance in lieu of quarters to Resident Magistrate at Busselton—Point of Order—Late Sheep Inspector, Champion Bay District—Medical Officer, Victoria Plains and Northam—Point of Order—Perth and West Guildford main line of road—Line of telegraph from Bunbury to Bridgetown—Chief Clerk and Gauger, Customs Department—Mechanics' Institute, Fremantle—Limitation of grant to Assisted Schools: Botanic teaching in Government Schools—Bushmen's Home, Northam—Use of police horses and van by officials other than Police Officers—Jury Act, 1871, Amendment Bill, 1878—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY
THE GOVERNOR.

MR. SPEAKER announced the receipt