

to the public accounts for the financial year ended 31st December, 1891; and that he now placed the same on the table.

Ordered—That the paper lie upon the table of the House.

SAFETY OF DEFENCES BILL.

(*Formal.*)

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill intituled "An Act to prevent the Unauthorised Disclosure of Information relating to the Defences of Western Australia."

Leave given, and Bill read a first time.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S
OPENING SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER reported that the House had attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council, when His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, Mr. Speaker said, he had for greater accuracy obtained a copy, which he read to the House. (*Vide p. 1 ante.*)

THE ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

MR. SOLOMON: I rise to move the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech. It is not my intention to take up the time of this House to any extent, but I will as briefly as possible make a *resumé* of the Speech, and offer a few remarks as I proceed. In the first place, I am sure that the calamity which recently occurred in the death of, I may say a friend of the colony, Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, was thoroughly felt throughout the length and breadth of the colony; and I am sure that his loss will be felt not only for a day, or a month, but will be felt for some considerable time, and it was only a worthy tribute to the late demised gentleman's name that a reference should have been made, as it has been, in His Excellency's Speech, to the loss which the country has sustained in his death. The next subject, sir, I will touch upon, is the financial condition of the colony. It must be pleasing to the colony generally, and I am sure it must be to members, to hear such a glowing account as has been given of the satisfactory and progressive

condition of the public finances, and to hear that there is a large surplus revenue. But I would ask permission for a few moments to go into the matter of how this revenue is obtained. We are aware that within the last few years, with the introduction of Responsible Government, something like 12,000 people have come to the colony of Western Australia to settle; but I would ask, sir, amongst those 12,000 people who have come here how many are there who have come with the intention of settling down amongst us as producers, and in some way to reduce the amounts now going out of the colony to feed those who are coming here. Sir, I must own to some extent the truth of what has been said, that at the present moment, we are feeding, to a considerable extent, on loan money and local revenues of the colony. I regret having to say this, but I feel, on going into the matter, that it is so. The new comers coming here are all—I may say one and all—consumers rather than producers, and in that way the colony is being drained day after day, and year after year, of a considerable amount of its money. That sort of thing, sir, cannot go on without some remedy, and that I hope will be found in the proposed new land regulations, which will presently be alluded to. The next matter referred to is the result of our last loan. I think we have something like £840,000 yet to receive of this loan money, and I trust that our credit will be sufficiently good in the English market to enable us to borrow this money, at something like a reasonable rate, for the benefit of the colony. We in Western Australia have not done anything to forfeit any confidence whatever, in the English money market; and I cannot see why we should suffer in any way for anything that has been done outside of this dominion. I therefore trust that we shall have very little difficulty, when the time comes to raise this balance of our loan, in doing so. At the same time, I myself—and I believe many other members—will not have any objection to Treasury bills being issued, to a certain extent, for the purpose of raising in the meantime any money that may be found immediately necessary to carry on the public works of the colony. The continued discoveries of gold must also be of great value to

the colony, and I am sure if it continues as it has done it must raise Western Australia in the future, to a position, far above, I may say, any of the other colonies. I trust the Government will do all they possibly can to foster the development of our mineral resources; and I should have been pleased to have heard something with regard to boring for water beyond the Yilgarn district, where there is a probability of there being a rush, so as to provide a supply of water in the event of such a thing occurring. I am sure it would be disastrous, should we have a rush to any of these outside fields where there are no adequate means provided for the supply of water; and I think the Government might very well in a case of this kind take upon themselves, if they possibly can, by means of boring, to get a supply in readiness. The next subject I would refer to is the proposed amendment of the Constitution Act. I am sure that it is the general wish of the community that this should be done, as suggested. The only part of the proposals of the Government that I do not agree in is as to the term of residence proposed for electors. I think six months' residence would be quite sufficient, instead of twelve, especially when it is provided that there are to be two more members in the Council, and three new members in the Assembly, so as to give the mining interests their due representation. With regard to the land settlement question, referred to in the 7th paragraph of the Speech, I perfectly agree with what has been proposed by the Premier, with the exception—so far as I can see at present—of the proposed advances of money. I think, myself, so far as I can see in the matter, that to clear the land and fence it would be quite sufficient, besides giving these people free grants of land to work upon. I feel sure that men with £100 or £200 ready money would be only too glad to take advantage of such an offer as that, without the Government also advancing them money, as proposed. But, sooner than that we should not do something with the view of encouraging settlement and cultivation, and settling upon the soil a body of producers, and so keeping all the money we possibly can in the colony—sooner than we should not do something

in this direction, I would not withhold my vote from the Premier's scheme, if no better mode of attaining the same object be proposed. I perfectly agree with the proposals of the Government as to the non-increase of rents in the case of the pastoral lessees in the Northern division of the colony. Of course we all know that what happened was a calamity, and that it was sent by Providence. [Cries of "Oh, Oh."] Well, there was no fault whatever of man in the matter. It was very unfortunate that the drought should have occurred, and that the losses of the settlers should have been so heavy as they were; and I shall not be in any way adverse to the increase of rents being foregone. I also notice that the laws referring to the transfer of land, to reformatory and industrial schools, and to joint stock and mining companies, are to be amended or consolidated. These are all very good objects, and I see no reason why I should withhold my support from them. In fact, so far as reformatories are concerned, I think such an Act would be one of the best Acts that could be brought forward. At present I can see that there are a great many young people who would be far better taken away from their parents, and sent to a reformatory, rather than being left in their parents' hands. The next matter referred to is the proposed change in the financial year. Of course that is a matter which mostly concerns the Government. No doubt they have their reasons for wishing this to be done; but I should like to know whether this change will interfere in any way with the revision of the tariff. That is a matter I should like to see taken up, with other matters likely to come forward next session; but it appears to me that if the financial year is to end in June next, it will be something like eighteen months before the tariff could be interfered with. Possibly I may be wrong in this, but that is my present impression. I think it is essential to the welfare of the colony that the tariff should be framed to encourage native industries, and so adjusted as to take the burden off the shoulders where it presses so heavily at present. I should like to see the lands that are now locked up made to contribute something to the revenue, as well as the tariff. I should like to see the tariff touch the holders of

these lands in some way. I think where lands have been improved and enhanced in value, and reap the benefit of the thousands of pounds of public money that we are constantly laying out in roads and railways—money which we receive from taxation through the Customs—I think these lands, unoccupied lands, belonging to people who are absent from the colony, but who are reaping the benefit of the money we are laying out in improving the country,—I think these lands should be made to contribute something towards the public revenue. The next matter I would refer to is that of the Midland Railway. This I fear, unless it is settled very shortly, will become a vexed question. [AN HON. MEMBER: It is so now.] Some hon. gentleman points out that it is a vexed question already. Possibly it is so. But I am very much afraid it will become more so; and the sooner the matter is settled the better, not only for the colony but for everyone concerned. I do not look so much into the past history of this undertaking. Whatever the past may have been, whatever the transactions connected with the formation of this company may have been, what we have to look to is the future. I look to the future, and not so much to the past; and I think the sooner we get the matter settled one way or the other the better will it be for the colony. As regards our finding the money to finish the railway ourselves, I cannot see—in the face of what we have been told only very recently—that we may find a difficulty in raising the balance of our loan (over £800,000) to carry out the works under the programme we have agreed to—I cannot see in any way that we could also raise an extra £400,000 to finish this Midland Railway. I therefore think that is a question that must be gone into in some other way, and, if we possibly can have it settled in the way of giving away land, I would sooner do that than have the matter hanging over from year to year, and interfering with other public matters of the greatest importance. The next paragraph deals with the policy inaugurated by the present Ministry. I think the policy of Ministers is a very liberal policy, and I thoroughly endorse what is said about it in His Excellency's Speech. Of course we know that all

people are liable to make mistakes, but I think that on the whole the present Ministers have done their duty to the colony, and that they have in every way acted conscientiously for the benefit of the country generally. The last matter I shall allude to will be the necessity for a revision of the tariff, in conjunction with the encouragement of land settlement and the development of our mineral resources. In my opinion these three must go together. I think that for the future progress of Western Australia we must do all we possibly can to reduce the present tariff, to lessen the burden of direct taxation through the Customs, and in some other way find the means of making that burden press more generally upon a population of nearly 60,000 spread over an area of 100,000 square miles. I will now, sir, move the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech:

*"To His Excellency Sir William Cleaver
"Francis Robinson, Knight Grand
"Cross of the Most Distinguished Order
"of St. Michael and St. George,
"Governor and Commander-in-Chief
"in and over the Colony of Western
"Australia, and its Dependencies, &c.,
" &c., &c.*

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

"We thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been good enough to deliver to us.

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

MR. MONGER: Sir, as the youngest member of this honorable House, both in point of years and election, I feel considerable diffidence in rising to second the resolution so nicely proposed by the hon. member for South Fremantle. Occupying as I do at the present moment a position entirely independent in this