

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA is the youngest of the seven sister colonies of Australasia; but, curiously, it shares with Queensland and the Northern Territory of South Australia the privilege of being first known to Europeans. As early as 1503 it is claimed that a French navigator, Binot Paulmyer, Sieur de Gonneville, was blown out of his course, and touched at some portion of the coast, but the evidence in support of the assertion is anything but conclusive. The Portuguese also lay claim to the discovery of the western coast at a later date. But it is to Dutch navigators in the early portion of the seventeenth century that we owe the first really authentic accounts of the western coast and adjacent islands, and in many instances the names given by these mariners to prominent physical features are still retained. By 1665 the Dutch possessed rough charts of almost the whole of the western littoral, while to the mainland itself they had given the name of New Holland. Of the Dutch discoverers, Pelsart was the only one who made any detailed observations of the character of the country inland.

It was reserved, however, for an Englishman, William Dampier, to make a more thorough examination of the country adjacent to the western coast, and he visited it on two occasions—once in 1688, when he was a member of a company of buccaneers who landed to repair their vessel, and later, in 1699, as an accredited explorer in charge of the “Roebuck.” The history of his voyage, published by Dampier shortly after his return to England, represented the country as so barren and inhospitable that no idea was then entertained of utilising it for settlement.

During the interval elapsing between Dampier’s two voyages, an accident led to the closer examination of the coasts of Western Australia by the Dutch. In 1684 a vessel had sailed from Holland for the Dutch possessions in the East Indies, and after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, she was never again heard of. Some twelve years afterwards the East India Company fitted out an expedition under the leadership of Commander William de Vlaming, with the object of searching for any traces of the lost vessel on the western shores of New Holland. Towards the close of the year 1696 this expedition reached the island of Rottneest which was thoroughly explored, and early the following year a landing party discovered and named the Swan River. The vessels then proceeded northward without finding any traces of the object of their search, but, at the same time, making fairly accurate charts of the coast line.

From this time onward the country was visited by various explorers; but the expeditions of Lieutenant King (1818-22) are the most noteworthy, inasmuch as this officer made very careful surveys of the whole of the western coast from King George's Sound to Cambridge Gulf, and continued his observations from this point along the northern shores of the Continent. King's work was so thoroughly and accurately done that his charts and sailing directions still form the basis of those in use at the present day.

Expeditions fitted out by the French Government had at various periods touched at the shores of Western Australia; and, in 1825, the presence of two French vessels, the "Thetis" and "L'Esperance," off the coast, roused the suspicion that France had designs on some portion of the Continent—a suspicion never altogether absent from the minds of the Colonial authorities. At this juncture, therefore, Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling (Governor-General of New South Wales) sent Major Lockyer with a detachment of the 39th Regiment, and a small party of convicts, numbering in all some seventy-five or eighty souls, to found a settlement at King George's Sound. The harbour was selected in preference to a port on the west coast on account of its unique advantages as a naval base. Lockyer's expedition landed at the Sound on the 25th December, 1825.

Twelve months later (17th January, 1827), Captain Gilbert, in H.M.S. "Success," was despatched from Sydney to re-victual the infant settlement, and also to examine the Swan River, with a view to its occupation, the Imperial authorities fearing that they might be forestalled by the French. The "Success" had on board as a passenger Mr. Charles Fraser, the Colonial Botanist of New South Wales. On the 5th March, the expedition reached Rottnest Island, which was explored. On the following day the vessel anchored off the mouth of the Swan River. On the 7th March the "Success" was moored at Berthollet Island (now known as Carnac), and, on the following day, the first gig and the cutter, victualled for fourteen days, and well armed, proceeded up the Swan River, which was explored to its supposed source; the boats experiencing, however, some difficulty in crossing the shallows near the islands which now form part of the causeway. About 15 miles up the stream two gardens were planted, and friendly relations were established with a party of natives by means of presents. The cutter returned to the "Success," and left the gig to make a hasty exploration of another river, to which the French had given the name of the Moreau (now called the Canning), which survey was successfully carried out. The crew of the vessel was subsequently employed in surveying the islands of Rottnest, Berthollet, and Buache, and the neighbouring reefs. On the island of Buache itself was planted a garden, from which circumstance it probably derives its present name of Garden Island; and a cow, three sheep, and three goats were placed thereon. On the 21st March, 1827, the "Success" sailed for Geographe Bay, where she arrived three days afterwards. On the 2nd April King George's Sound was

made, and the settlement planted there was found to be in anything but a satisfactory condition. Leaving the Sound on the 4th April the vessel dropped anchor in Port Jackson on the morning of the 15th. Captain Gilbert and Mr. Fraser both seem to have been highly impressed with the capabilities of the country around Swan River. Indeed, so encouraging were the reports made by the members of the expedition, that a settlement at the Swan River was finally resolved upon by the Imperial authorities on the earnest recommendation of Governor Darling; and Captain James Stirling, who appears to have been His Excellency's personal representative to the Home Government, was sent to England to receive instructions, and to take charge of the work of organising the expedition, should it be determined upon. In the meantime, about April, 1829, to Captain Fremantle, of H.M.S. "Challenger," who had been despatched for the purpose by Commodore Schomberg, of the Indian Squadron, was entrusted the hoisting of the British flag, and the taking possession of the newly-examined country. Captain Fremantle thereupon proceeded to the coast, and anchored off the Swan River. On the 1st June, 1829, he hoisted the British flag on the north side of the stream, at the locality which now bears his name, taking formal possession in the name of His Majesty King George IV, of "all that part of New Holland which is not included within the territory of New South Wales."

It would appear that Captain Stirling reached England in 1828, for the first Order in Council having reference to the Swan River settlement is dated in the month of December of that year. This Order, for the encouragement of emigration to the new colony offered advantageous terms to persons proceeding to it, at their own expense, during the currency of the year 1829. The Home Government, indeed, refused to incur the cost of a single passage or to undertake the maintenance of emigrants on their arrival in the new land, or their subsequent removal from it if such should be found necessary; but all persons who should arrive before the end of the year 1830, according to a later Order in Council, were promised grants of land, free of quit rent, in proportion to the capital introduced by them, to be invested in the improvement of their holdings, at the rate of 40 acres for every sum of £3 invested—or, 1s. 6d. per acre; choice to be made of situation in the order of arrival. The invested capital was scheduled to comprise:—(1) Stock of every description; (2) all implements of husbandry, and other articles applicable to the purposes of the productive industry, or necessary for the establishment of the settler on the land where he was to be located; (3) the amount of any half-pay or pension received from Government. Persons who imported labour were entitled, for the passage of every labouring person brought into the Colony, to land to the value of £15—namely, 200 acres; the introducer of labour being, however, liable, in the event of such necessity, for the future maintenance of the work-people introduced. This privilege applied to women, and to children above 10 years of age

—these being classed simply as labourers. A condition was attached that any of these conceded lands, which at the end of twenty-one years had not been sufficiently reclaimed, or satisfactorily improved, should revert absolutely to the Crown. As already stated, the first Order in Council dealing with emigration to the Swan River settlement limited the land privileges to the currency of 1829; the later Order extended the time for the issue of free grants until the end of 1830. But, apparently, the original offer was considered to be more liberal than expedient, as, according to the second Order, it was declared that selection licenses could be granted to settlers on proof of value of property imported, but the fee simple could not be obtained until proof was given that the sum of 1s. 6d. per acre had been expended in the cultivation of the land, or in other solid improvements. It was further stipulated that all granted lands were, within three years of occupation, either to be cultivated or otherwise improved, to a fair proportion of at least one-fourth, or the owners would be liable to the payment of 6d. per acre into the public chest; and should the lands, at the end of seven years, still remain in a state of nature, they were to be forfeited absolutely to the Crown. After the end of the year 1830 further modifications of the free-grant system were introduced, and before long it was totally abolished, land being subsequently obtainable, by purchase only, at varying rates. The land regulations under which the first settlement of the colony was effected, however, largely influenced its early history; and the result of their application is felt even at the present time.

The tempting offers made by the Imperial Government of grants of land, large and small, in proportion to the amount of property introduced, attracted many capitalists, and the consequence was that extensive tracts of the finest territory were granted to purely speculative investors. The efforts of the Colonial Office to obtain emigrants for the Swan River settlement were, therefore, successful beyond all anticipation; the eager competitors for property absolutely given away, knowing, of course, comparatively nothing of the character of the country in which they proposed to settle, or of the hardships, difficulties, and dangers that must of necessity beset them.

The first vessels to sail from England for the settlement at the Swan River were H.M.S. "Sulphur," having on board a detachment of the 63rd Regiment of Light Infantry, and the hired transport "Parmelia," which carried the emigrants and the principal part of the stock and implements. The two ships left England about the 13th or 14th February, 1829. On the 6th June following the "Parmelia" anchored in Cockburn Sound, having on board Lieutenant-Governor Stirling and his family; the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Peter Brown; the Surveyor-General, Lieutenant Roe, R.N.; their wives and families; Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Sutherland, Mr. George Eliot, and other intending settlers, numbering in all sixty-nine. Two days later arrived H.M.S. "Sulphur," having on board Captain F. C. Irwin, in command of a

company of the 63rd Regiment, comprising a staff officer, three subalterns, two sergeants, three corporals, a bugler, and forty-six rank and file. Having left a party of about half its strength to protect the stores, settlers, etc., on Garden Island (Buache), the remainder of the force debarked on the 17th June and encamped on the north bank of the Swan River (now Rous Head), relieving the party of seamen and marines from H.M.S. "Challenger," which had been left in charge of the British flag planted there by Captain Fremantle on the 1st June. With the landing of the immigrants from the "Parmelia" the history of Western Australia begins.

After the "Parmelia" followed the "Calista," the "St. Leonard," the "Marquis of Anglesea," and within eighteen months some thirty other vessels, carrying to the settlement over a thousand immigrants, representing, it is said, £100,000 in money, stock, or goods, on account of which, before the year 1830 had ended, claims for more than a million acres in free grants of land had been presented. Up to the 31st December of the year mentioned there had arrived in the Colony, as nearly as can be reckoned, and without counting the detachment of troops and their families, about 1,767 persons, bringing with them stock represented by 101 horses, 583 head of cattle, 7,981 sheep, 66 pigs, 36 goats, and a variety of poultry. Between the 1st September, 1829, and the 30th June, 1830, the value of the property introduced, upon which land was claimed, amounted to £73,260 8s. 3½d., equal, at 1s. 6d. per acre, to 976,805 acres of freehold land, while miscellaneous property, inapplicable to the improvement of land, had been imported to the value of £21,021 2s. 7d., making a total value of £94,281 10s. 10½d.

The best land was appropriated on the free grant system so rapidly and so prodigally that persons arriving within a few months of the first settlement of the colony could find no land available within easy access of the two rivers—Swan and Canning—along whose course settlement was then only possible. There were, of course, at this time no made roads, and the bush tracks consisted solely of dry, heavy sand. Water carriage was, therefore, the sole means of transport for produce. The only way to obtain land in an accessible position, and suitable for agricultural purposes, was for a new arrival to take over a portion of a block already in occupation, guaranteeing to the grantee to perform sufficient work in the way of improvements on the part taken, as to secure the whole concession—the remainder of the property, in such a case, in all probability would be left permanently in a state of nature. In course of time, and as the result of inability to cope with unaccustomed conditions, numerous would-be settlers left the Colony in disgust, but they still retained possession of the immense tracts of land granted to them; hence population was thinly scattered over a wide area, the pick of the territory being unprofitably locked up.

From these re-emigrations it will be seen that many of the earliest settlers were persons entirely unqualified for pioneer life and the

hardships of existence confronting those who essay to "rough it" in a new country. The first immigrants, indeed, comprised mainly gentlemen of culture and good position, their tenderly nurtured families, and indentured servants and agricultural labourers. They included among them retired officers of the Army and Navy, professional men, civil servants, and some of the younger sons of English families of wealth and high social standing. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that those settlers, landing as they did in a most inclement season, and wholly unprepared for the rude experiences they had to undergo, should have sent home reports of a most gloomy and discouraging nature.

In due course, also, but gradually, it was found that the expectations formed as to the fertility of the soil had been far too sanguine. Food became scarce, and pastoral and agricultural operations languished from want of capital to stock and to till the lands. To these drawbacks were added large losses of stock from disease or from eating the poison plant, and it became apparent that the young colony could only with the greatest difficulty maintain itself independent of outside assistance. As a last disaster came serious trouble with the natives. Not only were their houses robbed by their dusky foes, their crops torn up by the roots, and their cattle speared, but even the lives of the disheartened settlers were daily in danger, and it was all but determined on one serious occasion to abandon the infant settlement; indeed, but for prompt action by the Governor, things would have gone ill with a section of the colony from this menacing source. Between Bunbury and Garden Island, Peel's Inlet is the only break in the monotony of the low sandhills which fringe the coast. On the banks of the River Murray, a stream of some importance flowing into this backwater of the ocean, Mr. Peel, one of the earliest of the first settlers, established himself in days gone by, and here, at the small hamlet of Pinjarrah and in its neighbourhood, a small and scattered population is still maintained. This place is memorable in the history of Western Australia as the scene of the most serious of the many skirmishes which in the first few years of settlement took place between the colonists and the aborigines. In the year 1834 the members of the Pinjarrah tribes had committed atrocious murders on several of the few white residents in the district, and in the month of October the Governor, Sir James Stirling, accompanied by Mr. Peel and several other colonists, put himself at the head of a party of military and police, and coming upon the culprits in large numbers on the banks of the Murray, some 10 miles from Peel's Inlet, he engaged them, and after a smart skirmish put them to flight. In this locally celebrated "Battle of Pinjarrah" a considerable number of natives were killed, and several of the settlers more or less seriously injured. The result was, however, that outrages and depredations on the part of the natives almost wholly ceased, and that friendly relations between them and the white population ultimately grew up.

Captain Stirling, the superintendent of the first colonising expedition, was, before departing from England, created Lieutenant-Governor, and a promise was made that a Bill would be submitted to Parliament to make provision for the Civil Government of the new colony, which promise was duly fulfilled when, on the 14th May, 1829, "An Act to provide until the 31st day of December, 1834, for the Government of His Majesty's Settlement in Western Australia, on the Western Coast of New Holland," received the Royal Assent. The officials appointed comprised a Secretary to the Government, a Government Surveyor and Assistant Surveyor, a Harbour-master, a Deputy Harbour-master and Pilot, a Superintendent of Government Farms, Gardens, and Plantations, a Superintendent of Government Stock, a Storekeeper, a Civil Engineer, a Registrar, and a Surgeon—a list strikingly eloquent of the primitive and patriarchal nature of the first settlement, in which several of the functions usually left to private individuals were provisionally discharged by Government.

On the 8th June, 1829, the Lieutenant-Governor issued a warrant for the establishment of a Board of Commissioners, who should examine into and report upon such matters as might be referred to it relative to the management of the property within the settlement, and for the purpose of auditing and passing all public accounts, and demanding, receiving, and duly apportioning all fines, fees, and forfeitures accruing or becoming due to the Government. The Board, as first constituted, consisted of the Harbour-master, Captain Mark J. Currie, R.N., as presiding commissioner; together with the Government Surveyor, Lieutenant John Septimus Roe, R.N.; and Mr. William Stirling, the lastnamed acting also as registrar and secretary *pro tem*. This body was called the Board of Council and Audit.

By an Order in Council, dated the 1st November, 1830, the first Executive Council of the Colony of Western Australia was constituted. The Order in question, after settling the Constitution of the Council, declared its authority and power to make, ordain, and establish all such laws and ordinances, and to constitute such Courts and officers as might be necessary for the peace, order, and good government of His Majesty's subjects, and others, within the settlements. In the constitution of the Executive Council, as set forth in the Order of November, 1830, no change took place until June, 1847, when, under the authority of a Royal Order in Council, the Collector of Revenue was appointed an Executive Officer.

Notwithstanding the fact that a good number of the early settlers had returned to England or departed to the eastern colonies, where the conditions of life were less rugged, steady progress was made by those who remained. The towns of Perth and Freemantle had been much improved, while settlement was extending on the river flats. Higher up the river, farms and gardens had been laid out, and at Guildford the husbandmen brought out by Mr. Peel were turning the rich soil to profitable account. On the upper Swan River; on the Canning, to the

south ; over the hills, at York ; on the River Murray ; at Augusta, and at King George's Sound,—settlement was industriously spreading. Governor Stirling, in a despatch to Sir George Murray, G.C.B., then Secretary for State for the Colonies, writes of the colonists about this time as working with a cheerful confidence in the qualities of the country, and a general belief in its future prosperity ; and for a time the young settlement really did progress with a slow yeomanlike steadfastness.

In comparison with the eastern colonies, however, which progressed by leaps and bounds, Western Australia seemed to advance with very halting gait. Still, it must be remembered that the western colony was the victim of a peculiar set of circumstances. In the first place, as previously mentioned, the early colonists were not the best fitted for pioneer work in a new country. Then, again, the colony was in an isolated position, cut off by 2,000 miles of unknown country from the eastern settlements, and rarely visited by the ocean carriers of commerce. The discoveries, too, of valuable mineral deposits which had brought wealth and progress to the eastern colonies, had yet to be made in Western Australia. Moreover, the land, except in comparatively restricted areas, was barren, and in many places infested with a plant which poisoned flocks and herds feeding on it, while nearly all the best land was locked up in large grants, owned by persons who were for the most part at little pains to develop them. However, despite all these drawbacks, the small community of settlers was, generally speaking, so united, and consisted of people of such cultured tastes, that the earlier years of the colony's history were socially the brightest.

Captain James Stirling, R.N., who held the rank of Lieutenant-Governor, administered the affairs of the settlement from the 6th June, 1829, to September, 1832. The next Lieutenant-Governor was Captain Irwin, the Commandant of the Forces, who continued in office till the month of September, 1833. Then followed Captain Richard Daniell, up to May, 1834, when for a fortnight the colony was administered by Captain Picton Beete, Daniell resuming control of affairs and continuing in office till August, 1834, at which date Captain Stirling (now Sir James Stirling) entered upon his second term, this time as Governor with full rank, which closed at the end of the year 1838.

In the meantime the free-grant land system of settlement, which had been inaugurated with the first days of colonisation, had been working out in anything but a satisfactory manner. Magnificent estates had been lavishly squandered upon propertied immigrants during the first few years of the colony's existence, and the splendid territorial munificence of the Government soon began to show its retarding influence in the country's progress. All the best land, the "eyes" of the districts watered by the Swan, the Canning, and the Avon, as well as the finest patches in the vicinity of the more southern settlements, were gone beyond recall. It is now recognised that if the conditions originally imposed in the making of these grants had been rigidly insisted upon

no abiding mischief might have been inflicted upon the young colony. The Orders in Council, under which the Governor was empowered to act, offered land in extent proportioned only to capital invested in the colony for purposes of absolute improvement. Practically, however, grants of land were made for any and every kind of property the immigrant who imported it might choose to make a claim for in the form of acreage. Even articles of furniture, art, and plate, were assessed as valuable accretions to the colony's wealth, and acknowledged in donations carved from the public estate. Again, the occupation obligations were carried out neither in the letter nor in the spirit. It is recorded that full and unconditional titles were readily obtained, and that over a million acres of the best portions of those districts which, from the nearness to the chief township and the seaport of the colony, might most easily have been brought into profitable cultivation, became "locked up" in a huge land monopoly. When the poorer emigrants—the labourers and the mechanics, and such servants as had achieved freedom from their indentures—sought to establish themselves upon the soil, they found that they were shut out from these very areas where their enterprise and their labour would have been most productively and usefully applied.

Sir James Stirling gave up the reins of Government at the end of the year, 1838. He was succeeded by Governor John Hutt, whose administration lasted from January, 1839, to December, 1845. The next Governor was Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Clarke, from February, 1846, to February, 1847. Then came Governor Lieutenant-Colonel Irwin, from February, 1847, to July, 1848, and Captain Charles Fitzgerald, from August, 1848, to June 1855; and the term of office of the last-named officer ushers in a new era in the history of Western Australia. When the colony was founded, the Imperial authorities had made an agreement with the first settlers that no convicts or prisoners were to be transported to the new settlement, as was the case with regard to New South Wales and Tasmania. Some twenty years had rolled by, and Western Australia numbered close upon 7,000 inhabitants; 4,000 acres had been brought into cultivation, sheep had increased to 140,000, cattle to 11,000, imports had reached a value of £45,000, and exports £30,000. Nevertheless, the struggle to make a living was becoming harder and harder, trade was languishing, labour was difficult to obtain, and immigrants did not appear to find the country attractive enough to bring them thither—a result, doubtless, of the manner in which the land was locked up in big estates. "Widespread depression prevailed amongst the colonists, and at last, though with dire misgivings on the part of many, they decided to petition the Home Government for the introduction of convicted prisoners, hoping thus to obtain cheap labour, an abundant expenditure, and a market for their cheap produce." The colonists of Western Australia had no difficulty in gaining a complaisant answer to their petition; for, at this juncture, the Imperial authorities were feeling the pressing necessity of having some oversea settlement suitable for the deportation

thereto of criminals. The first batch of convicts was landed at Fremantle on the 1st June, 1850. Transportation to the colony was continued for about eighteen years, during which time some 10,000 members of the criminal class were added to its population. In the earlier years of the "transportation system" the convicts who were landed in Western Australia did not by any means belong to the worst type of criminal. Some of the shipments, indeed, were selected with special care, and with a view to meeting the requirements of a labour-starved colony. Although there was undoubtedly a sprinkling of hardened villains, a great proportion of those sent out consisted of agricultural labourers who were transported for some petty infraction of the game laws. Prisoners of this class were of great use during their term of sentence, and later on developed into an excellent body of settlers.

Governor Fitzgerald retired from office in June, 1855, and was succeeded in the administration by Arthur Edward Kennedy, afterwards Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy, and Governor of Queensland. Kennedy's term of office came to an end in February, 1862; for ten days or so the Government was administered by Lieutenant-Colonel John Bruce, as Acting-Governor; and then John S. Hampton, took over the control of the colony.

The complaints against the use of bond labour in injudicious directions which were frequently made in Governor Fitzgerald's time disappeared with Hampton's assumption of office. His admirers declare that there was an absolute change for the better all round. He had qualified himself for the position of Governor of a penal settlement by holding an office of authority in Tasmania connected with the convict system of that colony. He was a stern disciplinarian, and was able to gauge to a nicety how to get the maximum of work from the human muscle, and how to employ convict labour to the best advantage. He set to work with a will to improve the colony's means of communication, and succeeded so well that it has been said of him: "The remembrance of Mr. Hampton's administration is perpetuated in miles upon miles of macadamised road, in the covering of many a heavy sand-stretch with well-laid metal, and in bridges and causeways innumerable over river and swamp, from one end of the settled districts to the other."

Governor Hampton surrendered his office in the month of November, 1868, and with the termination of his régime the era of convictism was closed; but with the cessation of transportation, and the maintenance of prison labour, passed away also the large Imperial expenditure—although the withdrawal was gradual. The settlers at first felt this rather keenly, for though willing enough to be cleansed of the convict "taint," they were far from pleased at the loss of its solatium in currency. The "system" had reigned in the Colony for about eighteen years; and the settlers' expectation of material advantage accruing from its continuance in their midst had been

fairly satisfied. Nevertheless, beyond giving cheap labour, and a large circulation of money, transportation had done nothing for the general advancement of the colony, and had rather fostered than removed its chief bane— isolation. Transportation had ceased in the case of New South Wales in 1849; in that of Tasmania, in 1852; it had never been introduced into Victoria, South Australia, and (since its birth as a colony) Queensland. The eastern and southern colonies, therefore, looked askance at the distant western settlement.

After the conclusion of Governor Hampton's term of office, the colony was administered, from November, 1868, to September, 1869, by Lieutenant-Colonel John Bruce, the Commandant of the Forces, as Acting-Governor. Frederick A. Weld, was the next Governor, and he ruled the Colony from September, 1869, to December, 1874. During his régime, and by an order of the Queen in Council, dated the 3rd April, 1871, the Executive Council was remodelled. The Governor remained President; the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Senior Officer in command of the Land Forces, and the Surveyor-General retained their seats, whilst those of the Comptroller-General and Collector of Revenue were abolished.

Governor Weld, who had been trained to political and public life in the progressive and restless colony of New Zealand, saw with dismay the condition of stagnation in which Western Australia seemed perfectly contented to remain. He had been accustomed to a country which enjoyed a considerable measure of freedom and prosperity. Filled with enthusiasm, he conceived it to be his duty to break down the barriers which shut in the colony from intercourse with the outside world, as well as to provide more adequate means of communication between the centres of settlement within it. His first task was to arrange for regular steam communication between Albany, the Vasse, Bunbury, Fremantle, and Geraldton. This was the beginning of a trade which steadily grew, and later on all the intermediate ports between Albany and Cambridge Gulf enjoyed the advantages of a regular and efficient steam service. The Governor next turned his attention to the question of telegraphic communication, and in spite of the apathy of the colonists on the subject, had the satisfaction, before his departure, of seeing all the principal centres of population connected by telegraph lines. The closing act of this energetic Governor and true benefactor to the people whom he governed, was the planting of the first pole of the line of wire which has since brought Western Australia into direct communication with the other colonies of Australasia and with the world. During Mr. Weld's term of office he made a strong attempt to move the colonists in the direction of railway construction; though this could not, considering the colony's limited resources, be carried out on anything like an extensive scale at that time, he had the satisfaction of seeing a beginning made with two distinct railway systems, one commencing at Geraldton and the other at Fremantle.

Western Australia owes much to Mr. Weld's practical and progressive administration. In addition to the works already alluded to as carried out during his term of office, various industries, notably mining, were developed; a partially representative Legislature was established; municipal institutions were introduced; an Education Act was passed; and important explorations were successfully conducted by Mr. John Forrest.

It must not be forgotten, however, that useful explorations had been previously carried out, and had greatly furthered the extension of settlement. As far back as the year 1831, Captain Bannister had made an overland journey from Perth to King George's Sound, and his track afterwards became the regular overland route.

In 1837 Lieutenant Grey (afterwards Sir George Grey) set out on an expedition, having for its objective the north-west and western portions of the continent, and although the work was hindered by the opposition of the natives, and by sickness among the exploring party, important additions were made to geographical knowledge. Then Lieutenant Roe, Surveyor-General of the Colony, made several journeys eastward, and he was followed by various other explorers, but their discoveries were not of great practical utility. In 1839 Grey set out on his second expedition northward, and on this occasion again the members of the party suffered great hardships. Grey claimed to have discovered the Gascoyne, Murchison, Hutt, Bower, Buller, Chapman, Greenough, Irwin, Arrowsmith, and Smith Rivers, but the difficulties and privations met with on the expedition prevented him from making any detailed surveys of his discoveries.

Edward John Eyre's tremendous effort to march round the head of the Australian Bight, with a single black boy, in 1840-1, belongs rather to the history of South Australia than to that of Western Australia. Nevertheless, his exploratory expedition was of value in giving a more thorough and detailed knowledge of the geography of the coast of the latter colony, than that before possessed.

The colonists of the Swan River settlement believed that although their little colony was encircled by a belt of desert land, beyond the desert lay rich agricultural and pastoral country. Various efforts were from time to time made to penetrate this surrounding waste. In 1843 Messrs. Landor and Lefroy made a short excursion from York, but nothing tangible resulted from their exploration. Again, in 1846, three brothers named Gregory set out from Bolgart Spring, the farthest stock-station eastward, with the object of discovering fresh pastoral land. The country passed over in their eastward journey was found, however, to be barren and inhospitable, and interspersed here and there with numerous salt lakes. The explorers next turned their attention to the streams crossed by Grey in his disastrous expedition to Shark's Bay, and, at the head of one of these, the Arrowsmith, a seam of coal was discovered.

Another expedition eastward, in charge of Lieutenant Roe, who was accompanied by Mr. H. C. Gregory, set out on the 14th September, 1848. Beyond making further additions to the stock of geographical knowledge, the result of the expedition was unsatisfactory. In December of the same year Governor Fitzgerald, accompanied by Messrs. A. C. Gregory and Bland, proceeded to the scene of the discovery of coal already alluded to. During this expedition a serious conflict arose with the aborigines, in the course of which the Governor was wounded by a spear. In 1858 Mr. F. Gregory made important discoveries of excellent pastoral lands on the banks of the rivers previously crossed by Grey, and his expedition added greatly to geographical knowledge. In 1861 another expedition, led by Mr. F. Gregory, made Nickol Bay, on the north-west coast, the starting point of its explorations. This expedition was very successful, discovering several important rivers, amongst others the Fortescue, Ashburton, De Grey, Oakover, &c., and opening up some splendid pastoral country. Mr. Walcott, who was second in command, also discovered the existence of the pearl-shell beds, which have since proved such a source of income to the Colony.

It was not long before enterprising pastoralists occupied the newly-discovered pasture lands. Mr. Padbury, in 1863, sent the first shipment of stock to Butcher's Inlet, and thence occupation rapidly spread eastward to the De Grey River. Subsequently an attempt was made at forming a settlement at Roebuck Bay, but the hostility of the aborigines, coupled with bad seasons and misfortunes generally, led to its abandonment in 1867.

In 1864 a small settlement was established at Camden Harbour, the country round which had been reported as very suitable for colonisation. But from its very inception nothing but disaster was met with, the grass proved unsuitable for stock, the poison-plant was found in abundance, the colonists themselves suffered from ill-health, and the natives were very hostile. Consequently it was decided to abandon the settlement, and the decision was acted on in 1865.

In the tract of country, known as the "Nor'-West," which lies between the De Grey and Ashburton Rivers, there were grouped, by the end of 1867, the original pioneers of the district, some later arrivals, and the remnant of the Roebuck Bay and Camden Harbour experiments. To these must be added the members of a company formed in Melbourne, in 1865, to settle A. C. Gregory's recently-discovered Denison Plains. The colonists of the "Nor'-west" suffered many hardships in the early days of settlement. The decline in the price of wool, and the large expenses coincident with the maintaining of a Colony so far removed from the basis of supply proved a heavy strain on their original resources. But later on, with the advent of more favourable seasons, and the rise in price of wool, prospects became brighter, and this division now ranks among the finest pastoral areas in the Colony.

In 1869 Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Forrest made his first exploration, in the course of which he penetrated 250 miles farther eastward than

any previous explorer, but the country passed over proved to be extremely inhospitable. Mr. Forrest was next given command of an expedition which had for its object the traversing of the country between Perth and Adelaide, along the shores of the Great Australian Bight. In this expedition he proved that the desert surrounding the tall cliffs of the inlet did not extend for any great distance inland, where, indeed, he met with fine pastoral country, although the absence of permanent surface water proved a great drawback. In 1871 he made a second journey in search of new pastoral country. The one important circumstance made known by these expeditions was the absence of any river which it was thought might have been unwittingly crossed at its mouth by Eyre in 1840.

The tract of country between the Transcontinental Telegraph Line and the Western Settlements now became the area of the keenest exploratory attention. In 1872 Ernest Giles led an expedition from South Australia to the westward but his progress was stayed by the large dry salt lake, to which he gave the name of Lake Amadeus. In a further expedition his comrade, named Gibson, lost his life in the desert, since known as Gibson's desert.

In 1873 an expedition was fitted out by Messrs. Hughes and Elder, the command of which was entrusted to Colonel Warburton. After suffering incredible hardships the party managed to reach the head of the Oakover River, but the results of the expedition were disappointing. In the same year a party, under the leadership of Mr. Gosse, discovered fine pastoral country in the vicinity of the Marryat and Alberga Rivers; but the barren nature of the country precluded exploration to the westward.

One of the most remarkable journeys in the annals of Australian exploration was that undertaken by Mr. John Forrest in 1874. Colonel Warburton had succeeded in crossing the desert, albeit naked and starving when he reached the coast. John Forrest determined to accomplish the feat, and to accomplish it on more prudential and more successful lines. With this object in view an expedition was fitted out, comprising John Forrest as leader, his brother Alexander, two other whites, and two natives, with ordinary pack and saddle horses. On the 14th April, 1874, the party left Yuin, then the furthest outside station on the Murchison River. For the first six weeks there was little to record. The route lay along river-courses and through well-grassed country. When the explorers struck eastward they were fortunate in discovering some fine wells. Their agreeable experiences lasted until they got into the spinifex country, and then their troubles commenced. On the 8th June the leader started with one black boy to look for water, leaving instructions for the party to follow up in a few days' time. The two travelled 20 miles over undulating sand-hills clothed with spinifex, but were unable to find the priceless fluid. From the top of a low stony rise the view was gloomy in the extreme. Far to the north and east it was all spinifex country, quite level

and destitute of water. They turned back and met the remainder of the party a few miles from the spring at which they had been camped. A retreat was beaten, and the entire expedition fell back upon its former oasis. A day was taken to rest in, and then Alexander Forrest and a black boy went forth on a quest for water towards the south-east. During their absence the natives made an unexpected attack upon the camp, but they were repulsed after a desperate struggle. Alexander Forrest and the black boy had travelled over 50 miles from camp, and, though they had passed over much good grazing country, they had found no signs of water. The explorers now set to work and built a rough hut of stone, in order to ensure safety from the blacks during the night; for their stay at Weld Springs seemed likely to be indefinite, and a fresh attack might be expected at any moment. When the hut was completed, Forrest, taking with him a black boy, started out on a flying journey due eastward. This time they were fortunate in finding a small supply in some clay waterholes, and the whole party thereupon removed to this locality. On the 22nd June the leader started on another quest ahead, and 30 miles distant found a fine supply of water in a gully running through a grassy plain, where there was abundant fodder for the horses. Eight miles to the southward was discovered a small salt lake, to which was given the name Augusta. On the 30th June, John Forrest, while exploring ahead and searching for water, pushed far into the spinifex desert with his horses "knocked up." By the aid of scanty pools of rain-water in the rocks, he managed to push on for some distance, walking most of the way. He reached a range, and from its summit had an extensive but discouraging view. Far as the eye could pierce, the horizon was as level and as uniform as the sea—everywhere spinifex; no hills or ranges loomed in the distance. It was disheartening in the extreme. From time to time this experience was repeated. The supply of water was as precarious as it was priceless. Sometimes one of the brothers, sometimes the other, would find a sparse quantity in the rock-hollows and clay-pans of the desert. Sometimes both would fail. Now and again the finds of water were copious, as in the case of Wandich, Pierre, Weld, and Alexander Springs. Generally, however, they were scanty, and rapidly exhausted. Eventually the explorers got into country which, though anything but desirable as pasture land, nevertheless yielded them water. Here they were within a hundred miles of Gosse's "furthest" westward; and to span this short distance proved a weary work. Repeated excursions resulted only in repeated disappointments and "knocked up" horses. At last a generous shower of rain filled some rock-holes to the north-east of their camp, and after much exertion the whole party managed to reach an old stopping-place used by the explorer Giles, and named by him Fort Mueller. By this time they were also on Gosse's tracks, and the leader was able to congratulate himself upon the successful accomplishment of his task. From this point to the Transcontinental

Telegraph Line the route is practically that followed by Gosse, and on the 27th September Forrest struck the wire some distance north of the Peake Station, thus concluding a most valuable expedition in a highly satisfactory manner. On his arrival at the station Forrest learned that Giles and Ross had both turned their backs upon the inhospitable country which he had traversed in safety and with success.

The history of Western Australia is the history of a succession of pastoral settlements following in the wake of successful exploration, and in this connection it may be remarked that not one of the other colonies presented such terrible natural obstacles to the progress of the pioneer. As settlement extended Government residents were appointed to the charge of various districts with executive and legal functions, the chief law officer being styled Commissioner of the Civil Court. The Civil Service was expanded gradually, but during the first forty years of the colony's history the system of Government underwent little change. There was little desire during this period for administration of a more popular type. The Governors were anxious to learn the wants of the colonists and where possible to meet them. They maintained personal relations of a friendly social description with the leading settlers, and the views and the expressed wishes of the upper classes had full weight in determining the policy of the Government. The populations of the towns were too small to originate democratic ideals, or to agitate for constitutional reform. It is, of course, obvious that during the convict period personal government was almost a necessity; but no sooner had transportation ceased than political aspirations began to awaken, and the people evinced a desire to partake more directly in the management of their affairs. In the year 1870 Governor Weld was allowed to introduce a Constitution in which the Executive remained practically the same, but it was assisted by a Legislature, two-thirds of the members of which were returned by the constituencies into which the colony had been divided. This system of administration appears to have been well suited to the circumstances of the country at that time, and, in conjunction with municipal institutions, road boards, and boards of education (which were simultaneously established), served to prepare the people for the exercise of more advanced self-governing powers.

Up to the time of Governor Weld's arrival the Colonial Secretary had held a position practically little removed above that of the Governor's Chief Clerk, but to Mr. F. P. Barlee, who then occupied the post, the new administrator extended a far greater measure of confidence than had been enjoyed by any of the Secretary's predecessors, Mr. Barlee being permitted to assume a virtually ministerial position. When the time approached for the Governor's departure, the Chief Secretary, being desirous of keeping the measure of influence which he had gained, conceived the idea of becoming Premier under a form of Responsible Government. With this end in view he gained over the Governor's support to the scheme, and also enlisted the sympathies of several of the more prominent members of the Legislative Council.

Accordingly, in 1874, resolutions were passed urging the Governor to introduce a Constitution Bill conferring Responsible Government upon the colony. To this His Excellency gave his consent, but differences of opinion arose as to the details of the measure, and the Legislature was dissolved.

Governor Weld continued in office until December, 1874, and was succeeded by William C. F. Robinson, in the month of January in the year following. Upon the meeting of the new Legislative Council resolutions were again adopted expressing a desire for Constitutional change, to which eventually a discouraging reply was received from the Colonial Office. Governor Robinson had received instructions to throw cold water on the movement, but his task was by no means easy until the departure of Mr. Barlee from the colony. The Colonial Secretary, dissatisfied, as he expected to be, with the restricted position in which he found himself with an administrator of the old school, took leave of absence, and subsequently accepted the Government of Honduras. With the withdrawal of its energetic leader, the Responsible Government Party collapsed.

During the early part of Governor Robinson's term of office a noteworthy exploratory journey was made from South Australia at the expense of Sir Thomas Elder, and under the leadership of Ernest Giles, who had twice previously been driven back in his efforts to cross the great Western Australian desert. The expedition set out from Beltana, and travelled to Youldah where a depôt was formed. From the latter place the explorers started on their long and toilsome journey, and eventually reached an out station in Western Australia on the 4th November. From this point Giles retraced his steps to the Transcontinental Telegraph Line, following a track to the northward of the route traversed by Forrest.

Governor Robinson's term of office was extremely uneventful. Instead of stimulating the activities of the colonists, and leading the progressive party as Governor Weld had done, Robinson sought to restrain and modify their ambitions and aspirations. His administration concluded in August, 1877, and for some four months Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Douglas Harvest controlled the affairs of the Colony until the arrival of the new Governor, Major-General Sir Harry St. George Ord, in November of the same year.

The new Governor soon found that public opinion had drifted strongly towards responsible government not from any great dissatisfaction with the local policy pursued by the Governor and his advisers, but rather by reason of the restraints which the policy of the Colonial Office imposed upon a forward movement in local affairs. In the Legislative Council a motion in favour of Responsible Government was again brought forward. It was rejected, but only that an amendment might be substituted plainly intimating that it would soon become impossible to stem the movement if the Secretary of State for the Colonies continued the existing practice of interfering and thwarting the popular longing

for progressive measures. The Governor took advantage of a visit paid by the Hon. John Forrest to England to make, through that gentleman, strong representations upon the mischievous tendency of this obstructive policy. The result was that the officials of the Colonial Office gradually lessened the frequency of their intervention in the affairs of the Colony, and authority for several much needed railway works, hitherto held back, was granted and the requisite loans sanctioned. These grievances assuaged, another soon arose respecting the lack of control possessed by the House of Legislature over the expenditure of public money. No real power rested with the representatives of the people in this matter. Estimates indeed were passed, but as a mere matter of form. What moneys the Government thought fit to spend they spent; the Legislature was powerless to prevent them. However, no accusations of wild extravagance could be brought against the Governor and his Executive. They spent no more than they deemed necessary in the interests of the public service. But by making themselves independent of the House for their requirements they completely deprived that body of the power which it would necessarily have exercised had it controlled the public purse. The colonist had, however, to wait for a time in patience for the guardianship of the finances.

Early in 1879 Western Australia sent out another of the exploring parties which formed such a feature, indeed, the salient feature, of her history. The leadership was given to Alexander Forrest, who had accompanied his brother John on two of his great journeys into the interior. Funds were provided by the Government, and horses and equipments by the "Nor'-West" settlers. Alexander Forrest, with a small party, left Anderson's station, on the De Grey River, with a view of proceeding overland to King's Sound, and thence of penetrating through the Kimberleys to South Australia. The expedition set out on the 25th February, 1877, and reached Beagle Bay on the 10th April. Success of the most gratifying character attended this trip, though during its latter part the explorers were subjected to great hardships and privations. Leaving Beagle Bay the party followed the coast round to the Fitzroy River (which empties into King's Sound), and journeyed along the course of that stream, tracing it to its point of emergence from the fastnesses of the Leopold Range, and examining the rich pasturage of the adjacent alluvial flats. The Leopold Range for a time barred further progress, so a return was made to the Fitzroy River, and by following up an affluent named the Margaret the explorers were enabled after a time to work round the foot of the range. Shortly after this a fine river was discovered and named the Ord, and this stream was followed to its junction with the Negri, where they left it and continued their way to the Telegraph Line, passing through fairly good country. After leaving the Victoria River the privations of the party commenced, and Forrest and a companion named Hicks pushed on alone, and eventually met a repairing party from which they obtained supplies for their companions. This trip must be considered as one of

the most important in the annals of West Australian exploration, as the country opened up has since been stocked with sheep and cattle, and large mineral wealth has also been developed. The Government Geologist, who accompanied the party, gave it as his opinion that gold-bearing strata would be found in the country lying at the head waters of the Fitzroy and Ord Rivers, and after events have shown the correctness of his surmise.

Major-General Sir Harry St. George Ord was succeeded in the month of April, 1880, by Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson, who therewith entered upon his second term of office as Governor of Western Australia.

In 1881 a further loan was raised for carrying out the construction of the Fremantle, Perth and Guildford Railway. The first loan was obtained in 1879, but a third was necessary in 1883, and with the proceeds of these loans much was done to extend the railway facilities of the colony, and the Government was able to claim that it had brought every centre of population in the eastern agricultural areas into direct railway communication with the capital and its port. A great deal was expected from the completion of these lines in regard to increased settlement and agricultural expansion; there was, however, very little of either.

In 1883 the Hon. John Forrest, who had succeeded Mr. (afterwards Sir) Malcolm Frazer as Surveyor-General, sailed for Derby, a port in the West Kimberley District, accompanied by several parties of surveyors, and by Mr. E. T. Hardman, of H.M. Geological Survey of Ireland. The object of this expedition was a further and more extended examination of the two Kimberley Districts, and the carrying out of the surveys that had now become absolutely necessary. During this journey the country between the Leopold Range and the coast was examined, its rivers explored, and its geological formation noted and charted. The only metalliferous deposits, however, observed by Mr. Hardman on this trip were ironstone, a poor hematite in large quantities, and in the gravels of the Fitzroy River, minute, dark, heavy grains, which had all the appearance of stream tin.

Sir William Robinson's second term of office as Governor concluded on the 17th February, 1883. Until the 2nd of June of the same year the colony was administered by Chief Justice H. T. Wrenfordsley, and then arrived Sir Frederick Napier Broome who ruled the country some six and a half years.

In 1884 Mr. H. Stockdale set out on an exploring expedition with the object of examining the country in the neighbourhood of Cambridge Gulf. Leaving the Gulf and crossing the range through a natural gap, to which the leader of the expedition gave his own name, the explorers came upon a well-grassed and watered region. Later on the fine stream known as the Lorimer was discovered. Stockdale afterwards reached the Transcontinental Telegraph Line, but two of the party, who refused to proceed and were left behind at a camp with supplies of provisions, were never afterwards heard of.

The year 1884 saw much attention devoted by the Western Australian Government to an examination of the two Kimberleys. By that time it had become apparent that settlement on the river Ord and its tributaries must find an outlet at Cambridge Gulf instead of at Derby, the shipping port for the squattages bordering the Fitzroy, the Lennard, and the Meda Rivers. Accordingly, it was to Cambridge Gulf that Staff-Commander Coghlan, of the Admiralty Survey Department, proceeded. He reported favourably upon the capabilities of the inlet for meeting the requirements of shipping. Meanwhile, Mr. Surveyor Johnstone had been despatched to Derby, accompanied by an efficient staff, Mr. Hardman being again included in the party. Upon this expedition Mr. Johnstone, crossing the watershed of the Fitzroy River, passed Mount Barrett and followed the river Elvire and the river Ord to the junction of the latter with the river Negri. During the course of this exploratory survey, the geologist found good specimens of copper ore on the Margaret River, and of tin stone in the black sands of several of the streams. Lead also was noted in limestone rocks in the form of galena associated with zinc blende, and showing small traces of silver. Of non-metalliferous minerals, gypsum, agate, chalcedony, garnet, amethyst, opal, pink and yellow topaz, and other gems were discovered, but the chief interest of Mr. Hardman's researches centred in his statements of the gold indications he had found, and of the prospects of unearthing the precious metal in payable quantities. Two thousand square miles of the country through which he passed he declared, in his opinion, to be auriferous in a payable degree. Mr. Hardman made a full report on the Kimberley country, which concluded with the statement that, on the whole, the indications he had met with pointed almost with certainty to the eventual justification of the name of "Terra Aurifera," erroneously said to have been given to these districts centuries ago by the navigators who first landed upon their ironbound coasts.

In 1888-9 Mr. Ernest Favenc explored the headwaters of the Ashburton and Gascoyne. Three important tributaries of the Ashburton were discovered, the Cunningham, Jackson, and James, and splendid pastoral country was opened up. In 1896 Mr. S. Wells, chief of the Calvert Exploration Expedition started from Lake Way to examine the country lying between the Fitzroy and East Murchison Rivers. During this expedition two of the party, Mr. C. F. Wells and Mr. G. Lindsay Jones, lost their lives. In the same year Mr. A. Mason examined the country between Kurnalpi and Eucla, and claimed to have discovered rich pastoral country poorly supplied, however, with surface water. A portion of the area explored had been previously traversed and similarly described by Sir John Forrest in 1870.

On 20th July, 1896, an expedition equipped and led by the Hon. David Carnegie left Doyle's Well, 50 miles south of Lake Darlot, to search for auriferous or pastoral country in the great desert lying between latitudes 19° and 28° south, and longitudes 122° and 129°

east, which had hitherto only been crossed from east to west, or *vice versa*. The country passed over was in general extremely inhospitable. One result of the expedition was the proving of the impracticability of a direct stock route between Kimberley and the North Coolgardie fields.

While the "Eastern Railway" was being built, the Government of Western Australia, on the motion of the Legislative Council, made it known that the colony was open to receive offers for railway construction on the land-grant system. By this means it was hoped that, while much needed transit facilities would be obtained without adding to an already comparatively large indebtedness, immigration and settlement would be promoted, and outside capital embarked in developing the resources of the country. As already pointed out, the country had been largely colonised on the eighteen pence an acre value paid by purchasers of land in the form of personal property introduced. The Governor himself received 100,000 acres in lieu of salary, although, when his services were assessed at £800 per annum, he was ultimately paid from the date of his appointment. But this system of settlement left the colony practically and permanently undeveloped, by causing the dispersion over a wide area of a very small population. No wonder, then, that a solution of this matter should have been looked for in the promotion of land-grant systems of railway construction. Various negotiations were entered into and dropped; but a contract was at last signed by Sir Frederick Napier Broome and Mr. Anthony Hordern, of Sydney, for the building of a line to connect Beverley and Albany. Under the terms of this agreement payment was to be made at the rate of 12,000 acres for every mile of completed road, and this concession was handed over to a syndicate of London capitalists who undertook the construction of the line. The lands selected in payment were situated within a belt of 40 miles, on each side of the line, but half the frontage to the railway was reserved by the Government. The line, which has a total length of 243 miles, was opened for traffic on the 1st July, 1889, and in January, 1897, it became the property of the Government, the purchase money amounting to £1,100,000.

Following upon the West Australian Land Company's agreement to construct the Great Southern Railway Line between Beverley and Albany, came another land-grant contract to connect the city of Perth with Geraldton, *via* Gingin, the Victoria Plains, and the Irwin and Greenough Flats. However, the work on this route was temporarily suspended, the original syndicate having become involved in financial embarrassments which necessitated a transfer of the operation of construction to other parties. Other lines were planned to tap the timber forests of the Darling Ranges from various points on the southern coast, one connecting Rockingham with the Jarrahdale Company's Depôt, a second having its base at Bunbury, and a third running to the small shipping port of Lockville, near the Vasse.

During Sir William Robinson's second administration, strong remonstrances concerning the retention by the Governor and his Executive of the power of disbursing the public funds without reference to the people who were taxed to provide them, were addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who promptly directed the introduction of a Bill for securing to the Legislature further control of the finances. An Act was framed accordingly, under the provisions of which no unauthorised expenditure could take place (except in cases of emergency) without the approval of a Committee of Finance, acting for the House while its members were not in session. The result of this measure was immediately apparent. The people's representatives obtained an influence in the conduct of public business which they had never previously possessed, the Government becoming altogether dependent upon them for supplies, and therefore compelled the more closely to study their wishes, and to give them the constitutional position to which they were rightly entitled. But this measure of reform, sought for in the interests of the old Constitution, and with a view to prolonging its existence, was in itself a main factor in leading to the conclusion that Responsible Government must be obtained.

About the year 1885, during the administration of Governor Broome, the desire for Responsible Government may be said to have become a political aspiration among the residents of the towns and the more settled districts. For an entire decade preceding (from 1875 to 1885) an influential majority of the members of the Legislature had remained opposed to any change, though the country—apart from the Administration—continued to be divided in opinion. Those who opposed reform in the Constitution seemed justified of their convictions, as of late years the old form of Government appeared well-suited to the colony's requirements. Certainly, the appointments made to the Executive had not, in every instance, given the completest satisfaction; but the authorities of the Colonial Office had, in all other matters, almost entirely ceased to intervene in West Australian affairs. The Governor ruled the country with all but absolute power, it is true, nevertheless, he maintained most cordial relations with his Legislature. Indeed, without more than formal reference to the Home Authorities, decisions of the first importance were locally arrived at, works of a serious nature were embarked upon, and various means taken for the development of the colony's resources by the aid of borrowed money. Legislation, too, was free from the control of the Colonial Office, and, so far as its general policy was concerned, Western Australia was to a great extent a self-governed colony. The upper and privileged classes, together with the Civil Service, were, as a rule, opposed to the granting of Responsible Government, but the population in the urban centres enthusiastically supported it. As might naturally have been expected, the reform party steadily gained in numbers and influence. Railway expansion and gold discoveries were knitting the people together, and attracting fresh elements to the country.

In the year 1886 an Act (50 Vic., No. 10) was passed, increasing the number of members of the Legislative Council to twenty-six, nine to be nominated, the northern portion of the Northern District being taken to form the new "Kimberley District." In this year also certain by-elections took place, and as a result the party of reform secured a small majority in the House—a majority which it was evident would go on steadily increasing, and would, in the event of a general election, become very strong, perhaps even overwhelmingly so. The Conservative party, therefore, had to consider what position they should take up; whether the absolute opposition to constitutional change should be persisted in now that the reformers had practically won the battle, or whether an approachment should be made to them. It was eventually decided no longer to oppose the popular wish, but to join with the moderates in endeavouring to obtain the best form of Constitution that experience could suggest. As a result of this decision, Mr. S. H. Parker, in the winter session of 1886, moved a series of resolutions in favour of Responsible Government, and these passed the House by a large majority, only one elected member voting against them.

While the agitation was in progress for free political institutions, the attention of Western Australians, and of the miners of the eastern colonies, was directed to the gold-fields of the north. Hardman's reports had begun to attract attention, though he cannot be said to have been the original discoverer of the precious metal in the two Kimberleys. Shortly before he began his geological researches, some wandering prospectors had found indications of the presence of gold in the country at the head-waters of the Margaret and Ord Rivers. Nevertheless, Hardman's report was of great value, and he never led astray those who were careful to follow his directions. Soon after his return from his second expedition, prospecting was engaged in with some vigour; towards the end of 1885, specimens were brought into Derby from the vicinity of Mount Barrett by several fortunate gold-hunters; and this incident led to the disastrous "rush" that took place in the following year. Mount Barrett was too far distant from a base of supplies to prove anything but the scene of hardship, misery, and failure. It was 300 miles distant from the Port of Derby, and 250 miles distant from Wyndham, newly opened in the Cambridge Gulf. No tracks existed, and a rainy season was certain to cut the diggers off from the coast. But men poured into Wyndham in their hundreds, on the road to Mount Barrett, and the Government cautioned the reckless adventurers in vain. Some of the new arrivals were old hands on gold-fields, and came to the "rush" fully equipped and adequately provisioned, but the greater number were without experience—clerks, storemen, citizens, and city dwellers generally, unaccustomed to hardship, and altogether unsuspecting the difficulties the dangers and the privations they must encounter in such a latitude as that of Mount Barrett. Disappointment met them as soon as they arrived; the alluvial workings had not turned out as expected,

and the gullies, where the first rich finds had been made, were soon exhausted. Luck, however, did not wholly desert a certain proportion of experienced diggers, although the majority of the gold-hunters made barely sufficient to pay current expenses; indeed, many were at the point of starvation. Then the note was sounded to retreat, and the rush back to Wyndham degenerated into a stampede. Nothing but the prudent precautions of the Government averted all sorts of excesses, lawlessness, and riot. By-and-bye the unsuitable portion of the population of the gold-fields was drafted off, and the few hundreds of gold-diggers who remained entered upon a systematic examination of the quartz-reefs described by Mr. Hardman as so full of promise. The purging of the field of the incompetent and the inexperienced was not, however, accomplished without cost. The army of the defeated beat a retreat under all the rigours of a cruel climate; great distress was suffered from drought and heat; terrible hardship and pain from lack of provisions; while, on the line of march, many deaths occurred from disease, starvation, sunstroke, and exposure. Those who remained were furnished with only the most rudimentary appliances for the extraction of the precious metal; but the success of the first primitive attempts exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine; while subsequent assays of parcels sent to Melbourne seemed to establish the fact that in the two Kimberleys were some of the richest reefing-fields the world had ever seen. The Government, at all events, showed its faith in the roseate visions of the future of these Northern gold-fields by hastening the construction of a telegraph line from Derby to the auriferous areas, and by adding to the conveniences for shipping at the settlements in King Sound and Cambridge Gulf. The line of telegraphic communication was subsequently continued to Wyndham. Indications of gold began to be found all over the colony; at the head-waters of the De Grey River; in the Darling Ranges, close to the Swan and Canning Rivers; at the Yalgarn Hills, east of Newcastle; at Paterwangy, near Champion Bay; at the Kendenup Station, near Albany; and at various other localities; but for some time Mount Barrett, Hall's Creek, and the fields reached from Derby and Wyndham in the two Kimberleys, were supposed to be the only payable finds in the Colony.

In the month of July, 1887, it was resolved, by an almost unanimous vote of the Legislature, in affirmation of the principle of self-government, that His Excellency be requested to take the necessary steps eventually to secure it. Among the notable events of this year was a terrible hurricane that swept over a great portion of the colony, causing great damage to property; and (in the month of December) the discovery of gold at Yilgarn. The find was an accidental one, at a place called Mugakine; and was confirmed by a subsequent discovery at Golden Valley, in the same district. Southern Cross, one of the centres of the Yilgarn gold-field, was so named by the party who first prospected it, because they had been guided to the spot by night, while following the constellation so designated.

Affairs political were in the meantime trending towards the realization of the efforts made towards Responsible Government. In December, 1888, the Legislative Council was dissolved, and a general election took place in the month of January following, in order that the constituencies might have an opportunity of expressing their views upon the question of the new Constitution. When the Council re-assembled, the resolution favouring Responsible Government for the colony was again carried, this time without a single dissentient voice. The Legislature met in April, and a Constitution Bill, drafted by the Government, was at once brought forward, and, after amendment, was passed and forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor (Sir Frederick Napier Broome), Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell, and Mr. S. H. Parker being appointed by the Legislature to proceed to England to act as delegates on behalf of the colony when the Act came before the Imperial Parliament. These gentlemen experienced much difficulty in carrying the measure through its various stages, strong opposition having arisen in the centre of the Empire against the granting of Western Australia's desire for self-government. This opposition was mainly, if not altogether, the outcome of a misunderstanding relative to the control of the Crown lands of the colony. It was held by a considerable party in the mother country that such lands were the "heritage of the British people," and should be inalienably held by the central authorities for settlement by the surplus population of Great Britain and Ireland. So demonstrative was the opposition that it appeared for a time as if Responsible Government for West Australia was fated to be seriously jeopardised, and indefinitely postponed.

At the beginning of the year 1888, Perth was connected by telegraph with the far northern settlement of Derby, on King Sound; and in May of the year following, the cable connecting Banjoewangie, in Java, with Broome, in Western Australia (a little to the north of Gantheaume Bay), was laid. Another important gold discovery also distinguished the year 1889. This was the finding of the Pilbarra field, on the De Grey and Oakover Rivers, in the Northern District. The new field was proclaimed in the month of July, 1889, and by the end of the year it had exported 11,170 oz. of gold, valued at £42,446. During the year Yilgarn had produced 1,859 oz., valued at £7,062, making with 2,464 oz. sent from Kimberley, a total export of 15,493 oz., valued at £58,493. From this date the auriferous character of Western Australia was established, the gold increased from year to year, new gold-fields were successively discovered and proclaimed, and a great accretion to the population of the colony was gained from the eastern parts of the Australian Continent. Among the most famous of the continuous finds were the gold-fields known by the names of Ashburton, the Gascoyne, the Murchison, the Dundas, the East Murchison, the East Coolgardie, Coolgardie, the Yalgoo, the West Pilbarra, the Mount Margaret, the North-east Coolgardie, the Broad Arrow, the Peak Hill, the Kanowna, and the Kalgoorlie. One of the most sensational finds

was made in the Coolgardie field by Messrs. Bayley and Ford in 1892; it was christened "Bayley's Reward." One day Bayley, whose party was at the last extremity, appeared in the township of Southern Cross, loaded with several hundred ounces of gold and many rich specimens encrusted with the precious metal, but sadly in want of provisions. This incident led to a wholesale exodus to what is now known as Coolgardie, one of the richest fields in the colony.

Sir Frederick Napier Broome's Administration terminated on the 21st December, 1889, after a rule of six years and nearly seven months. During the Governor's absence on leave to England, from the 11th November, 1884, to the 16th June, 1885, the colony was administered by Chief Justice A. C. Onslow; and during a second absence, from the 1st January to the 21st February, 1888, by the Hon. Sir Malcolm Fraser, who again administered from the 21st December, 1889, to the 20th October, 1890, after Sir Frederick Napier Broome's departure from the colony, pending the appointment, for a third term of Governorship, of Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson.

In the meanwhile, the battle on behalf of Responsible Government was being waged at Westminster. The Bill providing for a new Constitution was eventually referred to a Select Committee, with the Baron De Worms as Chairman, for the purpose of taking evidence. So impressed was this body, after hearing what the representatives of the colony had to urge, and after a calm consideration of the advantages likely to result from giving the Western Australians a free hand in their great national estate—so thoroughly was the Committee convinced of the errors underlying the British popular opposition to the measure, that the Bill was returned to the Imperial Parliament unencumbered by nearly the whole of the clauses to which the Legislature of the Colony had previously objected, and a recommendation was made that the full and complete control of the Crown lands should be vested in the local Parliament which it was proposed to create. Thus was Western Australia—"one and undivided"—obtained for its colonisers; a result due to the intelligence and broad-mindedness of a majority of the members of the Select Committee, combined with the untiring exertions of the colonial delegates, assisted by the knowledge and influence of Sir William Robinson, who, as it opportunely happened, was in England during the battle for Responsible Government. Considerable help was also given to the West Australian delegates by the Agents-General for the other Australasian Colonies at a time when, in consequence of delays due to the Imperial Cabinet, the Bill appeared to be in jeopardy. At this juncture the Agents-General, in a body, waited upon the leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and made representations which swept away all final obstacles, and the Bill, enabling Her Majesty "to grant a Constitution to Western Australia," passed its third reading in the Lower British Chamber on the 4th July, 1890, and meeting with no opposition from the Lords, received the Royal Assent on the 15th August following. The present

Constitution of Western Australia differs but little from those of the other Australasian Colonies. The Executive power is vested in the Governor, who is appointed by the Crown, and who acts under the advice of a Cabinet composed of five Responsible Ministers. The Executive Council consists of the Governor (who acts as President), the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Colonial Treasurer, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and the Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works. Responsible Government was proclaimed in the colony on the 21st October, 1890, on which date the old Legislature was abolished. The new Parliament met on the 30th December following, with Sir John Forrest as Premier. The Forrest Ministry is still in office, but of its original members Sir John Forrest alone remains. Sir William Robinson continued as Governor until the 16th August, 1895, and was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Gerard Smith, who arrived in the colony on the 23rd December. On the 22nd March, 1900, Sir Gerard Smith left for England after a period of office lasting about four years and three months, and on the following day the Chief Justice, Sir A. C. Onslow, took up the duties of Administrator of the Government.

For long the question of the loss of revenue, which would undoubtedly occur to the colony, appeared to impose an insurmountable barrier to the entry of West Australia as an original State in the Commonwealth of Australia, even with the special concessions made to the State in the Bill approved by the Convention. The dread of isolation, from which Western Australia had so long suffered, proved more powerful than the fear of pecuniary embarrassment, and the Parliament of the colony, at the invitation of Sir John Forrest, determined to submit the question of federation to the decision of the electors. The strength of the federal sentiment was made abundantly manifest in the result of the referendum—the vote in favour of union with the rest of Australia being carried by a majority of more than two to one.