

it is not proposed to borrow all the money at once. I think we should go in for the whole amount at once, even if we lodged it in the Banks at  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. less than we paid. I am glad to see that we are about to have an Agent-General of our own. The Crown Agents have certainly shown wonderful energy at times over details, but on the other hand they have failed in larger things, and on the whole a gentleman who knows the colony and is thoroughly acquainted with the colonists would be of much greater service to us, and in my opinion no gentleman other than one possessing these qualifications should be appointed. We want a gentleman sent from the colony—not a gentleman chosen at Home for the sake of saving a little in the matter of salary. In conclusion let me say how satisfied I am that, notwithstanding the depressed times we have gone through, we have ended the year with a credit balance of £45,000.

THE HON. R. E. BUSH: I have read the Speech, sir, with a considerable amount of interest, and it is with regret that I find no reference to the great work that has been done for this colony by the old Governments and the old settlers. I think we are greatly indebted to those brave, loyal and persevering men, who for the first 40 or 50 years of the existence of this colony have prepared the way to the present state of affairs, and it is with considerable regret that I do not find some slight tribute paid to the acts and deeds of those who have now passed away. Of course, sir, to us the most interesting portion of the Speech is contained in paragraphs 7 and 8. In looking at them and seeing what works are to be carried out it must strike everyone that the amount of the proposed loan is altogether insufficient. I am glad to think, however, that many of these works which are set out will not come before us for our serious consideration. I hope the first work on the list, and I trust, that, because it is placed first, it is not considered to be the most important, will not receive any very great amount of support. I myself do not pretend to know much about the country through which it will pass; I can only judge from the opinions of those who know it and are consequently better qualified to give an opinion. I notice from the

report of the Agricultural Commission that one gentleman, who is now a member of the other branch of the Legislature, gave evidence and distinctly and emphatically pointed out that there was nothing to support the railway, and therefore it would be a waste of public money to construct it. After reading this evidence I am surprised that the Government should include such a work in their loan policy. I will refer shortly to the evidence the gentleman to whom I refer, gave. At question 2948 he says: "I should be very sorry to invest my money in the railway. I don't believe a railway between here and Perth would pay for a generation. That's my belief, and I am afraid a good many persons are of the same opinion privately, and advocate it merely for the sake of the expenditure which would come in its train while in course of construction." It seems to me that the latter part of that evidence must have been the object of including this railway among the other works. As my hon. friend, Mr. Wright, has said, this district is well served by the steamers at the present time, and probably in the near future it will be still better served. In answer to question 2949, Mr. Cookworthy, who is the gentleman I refer to, says he does not think a railway to Perth would largely increase production, and he says that nearly all the dairy land is now in the hands of private individuals. At question 2950 he says they can send everything now, except cattle, by steamer, except for the inconvenience of shipping at night, and cattle go nearly as well by road as by rail. He goes on to say that he does not think the cultivation of potatoes could be very largely increased, and as far as increased settlement goes he does not think there is much room for it in the district. Pressed about the railway he says he does not know whether it would pay to make a railway to send a few fowls. Further on he says there are very few places in the district that will grow hay, and that the main cause of agriculture being, so to say, non-existent in the district is that there is so little land fit for it. I am quoting the opinion, sir, of a man who must know this district better than I do. The opinion seems to be a thoroughly honest and disinterested one, and as it is an

opinion so emphatically given, we have no reason to suppose that it does not exist to-day. The railway to Yilgarn will, I think, be a justifiable work as soon as provision is made for a water supply there. It would be premature, in my opinion, to build a railway to any place where there exists no water supply. For my own part I would favor a large expenditure for a water supply being incurred, and I shall be prepared to support this item in the Loan Bill. The railway to Mullewa will be shown to be a fairly profitable work. Hon. members, in considering this proposal, must not forget that we have splendid prospects of a goldfield within fifty or sixty miles of what will be its terminus; besides which there will be a considerable traffic from the wool one way, and return stores the other. As to the Harbor Works, I can speak feelingly on those required at Carnarvon. At the present time there is an enormous jetty there, but unfortunately nothing larger than a dingy can get up to it. I hope, therefore, that the proposal to purchase a large steam dredge will be carried through, not only for the benefit of Carnarvon, but also for the improvement of Geraldton, and other important ports. As regards the lighthouse at the Leeuwin, I consider we are not in a position to undertake it. There is not a sufficiently large number of shipwrecks there, or loss of life, to warrant the expenditure. The telegraph line from Flint Cliff to Freshwater Camp is certain, I think, to prove a remunerative work. There is now a large population at Sharks Bay, and telegraph communication is much required. I will not refer further to the works proposed, except to say that not one half of them will prove remunerative, either directly or indirectly. It seems to me that they have only been put forward in this way to see what support would be enlisted to what I consider an ill-prepared and ill-considered loan policy.

**THE HON. W. D. MOORE:** I think, sir, if hon. members give their opinions now on some of the works which are brought forward in the Speech it will enable the Government to better judge what they are doing, and perhaps it may lead to some of the works, which are not now considered desirable, not being

brought forward. I do not think we are in a position to undertake all the works mentioned at the present time, nor are we in a position to borrow this very large amount of money. They are no doubt very legitimate undertakings, but surely we must not commence too much at once. With regard to the railway to Bunbury I think we should pause a long time before we think of it, for it is not a work that is likely to pay expenses for many years to come. I have been over the country and know it well. Also with regard to the line to Yilgarn, I think we should better satisfy ourselves as to the capabilities of the mines, before committing ourselves to it. The Railway to Mullewa must, I think, eventually be undertaken, as it will be the outlet for a large pastoral district, and will prove to be a line that is fairly remunerative. As to the Harbor works at Fremantle, everyone who is connected with the commerce of the colony must know the difficulties there are in carrying it on, and unless some better accommodation is provided at our chief port business will be very much impeded. We do not know what the Harbor improvements at other places are to consist of, and therefore it is premature to say anything about them. As to the telegraph extensions from Flint Cliff to Freshwater Camp, in Sharks Bay, and from Beverley to Broomchill, they are not very costly works, and are such as will pay the interest on the outlay. There are now a large number of people at Sharks Bay, and the necessity for telegraphic communication is very frequent. I think the most pressing work for the Government to undertake is to supply water on the Goldfields. As to the lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin, I always understood it was a work all the Colonies would join in, and as we shall get the least benefit from it I do not think we should undertake it unless they supply their proportion of the funds. Additional rolling stock must be provided for the Eastern Railway to enable the ordinary traffic to be carried on. I have only made these few remarks now in order that the Government may know what are the opinions of each hon. member, so that, if they find a majority against any of these works, they may not be led to bring them forward.