

congratulation; but I can bear out the remarks of the hon. member who has just sat down, that many of those who have come to our shores are to be found walking about the streets of our settled towns, without having any particular object in view. In fact, a great number of them appear to have come here more with the view of seeking employment in our towns than to put their energies to the test in the way of working our goldfields. Our gold discoveries, no doubt, will continue to attract a large population, but we must bear in mind that this colony is not in the same position as Victoria was at the time the goldfields were discovered in that colony, forty years ago. The whole of Australia was differently situated then. At that time a large influx of population occurred from all parts of the world, and more especially from England, whence vessels arrived week after week, with a class of people who, being unable or unwilling to go to the goldfields, turned their attention to the cultivation of the soil. Let us hope that such may be the case here. His Excellency's Speech affords us an insight into the policy of the Government; and the gist of that policy, its main object, appears to be the development of the mineral resources of the colony. To carry out this object, they propose a further Loan of £1,500,000. There can be no doubt that the policy sketched out is a broad and vigorous one, and one which I am sure will meet the views of the country generally. No doubt when these various schemes come before the House, the Government will be prepared to give us such statistics and other information as will induce us to fall in with their own views as regards the necessity and desirability of these works, to a very great extent, if not entirely. It is satisfactory to learn that many of the works undertaken and carried on during the past twelve months have been completed. Many of these works were very urgent works, but there are still other works requiring the attention of the Government—works which, if carried out as proposed, will no doubt give satisfaction to the country at large. I am pleased to find that the Government propose to give nearly all parts of the colony a fair share of the loan which they contemplate raising. I only trust that, when the

distribution of this loan is under consideration, the claims of the agricultural districts, in the matter of roads, will not be lost sight of. In my opinion good roads will benefit our farmers and settlers as much, in many cases, as railway communication, especially where they have to travel miles and miles before they get to a railway. The financial condition of the colony, as disclosed in the Governor's Speech, is no doubt sound and satisfactory; but I should like to call attention to one matter. According to the comparative statement of revenue and expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1894, the net increase of revenue during the year, from all sources, was £105,423 15s. 3d., and out of that no less than £66,116 12s. is attributable to an increase in the Customs revenue, showing that the bulk of our revenue is derived through the Customs. To my mind, it is in this respect that the people are over-taxed. I think if this matter is thoroughly gone into, it will be shown that many of the departments, instead of paying their own way, take a great deal from the amount derived from the Customs. When the Colonial Treasurer's budget is placed before us, we shall have an opportunity of going more closely into this matter, which I think deserves our serious attention. The Governor's Speech refers to certain works which have been completed and taken over during the past year, but I see no reference to a work which the public are rather anxious to know something about, and that is the Yilgarn railway. We see from the newspapers that this line was taken over by the Government some time ago; on the other hand, there are reports that the line is not yet completed, and that the Government have only taken over the traffic part. This, I think, is a matter calling for some explanation. In conclusion, I will only say that so long as the Government bring forward what in my opinion will eventually lead to the prosperity of the colony, I for one shall always be prepared to give them my support; and I feel sure that every member of the House will do the same.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker, I take it that the primary objects of the debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech are that there may be a complete review, and, as far as possible, the fullest

criticism of the actions of the Ministry in the past, especially during the recess, and of the proposals of the Ministry for the future. In many of the kind things that have been uttered on both sides of the House in reference to the Ministry personally, and also in reference to a good portion of their policy, I agree; but I do not look upon Parliament as a mutual admiration society, and I certainly do not think that on these occasions we are called upon to make a kind of after-dinner speech for the purpose of complimenting the Ministry in power—at any rate, not from this side of the House. We have heard a very great deal for some time past, and have heard a good deal in this House, too, about the wonderful development of the country under the direction of the present Ministry. No doubt, sir, we have enjoyed a considerable amount of prosperity during the past few years; but all who have studied the question must be prepared to admit that that prosperity is wholly dependent upon, and has arisen entirely out of, the discoveries of gold in the colony. With those discoveries, and the prosperity arising from them, the Government have had simply nothing to do. They did practically nothing whatever to further the interests of the fields, until those fields had attracted a large population to the country. We have heard a great deal about what they have done, and what they propose to do, in reference to these goldfields; but I ask what practically have they done? They have put a tax upon live stock, and so raised the price of meat to the digger. [THE PREMIER: No.] They have put extra duties upon tinned meats, which are largely consumed by the digger. They charge £1 for a miner's right. They are selling lands upon which mining storekeepers have fixed their businesses at the highest possible rates, after these people have made their blocks of land valuable. These holdings, prior to the erection of stores upon them, were available for the squatter at £1 per thousand acres; but the man with the miner's right has to pay a thousandfold higher rate for the occupation of his bit of land. These are among the actions of the present Ministry; this is the kind of reception that the miner has received at the hands of the Government. If he wants a horse, he must pay a tax; if he wants chaff to

feed his horse, he must pay a tax; if he wants a miner's right he must pay £1 for it, although he can get it in any other colony for 5s.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I don't think so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think I am correct. I am certain I am correct as regards the great mining colony of Victoria, and I am told it is proposed to reduce it to half-a-crown. The Ministry there are doing a very great deal to put people upon the mining portions of that colony, and it would be well if our Minister of Lands and our Minister of Public Works were to take a lesson from the book of Victoria on the question of the settlement of the land and the settlement of our goldfields. I have said that one of the objects of the debate upon the Address-in-Reply is to afford an opportunity of criticising the actions of the Ministry during the recess. In my opinion one of the things which Parliament should give its special attention to is to watch the doings of the Ministry during the recess. During that period Ministers have a considerable amount of responsibility, and a certain amount of latitude—more so than when Parliament is in session to advise them. For that reason it is necessary that their actions during the recess should be carefully watched, otherwise there is danger of their doing things which are at variance with the feeling of the country. One of the first things I wish to call attention to on this occasion is the action of the Government in giving further consideration to the Midland Railway Company. We have them here paying interest on the Company's debentures, in direct contravention of the Act of 1893, which they themselves asked this House to pass, and conscious of the fact that this Company has annihilated its capital.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is in accordance with the agreement.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not in accordance with the Act.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In accordance with the Act too. We have not deviated from the Act at all, in any way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not like to contradict the Premier, but, according to my reading of the Act, the Government acted contrary to the Act. How-

ever, if the Premier says not, I must accept his explanation. The fact remains that the Government paid the interest, and that the Government had no right to pay the interest. They had no ground whatever, in my mind, for showing any further consideration to this Company. What is the position? The line is not completed; it is far from completed, and all the Government have is £136,000, which is not sufficient to equip the line, much less to complete it, though the sum located with the Government was not only supposed to complete the line, but also to equip it. Here is a company that has practically annihilated its own capital, by an application to the Court of Chancery, and now we are expected to take over the line and finish it, and equip it, and work it with £136,000. I say work it, because that Company will never work it. As I have already said, the money in the hands of the Government will never complete and equip that line. Yet, in the face of all this, the Government during the recess took upon themselves to nullify an Act of Parliament which provides for the forfeiture of the line in the event of default on the part of the Company. I say there is nothing to warrant the consideration that has been extended to this Company by the Government. Then with regard to the Yilgarn line. It was distinctly stated, and understood by the country, that this line was to be completed and opened in sections. A question was asked in this House, as to whether the contractor would be allowed to run his own material, free of charge, over the completed sections of the line; and the answer given by the Minister of Railways was "No"—clearly indicating that the intention and purpose of the Government at that time was to have the line completed in sections. We now come to the time when the Government took over the line. When they did so the line was not completed. I have it upon the authority of experts that the line is barely safe; and I warn the Government that their continuous running of the line in its present condition involves considerable risk to life and property, and that this House will hold them responsible for taking over the line in that condition. The question arises: why the Government should have taken over the line before it was completed? That certain contractors in this colony

can get concessions from the Government which outside contractors cannot get, is very well understood. Other contractors send in their tenders expecting that the conditions and specifications of the contract will be insisted upon, and they expect to have to do their work according to the plans and specifications, or pay a penalty, and they fix their price accordingly; whereas certain contractors, as is well known, can get clear of penalties by approaching the Government in certain ways, and can take contracts at a lower price than the man who honestly intends to do the work strictly according to specification. That is well understood by many contractors who put in tenders for Government work in this colony. Strange to say, this Yilgarn line was taken over by the Government in such an incomplete condition that no man, if he had his reputation at stake, and if he was not backed by the influence which the Government can give him, would ever have thought of taking over. Another matter I want to speak about is in connection with the district that I, myself, represent. In answer to a question put by me last night in reference to the telegraph line to Cue, we had the assurance of the Director of Public Works that the line would be opened in about three weeks. Now I am prepared to submit that this telegraph line will not be completed in three weeks, and I question if it will be completed in three months. There are thousands of post holes to put in, and unless the contractor puts an immense number of hands on, more than he is likely to do, there is no possible chance of the line being finished in three weeks. When the Government come to this House, and, through their Minister, assure the House that the line will be opened in two or three weeks, they certainly either mislead the House, or they do what is tantamount—they are without knowledge. They certainly cannot have a grip of their public works when they cannot give an estimate as to the probable completion of a particular work of this kind nearer than this. In connection with this very line itself there has been, to my mind, a vast amount of waste. There is hardly a tree on the route high enough to touch the wire, yet the Government have gone to the expense of cutting over 200 miles of track a chain wide.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): Not a chain wide, I think, but 40ft.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not measure it. The exact width, we are told, is 40ft.; but it makes no difference, the principle is the same, the work being altogether unnecessary. In the name of all things right, what sense is there, what necessity is there, to cut a track through 200 miles of mulga scrub for a telegraph line when the Government are going to use iron posts, and when there is not a tree on the whole track high enough to touch the wire. The time expended in clearing that track, and the money expended, would have sufficed to have carried out a considerable amount of useful and necessary work on the gold-fields. Then, again, look at their policy in connection with wells. I have some very striking things to mention concerning these wells. I was along the road myself, and the Premier was there, too. There are three wells which the Government thought fit to take away from Mr. Townsend (a squatter), one of them being used for the purpose of a soda-water factory. The Government were pleased to remove that factory—for what reason I am not quite clear—and some one removed the rope from the well, and what use a well is to the public without a rope I cannot say. The Government are paying a good salary to a man to see that these wells are kept in order. Why does not that man do his work? What the district wants to know is, why should the Government take up this kind of work—why should they take wells away from people who have sunk them, and then let them become useless through neglect? There is another well that has been left in a condition scarcely fit for use, and another which is practically useless, no attention whatever being paid to it. Then there is a well at the 25-mile which was slabbed with mulga and not afterwards bailed, the result being that this well is absolutely useless; neither man nor beast can drink the water. If the Government have no proper control of the officers under them, I think it is time this House should say something about it. Then go to Mount Magnet. The Government spent a considerable sum on a well there, but the way the well is left is a disgrace to any man who calls himself a workman. The

reason why I call attention to these things is to show that the Government have no control over their officers who spend the public money; that they have no control over their public works; and that the people of the colony are being taxed, and their money expended wastefully, in consequence of this lack of oversight on the part of the Government over their public officers. We expect the Government, during the recess, to give some attention to these things. There is another matter I just want to refer to. I hope the Government will be able to say that I am incorrect, and that the information given to me is without foundation; but, I have been informed that the Public Works Department have started the South mole, in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Works. If that is so, it seems to me they have done so without Parliamentary authority. If I read *Hansard* rightly, when the vote for these harbour works was passed it was most distinctly understood that the money voted was to be expended upon the North mole, and it was distinctly understood that Parliament should be consulted before the South mole was begun. Now, I object to the Government, or to the Public Works Department, committing the country and this House to important public works during the recess, which have not received the sanction of Parliament. Then, I am also informed—I hope I have been misinformed in this case also—that the Government have secured a piece of land at Guildford, for the purpose of removing the railway workshops there, from Fremantle. If they have done so, they have done so without the authority of Parliament, and they have taken a step which no Government ought to take in recess; and they have committed the country to the removal of the workshops at Fremantle to Guildford, simply of their own will and pleasure, and without Parliament being consulted upon the question. This is a thing which I object to, and which I protest against. It is useless for this House to meet and discuss questions of public interest, if the Government are to take upon themselves, at their own free will and pleasure, to commit the country to a large expenditure, whilst Parliament is in recess. Another question I want to speak about is with reference to a railway

to the Murchison goldfields. A gentleman representing an important syndicate made certain overtures to the Government for the purpose of constructing a line of railway from Mullewa to Cue. These proposals were made *bonâ fide*, and I am informed—in fact I have good reasons for saying so, knowing as I do the firm represented in London—this syndicate was perfectly prepared to carry out their proposal to put down a line on the same gauge as the Government lines, and (unlike land grant companies) asking for no land in payment, but simply to be allowed to lay down the line, and offering to afterwards sell the line to the Government at any time within a certain number of years, at a price to be determined upon the basis of the actual profit. They were also prepared to assimilate their rates of carriage with the Government rates. This offer, however, was curtly rejected by the Government. I say the Government ought not to have taken upon themselves the responsibility of rejecting such an important proposal during the recess. But whether my view of that question is correct or not, that syndicate was at all events entitled to be treated with more courtesy by the Premier of the colony than a curt telegram of five words refusing to entertain their proposal. Yet that is all the consideration that an influential company offering to undertake an important public work could get from the Government—a brief, curt telegram of five words saying that “The Government decline to treat.” I will not say anything more about these proposals now, for I want to speak on the subject again. Looking at the future intentions of the Government, as sketched out in the Governor’s Speech, we find, practically, a policy which is absolutely barren. As has been already said, they floated themselves into office on a loan, they have kept themselves afloat on another loan, and they now propose to keep themselves in office by means of a further loan of a million and a half. I hope this House will not consent to that proposal. Sir, the country has been crying out for a political policy, but the Government offer us nothing but a loan. The question has been asked everywhere, upon every platform during the late electoral campaign, and in the columns of the Press, what the Govern-

ment intended to do with regard to the stock tax. Nearly every member returned to this House pledged himself to support a repeal of that tax. Then, again, on every public platform, candidates were asked to pledge themselves to a reform of that beautiful Electoral Act passed last session. The press of the colony has also cried out for it. All over the country you hear the cry, “Here is an Electoral Act which professes to give us manhood suffrage, but which only succeeds in putting 11,000 men on the roll, notwithstanding an increasing population rising to 75,000 people, and when there were 6,000 on the roll before the Act came into operation, and before manhood suffrage became the law of the land.” In my own district there are over 1,500 men who ought to be on the roll, but only 342 of them could get there; not because they were indifferent, but because of the vagueness and absurdity of the Act itself, which compels every would-be elector in every part of the colony, to go before a justice of the peace, or some other accredited official, to make a declaration, and to register his vote. In some districts this would entail a journey of possibly hundreds of miles,—in many districts 50 or 60 miles, where justices are few and far between. In my own district there is only one justice in the whole district.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): A postmaster or a sergeant of police would do.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: These are not to be found everywhere. You have not a postmaster at Nannine, you have not a postmaster at Cue; you have not sergeants of police stationed at every centre in the country. What is the use of the Government trying to dispute it? The fact remains that people cannot get on the roll. I say there has been an outcry everywhere, all over the country, for a reform of this Electoral Act, and, so far as my own district is concerned, there is a strong feeling that a miner’s right, six months old, should give the holder of it the right to vote, and not only the right to vote but an opportunity to vote. As the Act now stands, if an elector happens to move his residence from one side of the street to the other, he is liable to be disfranchised. The whole thing is absurd.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is the same in Queensland at any rate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not so in Victoria, it is not so in New South Wales, it is not so in South Australia, nor in Tasmania, nor New Zealand; and, why the Government should have picked out Queensland as their guide in this particular matter I don't know. They picked out an Act which practically takes away with the right hand what the Government pretend to give with the left. Then there is no proposal made to amend the Mining Act. Everywhere it is admitted that the future of the colony rests upon its goldfields. I do not think there is anyone in this House who will dispute the fact that the future of Western Australia is solely dependent upon the prosperity of its goldfields. If the colony's prosperity is not to come from the goldfields, it is more than I can say where it is to come from. Yet here we have a Mining Act—possibly we may be told by the Premier again that it is the Queensland Act—which has been found to be most unworkable, and the Government must know that there is an outcry in all directions about it; yet there is no proposal to amend it. Possibly they may have something in view, but at present we have no indication of any intention on their part to amend it. Another very important and serious question to which no reference is made is the question of mining on private property. If the discoveries of gold in the Yilgarn district should be found to extend to the adjacent lands of the Hampton Plains Syndicate, and should there be such a thing as an alluvial rush there, I can tell the Government, from my past experience in Victoria, it will not be a question of private property, but a question of human life. If hindrances are put in the way of the miners, the difficulties will be of a very serious character indeed; and the sooner the Government take in hand the introduction of a Mining on Private Property Bill the better it will be for themselves and for the country as a whole. Then, again, there has been an outcry from the mining districts for a Minister of Mines; but we hear nothing of any intention on the part of the Government to pay any heed to this outcry. There has also been an outcry in a good many of the electorates for a change in the existing Education Act, such a change as will do away with the dual system. The Government, however, completely

ignore the question. The only thing they are troubled about is the raising of a million and a half of money, so that they may have the spending of it. That is the policy of the present Government—to raise money and spend it. As for any political questions which are agitating the country, and calculated to promote its welfare, the Government very carefully leave them out of their proposals. Another question that will come up soon is the question of labour. We have already had one strike, and shall have more probably; yet with all the bitter experience of America and of other countries before them, the Government make no proposals to meet the difficulties that, sooner or later, must also arise here in regard to the relation of capital and labour. It would be easy at present to pass a Bill for the establishment of courts of conciliation, or dealing with arbitration; but the Government quietly ignore all these questions, and pass on to the one absorbing question which troubles them, the borrowing of more money. With regard to this question of borrowing money, first of all I want to show that the very proposal which they make to raise another loan at the present time is a distinct breach of faith. I have before me the Speech of the Premier when he proposed to borrow £540,000 last year. In moving the second reading of the Bill for that purpose, I find from *Hansard* that the Premier—not quite twelve months ago—said this, with reference to the £540,000 then about to be borrowed: "This amount will complete our authorised railways, and put us in a position, I hope, to cease borrowing for some considerable time—I hope for a long time—because it has been no pleasure to me, or to anyone in this House, to think that we shall always be going on borrowing." These were the Premier's own words last year, yet we find that Parliament had hardly closed its career when this sum was apparently exhausted, though nothing was heard of their intention to raise another loan of a million and a half until a few days before the first election took place. We heard a great deal about their bold policy in the past, and we were told that their policy in the past was an indication of their policy in the future. But the country was not made acquainted with the fact

that the Government proposed to borrow £1,500,000 until fourteen days before the first election.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Longer than that, I think. I made the announcement on the 23rd May, and the first election was on the 12th of June.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That makes nineteen days. I said fourteen. I do not know that it matters very much. I am quite prepared to be liberal with them. The argument remains that the country generally had no opportunity of discussing—neither did it discuss—this proposal to borrow another million and a half, sprung upon it by the Premier in his Bunbury speech, just before the General Election. At that election there were seventeen seats unopposed, but, if this policy had been known beforehand, who can say what the result might have been? In my district, the information was only received within a fortnight of the nominations, and it was impossible for the candidates or the country to get hold of and understand what was involved in the borrowing of a million and a half of money. Of course we all like money, if we can get it, and the country is always pleased to see a public works policy adopted, without thinking, perhaps, what that policy involves. It requires those who have an opportunity of considering and thinking over such questions, to put them in a clear and definite way before the country, in order that the country may be able to judge whether the policy is a wise one or not. I contend that the country has never sanctioned the borrowing of this million and a half, by returning members pledged to support it. I submit that the members sitting in this House have not the mandate or the authority of the country behind them on this question.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, we have.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I contend not.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Your own district wants its share of it at any rate. They want a railway to Cue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes, but not with borrowed money. Notwithstanding the fact that the Government did not give the country time to grasp the whole question of borrowing this million and a half, there was an immediate outcry against the two Southern lines when the intentions of the Government were made

known. Almost every candidate who had an opportunity of addressing himself to the subject spoke adversely to these two railways being included in the Government programme; and all the members who have spoken in this House, so far, have spoken against them. The only reason I can see for including them is simply to secure a balance of voting power in regard to the raising of this Loan. So far as the country is concerned, so far as the voice of the country has been heard or ascertained from the utterances of its representatives in this House, the country has unequivocally condemned the construction of these Southern lines. While I am dealing with this question of loans, there is one thing upon which I must compliment the Government, or rather the country, or whoever is responsible, for the establishment of a sinking fund in connection with these loans. The one thing which has been made patent to the other colonies has been the mistake of raising loans without making provision for their redemption; and one of the things that renders borrowing by this colony safer than by our neighbours is the fact that our Government are borrowing on inscribed stock, and that they are borrowing with a redemption fund behind them. I do hope that at no future time in the history of Western Australia will the Parliament of the colony reverse this policy. I hope that no Parliament, tempted by the fact that there is a large sum to the credit of the national sinking fund, will ever think of appropriating that fund to other purposes, as has been done in the mother country. Those of us who are acquainted with the past history of the old country know that the great national debt which is crushing it down, simply exists because in an unguarded moment the country forsook the principle laid down by Pitt, providing for the extinction of loans by a sinking fund. If this colony had not a sinking fund, I would be alarmed at its present indebtedness of £3,200,000. But we have made ourselves liable for another £500,000, for which there is no redemption or sinking fund. We have made ourselves liable to repay that £500,000 in 20 years, without a sinking fund behind it; and it is hopeless to suppose that the Midland Company will ever redeem its bonds.

Therefore, this half a million of money guaranteed by the Government is an absolute liability upon the country; and, if we add that amount to our other indebtedness, we have a public debt of £3,700,000; and, if we are to accept the proposal of the Government to borrow a million and a half more, we shall bring our actual indebtedness up to £5,200,000, of which £500,000 will have to be repaid in twenty years, and is not provided for in any way in the shape of a sinking fund. Now this debt equals £70 per head of the population; and if, as we all expect and hope, this country will go on increasing in population, we may anticipate that, before the last of this money is expended, the population may have increased to 100,000 souls. I think that is a fair estimate. We have no reason to expect that the progress of the country in the way of increased population will be as great in the next few years as in the years that have just passed. The influx during the past year has been greater than it is likely to be hereafter. That there will continue to be a steady influx of population to this country I have every confidence in believing. I hope so, at any rate; but the rush of twelve or eighteen months ago is past, and we are not likely to have a repetition of it. Still, I anticipate a steady and continuous flow of population to our shores, and possibly this steady flow will be better for the country than a sudden rush. But supposing that within the next three or four years we rise to 100,000 people, and supposing we borrow this million and a half of money in addition to our present indebtedness, we shall then have a debt of £52 per head resting upon our people. Victoria, we know, is sinking under a debt of £48 per head; and the very reason why Victoria is sinking is because of her accrued loans, year after year, for railway purposes. Yet the very object, or the main object, of raising this million and a half now before us is to build further railways, and some of them agricultural railways. Now if we look at our revenue we find ourselves in this position: the Customs, our principal source of revenue, during the past year yielded about £340,000, in round numbers; and, when we have increased our public debt to £5,200,000 we shall have

to provide £260,000 a year to meet our liabilities in respect of that debt,—four per cent. for interest, and one per cent. for a sinking fund. Deducting this from our Customs revenue, all we shall have left, after taxing the people as we are taxing them,—all we shall have left for the purposes of general government is £80,000. We know that is not sufficient, nor anything like it. Where, then, are we going to get the funds to carry on the business of the country? The Government make a boast that they propose no increase of taxation. But it is useless for us to live, or try to live, in a fool's paradise. We know we cannot expect to have the continuous growth in the revenue that we have had during the last twelve or eighteen months, and we have to face the question of how we are going to meet the engagements which the Government propose to commit us to. If we look upon our railways, we find that the revenue derived from them last year was £134,000, and the actual cost of conducting them was £106,000. That is the bare cost of working the lines, to say nothing about the cost of stations, to say nothing about wear and tear, and the inevitable expenditure connected with such works. Our railways, then, last year, under the most favourable circumstances, yielded £28,000 over and above the actual working expenses, leaving that amount to go towards the payment of interest and other liabilities connected with our railways. In addition to this, it must be remembered that during the construction of new lines there is always an extra amount of traffic in the carriage of sleepers, rails, and other materials, and the traffic cannot be regarded as the normal amount of traffic under ordinary circumstances. This increased traffic will cease when the railways are completed. The Government cannot expect that the line between Fremantle and Northam will show the same average proportion of traffic returns during next year that it did while the Yilgarn line was in course of construction. If they do expect it, they will be simply making a mistake. If they have based their estimates upon last year's traffic returns on that line, I am afraid their estimates will not be realised. It is useless, therefore, our relying upon our railways for the purpose of paying in-

terest. The only piece of brightness in the whole prospect that I can see is the revenue in connection with the Lands Department, and the stamp revenue associated with it, amounting altogether to about £12,000. That department appears to me to be the most economically worked of all the departments of the Government, and I am not surprised at it. I think a little more liberality in the Lands and Survey Department would be better for the country, as well as for the officers of the department. In this department they do manage to make a profit. Including the stamp duties it comes out with about £80,000 to the good. But I observe that we want £20,000 out of that to make good the deficiency in the Postal Department, where the revenue last year was £46,000 and the expenditure £66,000, showing a loss of £20,000 a year; and this loss must be deducted from the profit made by the Lands Department. While dealing with this question of our land revenue, I want to call attention to the fact that in obtaining this revenue we are parting with our patrimony, and that our territorial revenue cannot therefore be regarded as a continuous income, so long as the present system of alienation goes on. Of course, with our vast territory, we do not look upon it as any great harm at present, to part with the land as we are doing; but the fact remains that we are disposing of our patrimony. How, then, are we going to obtain the revenue required to meet the liabilities which the Government, year after year, are thrusting upon us? Some allusion has already been made to the position of our railways, as compared with the position of the railways in the other colonies; but I should like to call attention to some further facts and figures in this connection. In Victoria they have, in round numbers, 3,000 miles of railway for 1,100,000 inhabitants, or, more correctly, 370 people per mile of railway. In Western Australia, supposing our population increases to 100,000, we shall only have 65 people per mile of railway. I want to impress this upon the House: Victoria is going behind with her railways, notwithstanding the fact that she has 370 people for every mile of railway, and notwithstanding her wealth in live stock, wool, and other products. She has 1,800,000 head of cattle, equal to 600 per

mile of railway; and a large proportion of the traffic there is cattle. A vast amount of cattle from Riverina and other parts also go over the Government lines, and a vast amount of the wool raised in Riverina also goes over them; and the railway traffic is increased immensely by the existence of this vast herd of cattle. Western Australia has only 131,000 cattle, or 83 per mile of railway. I am quite prepared to hear that cattle at present are coming by seaboard. Again, Victoria has 13,000,000 sheep, or about 4,300 per mile of railway; whereas Western Australia has only 2,600,000 sheep, or 1,625 per mile. If Victoria, with her population of between 300 and 400 people per mile of railway, and with her wealth of live stock, cannot make her railways pay, what can we expect in this colony? A portion of the loan which it is proposed to borrow is to go in the construction of more railways for agricultural purposes. Have we not sufficient railways already established in agricultural districts? Is there not enough agricultural land already opened up by railways to supply the requirements of the whole colony, even if we had a population of 100,000? It is useless talking about growing wheat for exportation in the face of the competition now going on in the wheat markets abroad, and the consequent low price ruling for it. Russia, we are told, is actually burning its wheat because it does not pay to export it. South America can put wheat in the London market at 1s. 8d. a bushel. It has been sold at 1s. 11d. in Victoria, delivered at the railway station. That was last year. How can we in this colony seriously think of becoming wheat exporters in the face of these facts? How can we expect our agricultural railways to pay, even in connection with our local requirements, if we are going to have these railways springing up in all directions, competing against each other? With the agricultural land already available along existing railways, but still remaining idle, what is the use of talking about building more agricultural railways? It is proposed to have one to open up the agricultural lands in the South. Have we not already the Great Southern Railway open—and I am not certain we shall not have to work that railway—with agricultural land on both sides of it

thrown open for settlement? Then there is the Midland Railway going Northwards, opening up more agricultural land. With these and the other railways already in existence, have we not sufficient agricultural land within the radius of railway communication to supply the whole wants of the colony, even supposing we had a population of 250,000 souls? In the face of this we are asked to borrow more money for the purpose of constructing further agricultural railways. I call them agricultural railways, for it is useless to talk about the tinfields, because all the tin could be brought up in a couple of trains once a year; and it is useless talking about coal measures, because the field is not yet developed or even tested, and, until we have all the facts before us, it is useless to speculate in that direction. No one would be more pleased than I would be if it could be proved that we have a good bed of coal; I would prefer it to half-a-dozen Londonderrys.

MR. SIMPSON: I would chance the Londonderrys.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I mean it would be better for the colony. But we want to be sure that there is coal there—good commercial coal, and in payable quantity; and this House is not going—at all events I am not, and I believe I shall have a great many members with me—to vote for a railway under the idea that it is going to be a coalfield railway, when it is simply an agricultural railway going to Bridgetown.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): That is not the same railway at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not posted up in the geography of that district; the argument remains the same. I contend there is no warrant—indeed there is great danger—in our increasing our indebtedness at all; but, if there is anything that will warrant any further borrowing, it is for the development of our goldfields. But it is useless our talking about constructing a line to the Murchison unless the House is prepared to see that it is very quickly made. There is a large quantity of stone, something like 30,000 tons, at grass now awaiting to be crushed, and it is impossible to sink the present mines deeper than they are without timber, and that timber must be obtained from down South. We want the jarrah of the South to enable us to

sink our mines deeper, and it is utterly impossible for the district to be developed until we get this timber. It is clear we cannot cart it up there by team; and a railway is the only hope for the continuance and permanency of the Murchison goldfield. The hon. member for Yilgarn is present and can speak for his own district; but I imagine that somewhat similar circumstances prevail there. (MR. MORAN: No.) I am glad to hear it. Now the proposal of the Government is to extend the borrowing or spending of this loan over four years. If we are going to wait that time for this line to the Murchison, all I can say is, it will be absolutely useless for the development of the mines. It is necessary it should be constructed as quickly as possible, and in the cheapest possible way; a railway that will be a goldfields' railway, and not a squatters' railway; a railway that shall accommodate the goldfields in the most direct way, and not a line going a round-about way to bring down wool once a year. I have described the kind of railway we want, and I say the sooner it is constructed the better. Let it be a goldfields' line, and not a squatters' line.

AN HON. MEMBER: You want it for the poor miner.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would be a poor look-out for this country if it were not for the "poor miner." Squatters are a very necessary evil I admit, but we want this railway for the miner rather than the squatter. I will say no more at present on this subject. I wish next to call the attention of the House to a matter which, to my mind, amounts to a question of privilege. At any rate I want to raise the strongest possible protest against it. The Minister of Public Works, as members are aware, took the trouble to go to Yilgarn and Coolgardie a short time preceding the general election. The Minister of Lands afterwards visited that district. With the visit of these two Ministers, accompanied, as one of them was, by the Engineer-in-Chief, one would reasonably suppose that the Government would be well informed as to the wants of the district? Yet the Premier also took upon himself to pay the district a visit, and he landed at Coolgardie just about the time of the nomination of candidates for the district. But that is

an incident. What I wish to refer to is another matter. Most of us have had this little gold token—[exhibiting a member of Parliament's free railway pass]—which I understand we are supposed to retain till our fate at the polls is decided. At any rate a telegram, dated the 30th June last, a few days before the election for Yilgarn, was sent on Her Majesty's service, addressed to Mr. De Hamel, one of the candidates, who was the holder of one of these tokens. The telegram was in this form: "Will you kindly return the gold token railway pass you hold; there is only a limited number of these tokens, and I have to reissue them to the new members." The Minister of Railways, I am sorry to observe, is not present, but I should like a note made of it. That telegram was signed by the Under-Secretary for Works and Railways, Mr. A. F. Thomson. [THE PREMIER: It must be a mistake.] Will the Premier kindly take charge of it—[handing it across the floor to Sir John Forrest.] We know very well that, notwithstanding the sacredness of the telegraph office, these things will leak out now and then. If it was a mistake, I hope the Government will prevent a recurrence of such a mistake. Here is another little matter,—a pamphlet issued by the Government Printer, and stated to be the "Speech of the Hon. Sir John Forrest, K.C.M.G., to his constituents at Bunbury; printed, by authority, by the Government Printer." The newspapers considered that Speech of sufficient importance to telegraph it all over the country the day after it was delivered; and why the Premier should afterwards put the country to the cost of printing the same Speech is more than I am able to say. But that is not what I want to get at: the cost of printing this Speech would have sufficed to have provided the necessary accommodation for the Cue hospital at the time when sick men were lying outside under mulga bushes. I want to know whether the money of the public is to be spent in this particular way, for the glorification of the Premier, when the Premier cannot find a few pounds to provide shelter for sick men who are dying from fever?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What evidence have you of that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have the evidence of the doctor.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All I can say is that the doctor did not speak the truth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then I am very sorry for the doctor. If the Premier wants to disprove it, I may say that I saw the hospital myself, and I saw the condition it was in, and that sick men were not provided for. If the Government can find money to print and circulate the Premier's speeches, they cannot or will not provide money to provide accommodation for the sick who die on the goldfields. I have another matter yet to refer to. When I was up at Mt. Magnet the other day, or just before I arrived—I think it was on the 29th May—a white man was arrested for some little disturbance he had made when he had been drinking too much soda water, and, as a consequence, the police had occasion to take him up. He was a white man, mind, not a blackfellow, and the policeman chained that man to a mulga bush on a cold, frosty night, until next morning, when he was taken sixty miles to the nearest justice of the peace. Why do not the Government prevent such barbarities? Why do they not provide justices of the peace at the centres of population? Why do they not provide some accommodation for locking up white men who happen to break the law, and when it is not quite certain whether a man ought to be locked up or not, instead of having him chained to a tree in the open air? It is bad enough to chain up a black man; but, for a white man to be chained up to a mulga bush all night is a little too much for my nerves, and I hope, for the members of this House. This is the kind of provision made by the Government for the goldfields. This is the kind of provision we are expected to be satisfied with—white men chained to a tree, and sick men dying outside, without shelter or accommodation. They can provide all sorts of accommodation in the city; but, for the men who are striving to develop the resources of the country, for those who are now acknowledged to be the backbone of the country, for those who are engaged in an industry which is the very foundation of the progress and prosperity of the country, this is the kind of treatment which the present Government metes out. We have been assured

by the Premier himself that the policy of the Government in the future is to be the policy of the Government in the past. I have shown you the policy of the Government in the past; I ask, is this to be the policy of the Government in the future? If so, I am not one to support the Government. I do not suppose they expect it, and I do not suppose they are very much concerned whether I support them or not. [The PREMIER: Hear, hear.] The day will come; and also the man. I have just one word to say in reference to this proposed State or Agricultural Bank. It appears to me that imitation is the cardinal virtue of the Ministry. They go to Queensland for their beautiful Mining Act, and they go somewhere else for their Electoral Act. I think a Ministry ought to have some originality, at any rate. I would rather have an original law suitable to the circumstances of the colony, even though it were a little crude, than an elaborate piece of legislation copied from another country that was not at all suitable to our own requirements. Because Victoria, in its foolishness—not in its wisdom—has seen fit to introduce a Bill to create a Land Credit Bank, this Government think they must do the same. I have read the whole discussion in the Victorian Legislature—*Hansard* comes to me every week—and no solid argument was placed before that House in support of the adoption of such a policy. The Government here are going to bring in something of the same kind, for the purpose of helping our agriculturists to clear their land for growing wheat, when wheat in America and in the neighbouring colonies is selling at about 1s. 10d. a bushel, and when Russia is actually burning its wheat, because it does not pay to export it. If you want to help the agriculturist, if you want to keep people in the country, if you want to make the country districts prosperous in their own natural resources, let the money you borrow be expended on reproductive works; let the efforts of the Government be directed to making the Lands Department such as it may be the means of providing people with information as to where they are likely to obtain such land as they require; let them provide the goldfields with railway facilities and roads, and the question of a Land Bank need not be discussed for the next

twenty years. What the country wants, what the agriculturists want, is not a donation from Government funds, or a loan from a Land Bank, but common justice done to the lands they hold,—proper roads made to their own district, and the money raised in their district expended in that district, for the promotion of their own interest. What we want is for the country to be pushed ahead in the right way, so that we may have, not 100,000 but 500,000 people here; and then the agricultural question will be settled. But, to propose a Land Bank and give our farmers a Government donation, or lend them money at 5 per cent., instead of 8 or 10 per cent., and in this way expect to make the country prosperous and to settle people on the land, is one of the wildest schemes imaginable. I had some other subjects which I should have liked to refer to, but I think I have trespassed long enough on the patience of the House. This is my first speech in the House, and it is my duty before I resume my seat to thank members for the courteous reception they have accorded me, and to ask their forgiveness for trespassing so long on their time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. Speaker—In the first place, sir, I would like to congratulate you upon being re-elected Speaker of this House. I think it is a matter that we should congratulate ourselves on, and that the colony should be congratulated, that for another term we shall have the honour and pleasure of being presided over by you, sir. I should like also to say that the colony is to be congratulated on the men that have been returned to this Assembly. I believe that this House is as good an Assembly at the present time as it ever has been in the past; and I think that is a matter we ought to congratulate ourselves on. Especially should it be a matter of congratulation to those who advocated and who were the means of carrying into effect the recent change in the Constitution Act, by which the franchise was very largely extended. The result of the elections throughout the country has been, taken as a whole, quite satisfactory; and it is to me, personally, a matter of great gratification, because I always have said there was sufficient good sense amongst our fellow-colonists to look