

Legislative Assembly,*Thursday, 5th February, 1891.*

Market place for Perth—Agricultural Areas—Transit of English and Colonial Mails between Albany and Perth—Message (No. 5): Confirming Standing Orders—Census Bill: first reading—Officials in Parliament Bill: first reading—Postage Stamp Act, 1889, Amendment Bill: first reading—Loan Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7-30 p.m.

PRAYERS.**MARKET PLACE FOR PERTH.**

MR. CANNING: I wish to ask the Minister for Public Works whether the Government have had under consideration the question of providing a public market place, or public markets, for the city of Perth? In asking this question, I may say that I have in view the probability that if the Government have any intention of providing a site for a market place or market places, these markets would be handed over eventually to the Municipality; but it will be necessary for the Government in the first place to find the land for the purpose and decide upon the site.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government has not yet considered this question, but, attention having been called to it, the Government will make it a matter for future consideration.

RETURN OF AGRICULTURAL AREAS.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, moved that there be laid upon the Table of the House a Return showing:—

1. The amount of land reserved for Agricultural Areas throughout the Colony.
2. The locality of the different areas so reserved.
3. The amount of public money expended on surveys, &c., in connection with the laying out of each area.
4. The amount of revenue received and the amount of land selected within each declared Agricultural Area.

Agreed to.

TRANSIT OF MAILS BETWEEN ALBANY AND PERTH.

MR. PARKER moved that there be laid on the table all papers and correspondence that had passed between the Government and the Manager of the Great Southern Railway, in connection with the more speedy transit of the English and Colonial Mails between Albany and Perth.

Agreed to.

MESSAGE (No. 5): APPROVING STANDING ORDERS.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

"The Governor begs to acknowledge the receipt of Address No. 3 from the Legislative Assembly, and returns here-with the Standing Rules and Orders adopted by the Legislative Assembly on the 2nd instant, and which the Governor has approved.

"Government House, Perth, 5th February, 1891."

CENSUS BILL, 1891.

Read a first time.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL.

Read a first time.

POSTAGE STAMP ACT, 1889, AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a first time.

LOAN BILL: (£1,336,000).

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest), in moving the second reading of a Bill to authorise the raising of a sum of £1,336,000 by loan, for the construction of certain public works and other purposes, said: Mr. Speaker—in moving the second reading of this Bill, I do so with very great pleasure, but at the same time with a very great sense of the responsibility which rests upon me, because the policy of the first Government in office here under the new Constitution, so far as it relates to public works, is contained in this Bill. In the opinion of the Government the people of the country demand that a public works policy should be inaugurated. I think there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who has watched the course of events during the

last year or more, that throughout the length and breadth of the colony there has been a general desire expressed that a policy of public works should be instituted as soon as possible after the introduction of the new form of Government. If that were not so we can easily believe that there would not have been that great desire for the change of Government which was expressed and felt by all sections of the community. I unhesitatingly assert, sir, that the chief reason why the people of the colony wanted this change was that they might have a free hand, if I may use the expression, to manage their own affairs, and to deal with the public estate of the colony in the way they thought best. It was not, I think, that they were laboring under any sense of oppression, or that their liberties were attacked or infringed upon (for they have but the same liberty under this constitution as they had under the old), but that the controlling power was too far distant, and that they were not able to manage the public estate as advantageously as if they had the entire management themselves. I also think I may venture to assert that no Government which came into office at the present time, if not prepared to initiate a progressive and comprehensive scheme of public works to develop our resources, would have any chance of retaining office. Sir, the object of this Loan Bill, which we now place before hon. members, is to develop the resources of the colony and to improve the public estate. Hon. members will expect from me, in introducing a loan bill for this comparatively large amount, that I should give some reasons for the faith that is in us, and I will endeavor to do so. But if I were to attempt to say all I feel that I ought to say, or might say, I am afraid I would take up a good deal of the time of hon. members. If we refer back sir, to the days when our old and esteemed friend—I say esteemed friend because he was beloved by all—Sir Frederick Barlee had the management of the finances of the colony—and some of us thought those were great days—if we look back to the days when our late lamented and esteemed friend made his last Budget Speech—I think it was in 1874—the revenue of the colony was £134,225, but since then it has rapidly increased until, as I said last

night, we estimate it for 1891 at no less a sum than £439,165. I also told hon. members last evening—and if I mention some of the facts again I will not refer to more than is absolutely necessary—that at the end of the year 1891 we estimate we shall have a credit balance of £49,461. We shall have, we believe, almost enough at the end of this year to pay the interest on the loan we now propose, up to the end of 1892. I wish also to state, for the information of hon. members, that in the opinion of the Government the affairs of the colony at the present time are in a thoroughly solvent condition; and having made that statement I will not refer to our financial position further to-night. We can easily afford, we think, to pay for this loan. I believe I proved that pretty conclusively last evening, if my figures turn out to be correct. If there are any hon. members who are still doubting, I would ask those hon. members whether they have any faith in the future of this country. If they have, let us compare for a moment the revenue now and what it was 20 years ago, and having done so, I think if they have any faith already they will still have greater faith. Although the figures are perhaps familiar to hon. members, they form part of the argument I am bound to use. In 1870 the revenue of this colony was only £82,960. In 1880, ten years later, it was £180,049; but last year, 1890, it was £414,313; therefore the revenue of the colony actually received last year was five times greater than it was 20 years ago. In 1870, as we are all aware, there was no intercourse with the other colonies or the outside world. Perhaps I am not quite correct, literally, in saying there was no intercourse; but there was little intercourse with other parts of the world, and the fact of any person leaving or arriving here in those days was quite an event. We were then a small and isolated community, almost cut off from the world. The only means of getting to Albany, where the P. & O. steamers called once a month, was either by long coach journeys, taking four or five days, or else by a trip in the one miserable and uncomfortable little steamer that was then on the coast, and a trip to the other colonies or to Europe was considered quite an event. Look at the position of the colony in 1870 and

the position of the colony now. In 1870. we had one miserable and uncomfortable little steamer on the coast, and we looked on her as upon a magnificent man-of-war. I remember one day in Geraldton, to our surprise and delight we saw a very much smaller boat even than the old "Georgette" steaming up to the jetty against a head wind, and we looked upon the event as if the days of real progress were at last coming upon us, and that things were going to change. However, they did not change then. We had no railways, and we had very few telegraphs, and our revenue, as I have said, was only £180,049. Looking at our present position what do we find? We have some hundreds of miles of railways in working order, and when the Midland is completed—which will be very soon now, as the works are progressing rapidly and satisfactorily—we shall have no less than about 800 miles of railways open for traffic. Then we have telegraphs from one end of the colony to the other; we have about 10,300 miles of poles, and we have telephones established at Perth and Fremantle. We have decent steamers on our coast; intercourse between us and the other colonies, or with any other part of the world, is now both rapid and certain, and we can take a trip to the Eastern colonies or to Europe as easily as it can be done from any other part of the Australian Colonies. Sir, with regard to the Bill now before us, I should like to point out to hon. members, that in passing the second reading of this Bill, it will only mean that, in the opinion of the House, a loan is advisable, and that generally the House approves of the schedule of the Bill. It is quite competent for hon. members, after voting for the Bill, to object to the minor details of the schedule. I should not like any member to misunderstand the exact position; and therefore I have ventured to point that out. The passing of the Loan Bill will authorise the Government to raise the money; but separate Bills will be necessary before the railways can be undertaken, and Loan Estimates will be necessary for the other works. The only thing the Loan Bill will do will be to authorise the raising of the money; the other authorisations—the Railway Bills and Loan Estimates—will afterwards have to be submitted for the approval of

hon. members. Supposing—which I believe is impossible—but supposing that the Yilgarn goldfield entirely collapsed during the next six months; or, supposing—which is just as improbable—that all the sheep on the Murchison were to die—and one, in my opinion, is just as likely as the other—I say if either of these two catastrophes happen, then we should be in this position: the Yilgarn and Mullewa railways would not be brought forward, and the money would be diverted to some other purpose, as has been done on some former occasions, one of which we all particularly recollect—the re-appropriation of the loan for Fremantle Harbor Works. In dealing with this question, sir, of the loan for Public Works, we must all remember that we have a vast territory to manage, and that unless we are equal to the occasion, and take a broad view of our affairs and grasp the circumstances and requirements of every part of the colony, the people will not be satisfied. If this great estate of Western Australia belonged to any of us, or to any individual, would he be afraid to borrow a few millions upon it? Should we not, if it belonged to us, sell or lease or mortgage part of it, and would not our endeavor be to improve it? Should we not be looking about to find means to increase our income by developing its resources? If we did not do that our estate would not be worth much to us. If this would be the duty of an individual, surely it is our duty collectively to do it—and is there not a greater advantage in doing it collectively rather than one individual having to do it? Some people are always expressing the wish that the colony might prosper. They say they want to see population here, they say they want our resources developed; and then, when a Government, as we have done in this case, bring forward a scheme to carry out the views of these persons, there seems to be opposition to our proposals. Now I would like to ask these hon. members how is population to be attracted; how are we to be made progressive unless we borrow money? It is quite certain (we know it is a fact) that the revenue of this Colony is not sufficient, or anything like it, to enable us to enter into any large schemes for developing this immense territory. It is

no use people coming here now unless they have money. There is nothing really for a large number of people coming here to do. There is no work for them. Our present employers cannot employ them. The limit of our employing power is reached, and unless there is some scheme to attract population, and to give employment to them when they come, I can only say we shall continue to go on somewhat in the way we have in the past, probably improving a little, but nothing very great. If there is no loan there can be no public works; certainly none of any great magnitude, and very few people will come here. Without borrowed money it is practically impossible to develop the public estate of this country to any great extent, and the result will be that we must go on as we have in the past. I appeal to hon. members if they have faith in the colony and her resources, and believe they are capable of development—if they believe this, I ask them to sink all minor differences and make one great effort to develop them. If we pass this Bill by a large majority it will have a good effect throughout the country, and it will have a good effect in other places. But, if we are half-hearted, if we are halting in any way, and show ourselves weak and undecided, we shall leave ourselves open to attack. There have always ever since the colony has been a colony—and I suppose it is the same in every country—there have always been croakers, and timid men. There are many good and honest men here who cannot believe in the progress of their country. They are men I esteem—good upright men who have done their duty to the colony, but who cannot believe that the colony can progress. They remember the difficulties and the toil they underwent in the early days, and they cannot now believe that things are going to be any different in the future. We have had strong opposition in this House to many useful measures, measures which we now all approve of. Even the steamers on our coast were not obtained without great opposition in this House, from men who, no doubt, were honest in their belief, and who were anxious to promote the interests of the colony as they thought. One esteemed colonist, a man for whom I have the greatest respect, said that

steamers would only have the effect of enabling people to leave the colony. Telegraph communication with South Australia, a now admittedly desirable work, was also opposed by men who, no doubt, had the interest of the country at heart. It was said that the work was beyond our means, that it was not necessary, and that it would only be a source of expense and trouble. The extension of the telegraph to the North was also opposed. In fact there has always been opposition; there have always been croakers, and men who are timid and half-hearted. There are now some members in this House I believe who are afraid, after spending £40,000 or £50,000 on the Derby-Wyndham telegraph line, to go any further, and who now advocate that it should be left idle and should not be completed and put into working order. [MR. SHOLL: Hear, hear.] These people, I think, have lived too long by themselves—too long in isolation, they have not rubbed shoulders with the outside world. They are good people in their way, but timid and half-hearted. Their intentions are excellent, but if we trust to them we shall never make this country what we hope to see it. There are many among our old colonists who having borne the heat and burden of the day say: "The colony is good enough for me; I have done very well here as it is, and why should these changes be necessary now? I have been 40 or 50 years here, everything is pretty comfortable with me, and I do not see any reason for a change." Experience should teach us that those things which in the past were regarded as unnecessary are now considered essential to our welfare; and those who opposed some of the changes in the past regret having done so now. In fact, if anyone wishes to particularly annoy any prominent old colonist who opposed these improvements, he could not set about it any better way than by saying to him, "You opposed the steamer, or you opposed the telegraph, or you opposed the railway,"—things which everyone now deems most essential to our welfare. I remember, sir, the Perth railway station being built, and I remember how the Government in this House were attacked and told that they were entering into extravagances, building splendid places when there was no necessity for them, and wasting public money. Now these

very places are altogether unsuitable and inadequate for our requirements. We were told that the railway to Fremantle would not pay for the grease on the wheels. All these were opposed by men actuated no doubt by the best motives; but they are men who have lived too long in this country, and cannot believe there is any good to come out of it. Look at our railways now, and only think that last year we received £45,814 revenue from them. That looks like paying for more than the grease. [Mr. SHOLL: What was the expenditure?] I did not say anything about it. I said the people of this country last year paid £45,814 for railway accommodation, and this year we expect they will pay £53,000. Sir, I do not propose at the present time to refer in detail to the schedule of the Bill now before the House. I will do that when the Bill is in Committee. At that stage the Government will be glad to explain and to give all information to hon. members on each item—that is if we are fortunate enough to get that far. No good can result by going over the ground twice. I can only say here that I challenge anyone to show that the colony has been retarded or injured by its borrowing policy in the past, and I would ask hon. members whether they think the colony has reached the limit of its borrowing powers. My opinion is, sir, that it is only about to begin the development of its great and varied resources. As to reaching the limit of its borrowing powers I say that, if we progress, as I hope and believe we shall, we are only just entering on our borrowing powers. But, as I have said before, without cheap and rapid means of internal communication it is impossible for any country to progress. I have said that on one or two occasions in this House already; but it is so important, and I believe in it so thoroughly, that I repeat it again. Look at all the countries of the world. Let hon. members turn to places they have seen and read of both in the Old and New worlds—the places where railways and telegraphs exist, and those in which they do not exist. Let them look to Europe, India, Canada, the United States, the other Australian Colonies, and countries where railways and telegraphs have been established. They will find progress, civilisation, culture, arts, and sciences, and

they will find there the homes of the great ones of the earth. Then let them change the prospect and turn their thoughts to Central Asia or Central Africa, and what will they find? They will find them steeped in barbarism. They will find insecurity of life and property, exclusiveness, bigotry, idolatry, and will, I fear, continue to do so until they obtain cheap and rapid means of communication, when the strong light of public opinion will be let in upon them. Can anyone in this House bring himself to believe that when we have expended this £1,336,000 we are now asking the House to approve of, on the objects in the schedule to the Bill, that we shall wish we had never borrowed it? I cannot think so. I firmly believe in the present policy of the Government, and in this Loan Bill. I believe it is the right commencement of a public works policy. The schemes which are proposed are all familiar to us. Most of us know all that is necessary to know with regard to these works. We have not received our information second-hand; it is not based on mere report or hearsay. We have not listened to this one or to that one; but it is knowledge founded on our own experience and an intimate personal acquaintance with every locality in which these works are proposed. I ask, sir, that credit may be given us for desiring to do what we think is best to promote the prosperity of this colony. We ask hon. members to carefully consider the whole matter, as we have carefully considered it. Unless hon. members are prepared to accept this Loan Bill, or something like it, there seems to me to be no other course we can pursue in order to obtain what we desire so much,—the progress of the colony. I would also put it to hon. members from a personal point of view. I would ask them to consider whether the members of this Government have—either in their private or public life—had the reputation of being reckless men? I have never heard anyone who has dared to assert that any member of the present Government, in his private or public capacity, has borne any other reputation than that of being a very careful man. If we are going to bring ruin and disaster on this colony, we should also bring it upon ourselves, I believe, as much as upon anyone in the country. We should be some of the

principal sufferers. But, sir, we have only one object in view. We want to do the best we can for the country; but whether we have set about it in the way that will meet with the views of hon. members, of course, remains to be seen. I can only assure them of this: we have brought all the knowledge and experience we possess to bear on this work, and the result is before hon. members in the shape of this Bill. We are not—as I said yesterday—political adventurers, desirous of retaining office at the expense of the country. For my own part I am willing and anxious to devote my whole time to the service of this country; I am not actuated by any desire for office in so far, at any rate, as the spoils of office are concerned. We wish to see the population increased, and this colony made the happy home of thousands of our race; and we believe that the only way to do this is by setting about as quickly as possible to develop the resources of the country. As I have said before, this cannot be done out of current revenue, and unless hon. members are prepared to vote for this Loan Bill—or something similar to it—we cannot do it. Or, if hon. members can show me any works—and I know they cannot—which are more useful and pressing than these we have brought forward, I shall be glad to retire from these benches, and allow those gentlemen, who can place a schedule of more pressing works before the House, to take our places. The hon. member for West Kimberley, the other evening—and he also is acquainted with every part of the colony—defied hon. members to show any works of pressing importance at the present time that are not included in this Loan Bill. That challenge has not been replied to by anyone. I have now said all that I have to say on the present occasion. I have not referred to the clauses of the Bill, because they are in the form which is usual in Bills of this kind. The very pith of this Bill, the whole substance of the measure, is contained in the schedule; and when we come to deal with the various items of that schedule in Committee, I shall be glad to give hon. members all the information I possess. In conclusion, I can only say that, whether hon. members approve of our policy or not—whether our existence as a Government be short

or long—I feel sure we shall be credited with having an honest desire to do our duty, and with having made an honest effort to raise this colony to a position of importance, to place it on the high road to prosperity, and to enable it to take an honored place among the great self-governing colonies of Australasia—(cheers). Sir, I now move the second reading of this Bill.

MR. PARKER: Sir, I believe I may safely say that I have quite as much confidence in the future of Western Australia as the members of the Government have; and I have not the slightest objection to the Government or the colony raising money with the view of developing the resources of Western Australia. I believe that the prophecy contained in the concluding remarks of the speech we have just heard will be carried out ere very long, and that this colony will be found to be the home of many thousands of our fellow Anglo-Saxons. We are fully aware, I think, all of us, that it is impossible out of ordinary revenue to develop the resources of a country like this in the way they ought to be developed, and to make it as attractive to outsiders as it ought to be; I think we all believe this cannot be done without the aid of foreign capital. This is the policy that has been pursued in the neighboring colonies, and I believe in every British dominion,—that is, a policy of spending loan moneys in the development of their resources. I do not think any one will cavil at that. I do not think any member of this House cavils at the principle of borrowing money for the purpose of inducing settlement; but what I imagine some members of this House do object to is to some of the items in the Schedule of this Loan Bill, which they doubt will have that effect,—the effect of developing the colony's resources; or whether they would or not, if carried out, have the effect of loading us with a burden in the future by way of taxation. I am not going to discuss these items now; I am bound to follow the example in that respect given by the hon. gentleman who introduced the bill. Like him, I shall wait for another and more opportune occasion for raising a discussion upon these items in detail. I have no doubt there is a general desire throughout the colony, and there has

been a general desire for some time past, that money should be raised by loan for public works purposes. I have no doubt that many persons looked forward to the inauguration of Responsible Government simply with the view of having large sums of money borrowed, and expended in the colony. I doubt, though, whether if you polled the whole length and breadth of this colony there would be found such a general desire, such a universal desire, to borrow money simply with the view of spending it, as apparently appears to be the idea of the Premier. The hon. gentleman tells us that no Ministry would retain office unless they were prepared to borrow money, that no Ministry could hope to retain office in this colony unless they went in for this borrowing policy. I do not know whether a Ministry would retain office or not if it did not go in for borrowing money; but I think the hon. gentleman put this bill forward on very low grounds when he put it forward with the idea that it was absolutely necessary to enable his Ministry to retain office. I do not really believe that the hon. gentleman could have meant that. I firmly believe what he says, that the Government are animated by a desire to do their best to further the progress of the colony; and that they are not putting forward this Loan Bill in order to enable them to retain office; I cannot believe that the Premier could have meant to put it forward on such low grounds. We are told that at present there is very little employment in the colony for outsiders, and that the idea is to create employment by initiating a system of public works, so as to induce people to come here. I do not object to providing employment to outsiders by means of loan money, if in doing so we are going to settle these people on the land after the loan money is expended. What we have to look at is this: we do not want to attract people to these shores simply to participate in the spending of this loan money, and when that is done, to go away again. What we want to attract here is a permanent population, a population that will settle on the soil and assist us in developing the country's resources, a population that will make their home here, and become good colonists and taxpayers, and who will assist us

in sending the colony forward, and to make it a worthy member of the Australasian group, and who will enable us to borrow more money hereafter for the further development of our resources. That is the object we ought to have in view,—the permanent settlement of the soil and the permanent benefit of the colony. I take it that every work we undertake out of borrowed money ought to have this object in view. No doubt some of the works mentioned in the Schedule of this bill cannot be looked upon as likely to be directly reproductive, and some of them no doubt will not be indirectly reproductive,—that is, they won't bring any more coin to the exchequer. But I hope and trust that the major part of the works we are going to undertake out of loan money will have the effect of attracting a large population to our shores, and not only attract population but also attract capital as well. I take it that what will attract population more than anything else to Western Australia is its minerals. I was very pleased indeed to hear the figures given to us by the Premier last evening with regard to the production of gold in the colony during last year, for I firmly believe that it is by means of the development of our mineral resources that we must look to attract both population and capital to these shores—and not only attract population here, but attract a population that will eventually settle upon the soil. We must bear in mind that if we attract a large population that will develop our goldfields, open up our tin mines, not only at Yilgarn and at the Blackwood, but from one end of the colony to the other—and we know, sir, that minerals have been discovered from one end of the colony to the other—we must bear in mind that, if we attract a large mining population, we shall not only be developing the mineral wealth of the country, but also providing a large body of consumers; and this will tend to give a stimulus to cultivation of the soil and agricultural settlement. Therefore, I take it, our first great object in borrowing money should be the development of our mineral resources; and I should have liked to see the items for the development of the colony's mineral resources placed first on the Schedule.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): It does not matter much where they appear on the Schedule.

MR. PARKER: It may not matter; I don't know. The hon. gentleman who introduced this bill told us that if this colony belonged to a private individual, he would do all he could to develop its resources, with the view of increasing its income. I will ask him, if a private individual owned this colony, with its wealth of mineral resources, whether he does not think that the very first thing that private individual would turn his attention to—with the view of increasing his income—would be the development of its mineral resources. He would not think of building lines of railways that were not likely to induce settlement, either at present or for years to come, but entail a serious loss, not only in interest, but also in working expenses for some years. I say, no man in his senses would dream that such works as these would increase his income. They might, fifty years hence, perhaps, be of some benefit to his descendants; but, certainly, not to him personally in increasing his income. Therefore, when the Premier said we ought to deal with the colony on the same lines as a private individual would deal with his estate—and I quite agree with him in that—we must think what a private individual would be likely to do. We may be sure that a private individual, bent upon increasing his income from his estate, would eschew all such works as were likely to prove entirely unproductive for many years to come, and works which were not likely to induce settlement. The hon. gentleman asked us, how are you going to attract population? I have already pointed out how we may attract population, and that is, by the development of our mineral resources. He also asked us whether this colony had reached the limit of its borrowing powers? I quite agree with the hon. member that it has not reached the limit of its borrowing powers. I believe the colony can borrow this money quite safely—I firmly believe that. But what I wish to see is the money judiciously expended, so that when it has been expended we may not see such another period of depression as we had after our last loan was ex-

pendent. We do not want the experience of the other colonies to teach us this,—that while loan money is actually being spent, everything goes on swimmingly and flourishingly. Booms in land and everything; everybody making money; nobody caring about a little extra taxation; everyone in good spirits, and everything looking bright. But when the spending period is over, unless the money has been judiciously expended, there comes a reaction, and a period of depression and stagnation; people thrown out of employment, land down in value, depression in trade, and people leaving our shores as fast as they can. Hon. members know that I am only repeating our own past experience in this colony. They know what followed after the cessation of public works when our last loan had been expended. The only way to profit by our past experience is to take care that when we borrow this money which we now propose to borrow it shall be spent judiciously, and spent upon works that will not only attract people to the colony but also induce them to settle here when the money is spent, instead of leaving our shores in disgust. The Premier also asks us whether the loan policy of the colony in the past has in any way injured the colony? I should be sorry to say that our loan policy in the past has injured the colony, but I very much doubt whether that last loan of £525,000 in the end did very much benefit for the colony. When members look around them they will find it a very difficult matter, I think, to point out to works constructed out of that loan that have proved of lasting benefit to the colony. We are all fully aware that the expenditure of that money did not attract that population which we had hoped it would, and did not send the colony forward on the road to prosperity in the way we expected it would, and in the way it ought to have done. And I attribute that in a great measure to the way in which that money was frittered away. The hon. gentleman says there are some persons who are opposed to railways, and some persons who are opposed to steamers, and opposed to all progressive measures. I admit there were one or two railways included in that £525,000 loan which I did oppose at the time, and I am happy to say that at any rate one distinguished

gentleman who now sits on the Treasury bench was also opposed to one of those railways—a line which up to the present time has never been worked to this day by the Government. Does he think that work has been of any benefit to the colony? I am referring to the railway from the port of Bunbury running fourteen miles inland to a mahogany tree; a line that cost the colony some £40,000, and upon which to this day there has not, I believe, been an engine on it, unless it was the contractor's engine.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest): We are going to work it now.

MR. PARKER: I am glad to hear it. I am proud to think that I was one who opposed that railway; and I believe if the same line were now proposed, a line terminating at a mahogany tree in the bush, this House would reject it entirely. Then again out of that same loan we built a railway from Geraldton to Greenough. The Midland Railway people were the proper persons to build that line, and I believe they were always willing to do so, and I hope and trust the present Government will hand it over to them. These are two of the works constructed out of our last loan that I am happy to say I opposed; and I have yet to learn that either of them has proved of any great benefit to the colony. I firmly believe that under the judicious management of the present Ministry we shall not have such works proposed again as this Bunbury line running to an isolated gum tree. I am prepared to give the Government credit for bringing forward such works as they think necessary in the best interests of the colony. I agree with the Premier that they have taken in every part of the colony, they have in that sense taken a broad and comprehensive view of the situation, as they ought to do; they have brought forward every possible work they could think of. I do not think many members would dare to bring forward any other works and say they were more important or even as important as some of these works, although, as I have said, they may not be directly reproductive,—that is, in the light of bringing pounds, shillings, and pence to the Treasury. I think that harbor improvements along our coasts are most necessary works. A railway that will have the effect of reducing

freight on wool, and lead perhaps to increased pastoral settlement, may be beneficial; but I shall wait for more information before I decide whether I shall be prepared to support such a line, which admittedly is intended to benefit the squatter. I believe, myself, that at no period in the history of Western Australia have our agricultural and pastoral industries been so prosperous as at the present time. I think it is a happy combination of circumstances that Responsible Government should be inaugurated at a time when the principal industries of the colony are looking up, and when we find our flocks and herds largely on the increase, and the settlement of the soil going on rapidly in many parts of the colony. I say it is a very happy augury that Responsible Government is being introduced at such a favorable time, when the prospects of the colony are so encouraging; and I only hope and trust that nothing we may do may have the effect of marring those prospects or of retarding the progress of the colony. I believe we are now recovering from that depression caused by the cessation of all expenditure upon public works from our last loan, and I also believe that if it had not been for that loan and the way it was expended we never should have had that depression. I doubt very much whether without that loan money we should not have been in a more prosperous condition, as a colony, than at the present time. [SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: No, no.] Hon. members say no, no; but there are some hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench who are fully aware that times of depression following upon a lavish expenditure of loan money are most disastrous to a community. We have only to look back at the history of Perth and Fremantle during the past two or three years to know that, and to show how very bad the times have been to a great many persons. And I believe that resulted largely from what we called the great boom that came about during the expenditure of that loan money, followed by the sudden stoppage of such expenditure, and it was mainly because the money was not judiciously expended, as I hope and trust our loans will be in the future.

MR. RICHARDSON: In rising to make a few remarks on this bill, I shall, like other members, not attempt to deal

with the items *seriatim*, but deal with the matter as a question of policy and the necessity of borrowing, and also the wisdom of it. I think one very great point with regard to this question of borrowing, and especially borrowing such large sums of money, is to ask ourselves, as all really good sound business men would ask,—how are we going to pay the interest, and also what is likely to be the amount of increased taxation which the community will have to bear as the result of this increased borrowing? I may be given leave to hark back a little on this question, and allude to some figures that were brought forward a few nights ago by the hon. member for Greenough. I take the liberty of complimenting that hon. member upon the business-like manner in which he treated this question; it struck me at the time that he attacked this borrowing policy upon the only point which, in the first place, it might be susceptible of attack, and in which it ought to be attacked, if it was unsound; and that was, whether we would be increasing the burden of taxation to such an extent that the community was likely to suffer from it. The hon. member went on to show, or to attempt to show, that we could not incur this additional liability without at the same time incurring extra taxation. I hope, however, I shall be able to bring forward figures which will somewhat qualify the conclusions he drew, and perhaps modify his fears as to the result of this further borrowing. If so, I hope the hon. member will cheerfully accept them, and will not be ashamed to support the policy of the Ministry, if he finds he was mistaken in his apprehension. I will not detain the House very long with these dry figures. Our present taxation, in respect of interest and sinking funds—and I am going to confine myself now to the taxation we have to pay on our national debt—amounts in the aggregate, including both interest and sinking fund, to £63,000, on our whole indebtedness. Taking our present population at 45,000, this taxation amounts to £1 8s. per head, for every man, woman, and child in the community. That is what we have to send out of the country to pay the interest and provide the sinking fund in connection with our present public debt. As the Ministry now propose to about

double our debt, the taxation necessary to meet the additional charges will be £2 16s. per head of our present population. But I think we may take it for granted that we shall be able to borrow this money at a cheaper rate than we were able to borrow some of our previous loans. I will say nothing here as to the question of doing away with the sinking fund, and of borrowing for the purpose of redeeming some of these loans; though I would point out that the very fact of a country being able to float conversion loans is a strong proof that the lenders of the money have every faith in the solvency of the country. But, supposing we are able to raise this next loan at 4 per cent., this would increase the interest and other charges, including sinking fund, by £52,000 (in round numbers), which would bring up our taxation in respect of loans to about £2 12s., instead of £2 16s. That is reckoning at the present number of our population. But supposing that by the time this loan money is expended, say four or five years hence, our population has in the meantime increased to 50,000—which is not a large estimate—our taxation per head would only be £2 9s., as against the £1 8s. we are now paying. I would also remind hon. members of this fact: that when we incurred the liability which raised our taxation for loans to the sum of £63,000, our population was only 35,000, so that the rate of taxation per head at that time was £1 16s., instead of £1 8s.; so that the increased taxation that will be entailed to meet the charges on this new loan will only be 13s. more than our taxation per head was when we entered the money market and raised our last loan. Since that time our population has increased about 10,000 in about four years. It has been said that every fresh inhabitant introduced into the colony means an increase of about £8 to the Customs revenue; but I will take the half of that as the amount received from Customs duties; and I will deduct £2 on account of the probable increase in the cost of administration, and take the value per head of each additional inhabitant as £2 per annum. Now £2 per annum on 10,000 additional inhabitants makes a clear increase of £20,000 per annum. This would pay the interest on £500,000, which would only leave us £800,000 out of the proposed new loan to provide for.

When you come to bear this in mind, and if we may calculate on this increase, it will be seen that all the additional charges we shall have to meet will only be 4s. per head of the population more than what we had to provide when our population only numbered 35,000. I would ask any business man in this House whether 4s. per head of additional taxation is going to break us? I hardly think that the most desponding pessimist will venture to say that 4s. additional taxation over and above what we had to provide when we had a population of 35,000 is an amount that ought to frighten us. But this is not all. Are we going to stand still while the expenditure of this loan money is going on, and these public works are undertaken all over the colony? And is it not a matter of fact that very shortly—next year in fact—some millions of acres of land will be thrown open for selection that are now shut up, and have been shut up for years; and is the colony not going to derive some revenue out of these lands? Then, again, there will be some additional millions of acres in another part of the colony that will be thrown open when the Midland Railway syndicate make their selections. And are we going to get nothing out of all these millions of acres of land? Is there absolutely to be no settlement on these lands? I think it is absurd to think so. I think we may reckon on a very large increase of revenue indeed from these lands, and that this extra 4s. will be completely lost sight of, and not only lost sight of, but more than counterbalanced. I may be allowed to make another remark on this aspect of the question. Are these railways that we are going to build going to do nothing for us at all? If so, we had better have nothing to do with them. Surely we may reasonably expect that railways tapping some of the finest districts of the colony will do some good, by bringing the producer and the consumer into closer communication. Is it not a fact that, at the present time, the cost of living here—as regards many of the necessities of life—is about double what it is in other parts? We may have our meat and bread at reasonable rates, but dairy produce—fruit, vegetables, bacon, cheese, and articles of daily consumption like that—are double the price they are in other parts;

and the reason of that is the cost and the difficulty of transit. If by the construction of these railways we can remedy that, and reduce the cost of living by bringing the producer and the consumer into closer communication, surely it cannot be said that we shall not derive some counterbalancing benefits. If it is allowed that the cost of living in Perth now is from £5 to £15 per annum more than it need be, and if we can reduce it by one half, what will be the result? We shall be reducing the cost of living to the 20,000 people of Perth and Fremantle by at least £3 per annum, which means a saving to the inhabitants of these two towns alone of about £60,000. Is not that worth considering? I think this is a strictly business-like way to look at these things. There are many considerations to be thought of in connection with this matter. Some people seem to run away with the idea that it means increased taxation and nothing else, and that there is no set-off of any kind. These people will not contemplate the probability of an increased population, they will not contemplate increased settlement, and increased revenue from the land; they will not contemplate the material advantages which the community will derive in the lowering of the cost of living. No; they cannot see anything but a vision of increased taxation. As I have already shown, this increase of taxation will only amount to 4s. per head more than we were paying when our population was only 35,000. For my own part I see nothing in this vision of increased taxation calculated to cause us any alarm. What we have to guard against, as the hon. member for York has said, is not so much the borrowing of this money as the injudicious expenditure of it. But there was one remark which emanated from that hon. member with which I entirely disagree: the hon. member said that the expenditure of our last loan of £525,000 did not result in any benefit to the community. [Mr. PARKER: I questioned it.] Yet in the very next breath the same hon. member congratulated the country on the prosperity of the agricultural and pastoral industries. The hon. member seems to attribute this general prosperity of these important industries to the cessation of public works expenditure. The

hon. member seems to think that the present satisfactory condition of these industries is due to our having ceased to borrow. Let me again remind the hon. member that the mere fact of our having ceased to borrow does not do away with our having to pay interest on what we have already borrowed. We still have to send this £63,000 out of the colony just the same as on the day we ceased from borrowing. The hon. member also spoke of a period of severe depression. I beg to differ most emphatically from him as to there having been a period of tremendous depression and stagnation all over the colony, as the result of a sudden cessation of expenditure from public loans. I am aware there were a few failures in business circles about Perth, and a certain amount of depression in trade among merchants. But what was the reason? The reason was over-trading and rash speculation, and the formation of certain land rings, which raised the price of land to a fictitious value, with the result that those who came last were "dropped," and there was the inevitable reaction. There went up a cry of depression, and the country was blamed for it; the country was said to be in a rotten state because a few of these rash speculators suffered. There was a certain amount of depression, no doubt, in business circles, but I deny that there was any depression among those who are looked upon as the backbone of the colony, the middle classes, the steady laboring classes and artisans. There were a certain number of disemployed, I admit, but that arose in this way: the introduction of any public works policy is bound to bring a large accession to the labor market, in the shape of navvies and people of that class, who are only fitted for that particular kind of work; and when the works cease, these people, of course, are left without employment, and they clear out of the country. But I submit that the depression of which we have heard so much did not touch the general community. The middle classes, the artisan, and the sober and industrious workman did not suffer from any depression. On the contrary they have continued thoroughly prosperous. There have been unmistakable proofs of this. At every land sale held during the last few years you will find

that the buyers have been from amongst these classes, and that they were *bona fide* purchasers, with the intention of settling on the land, and building themselves homes. You can see this on the outskirts of Perth and Fremantle, in the large number of prosperous-looking villas that are going up in all directions, affording unmistakable signs not of depression but of general prosperity. The agricultural portion of the community, too, are fairly prosperous, on the whole; and to cry out about depression and stagnation, or want, or poverty among the general body of the inhabitants of this colony is to brand the country with a stain that it does not deserve. I maintain we are in a thoroughly sound and prosperous condition; and all those classes of the community who are the mainstay and backbone of the country are in a much better position to-day than they were in five or ten years ago.

MR. LOTON: I think, sir, this being the first occasion I have stood on my legs since the opening of the present session, and especially on an auspicious occasion like this, I may venture to make a few remarks. From the opening speech of the Premier in moving this bill one would almost imagine that it was high treason to sit on the Opposition benches; but I have always understood that under the system of Government we have now inaugurated—what we call representative or party Government—I have always understood that if we are going to have an honest Government and a good Government, there must be a vigilant Opposition—I do not mean a factious opposition, but a reasonable and fairly strong Opposition, an Opposition that takes cognisance of the acts of the Government, and watches them as closely as it can in the interests, not of the Opposition itself, but in the interests of the country. Sir, the little bill now before this Assembly seems to be a very tempting morsel, if one may judge from the number of members who have been attracted to the shadow of the Government. While the Government benches are almost filled, I observe that the Opposition benches are nearly empty. [THE PREMIER: Come over here.] So far as I am concerned, I wish to state that I have not taken my seat on the Opposition benches for the sake

of opposition. I shall be prepared to yield to the Ministry equally as firm and honest a support by sitting on this side of the House as I should if I sat on the other side, when in my opinion they deserve support. I have taken my seat on this side of the House from the conclusion I arrived at with regard to the policy put forward by the Ministry at the opening of the session, because I felt I could not (fully at all events) endorse that policy as shadowed forth in this little bill before us to-night. Not that I am afraid of borrowing money; nor do I think that the colony is not in a position to borrow money. The question to my mind is to what extent the colony is justified in borrowing at the present time, or in authorising the Government of the day to borrow money, for expenditure on public works. I had intended on this occasion—being the first occasion I have stood up in this Assembly to say anything at all—to have gone somewhat into the details of the Schedule of this Loan Bill; but, following the example set by the Government and previous speakers, perhaps it would not be politic or desirable at the present time to go into details, as we shall have an opportunity of discussing these details when the bill is in committee. But I did hope we should have had a little more information in detail from the leader of the Government, rather than the way he put it to us in one part of his speech—a sort of personal appeal to our feelings to support the Ministry on personal grounds, in their bold and comprehensive policy for the developing, as he said, of the resources of the colony. Before I go very briefly into the financial aspects of the case, I would just like to touch upon a few of the remarks that emanated from the hon. member for the De Grey (Mr. Richardson). I cannot altogether follow the hon. member in the details of his figures where he attempted to show that, if we borrow this money, there will be little if any extra taxation; I was not smart enough for that. But I could not help following him in the remark he made with reference to the loans we have already raised, and the suggestion he threw out about doing away with the sinking fund, and resorting to conversion loans to pay off the loans we have already raised. The hon. member seem-

ed to put it to the House that that was quite within the realms of sound finance, because (he said) nobody would lend us this money to pay off our old loans unless they thought the country was in a sound position. But I would ask him what would be the position of this colony if, after borrowing this £1,336,000 without providing for its repayment by means of a sinking fund, it went into the money market with a conversion loan to pay it off, and it should be found that the colony had not advanced to that condition of prosperity we hope it may, and, if the markets of the world finding us in that position would not lend us any more money? I ask what would be our position then, if we had not taken the precaution of providing a sinking fund? I should be very sorry personally to find myself in such an unfortunate position, and I should be very sorry indeed to see this colony in such an unfortunate position. From the remarks that fell from the hon. member, and also from the remarks of the leader of the Government, we are given to understand that if this proposed loan is raised it will not entail any increased taxation. Well, sir, we had a very long display of figures put before us last night by the Premier with regard to our ordinary revenue and expenditure, and also the revenue we had received from other and unexpected sources. The hon. gentleman particularly referred, and referred with pride, to the revenue we have been receiving from our railways; and the conclusion he came to, both last night and this evening, was that we can easily pay the interest on this loan without any increase of taxation. He said with every confidence that we shall have at the end of 1891 a sufficient balance to credit to pay the interest on the loan up to the end of 1892. Well, sir, I hope we may. I am not prepared to say that we shall not. But I should like to put before hon. members at this time just a few figures, which I have taken from the official returns, and which I think will be found pretty nearly correct. I have not gone into the shillings and pence columns, nor confined myself quite to a pound or two; but in the main they will be found to be pretty close to the mark. We had put before us last night a great array of figures to show the progress the colony had made in prosperity between

the years 1880 and 1890, and the way in which the revenue of the colony had expanded. Of course we all know there has been considerable progress; but it has been slow, if continuous, and what we want is that it shall be more rapid and at the same time perfectly sound and enduring. But with regard to this question of revenue and expenditure, I should like the House to look at the figures in another light. I shall not trouble the House by going back a period of ten or twenty years; I will deal with the more immediate past. I will not go further back than 1889. In that year our gross revenue was £442,000, less £60,000 refunded out of loan, thus leaving the ordinary revenue at £382,000. I find, sir, that our actual expenditure in that year was £386,387, leaving a deficiency of £4,387 on the year's transactions. It is not a very large item, it is true. Still some members may consider it rather strange that notwithstanding this deficiency we had a credit balance at the end of the year, when our expenditure for the year was £4,387 in excess of the revenue. That is accounted for by the fact of our having recouped ourselves out of certain loan moneys. That is where our credit balance came from. I do not wish to attempt to mislead the House. This £60,000 that was refunded had been previously expended out of current revenue, in more prosperous times, and expended upon works which it was considered ought to have been undertaken out of loan money. But let us go a little further. In the following year, 1890, the year that has just closed, our gross revenue is stated by the Premier to have been £414,000; but in that amount there was a certain little windfall of £27,000 which was added to the revenue from the sale of those Hampton Plains lands—an item which certainly cannot be looked upon as ordinary revenue. This £27,000 being outside what may be regarded as our ordinary yearly revenue, we have to deduct it from the gross revenue for the year, and if we do this, we have the amount reduced to £387,314. Now, sir, what was our expenditure during the same year. Although we have been told (and it is shown on the Estimates now before us) that we had a credit balance of £45,000 at the end of the year, I find

that the expenditure for the year was £401,737, as compared with a revenue from ordinary sources of £387,314, showing a deficiency of £14,423 on the year's transactions. The hon. the Premier in dealing with ways and means, and showing how he intends to provide the interest on this proposed loan—and personally I do not intend to oppose the borrowing of a portion of it, though I am opposed to borrowing so large an amount—the Premier referred with a great deal of satisfaction to what he called the surplus revenue which is to provide this interest. But let us look at the figures. I have dealt with the two last years. The estimated expenditure for this year, 1891, is £435,303, and the estimated revenue is £439,165. But what is there to justify this increase of revenue as compared with the two previous years? The ordinary revenue for 1889 was £382,000, and the ordinary revenue for 1890 was £387,000,—a nett increase of £5000. But for the current year the Premier estimates he will receive a revenue of £439,000, showing an increase on the ordinary revenue of the previous year, not of £5000, but of £51,800. Sir, I hope it may be realised. [The PREMIER: So do we.] We all hope so. But it is a very considerable increase. No doubt the Government expect that the expenditure of this loan money on public works will have the result of increasing trade in various directions, and of increasing the revenue from the Customs; still £51,000 is a considerable increase in one year, and I am not at all sure that the Government have not strained their estimate to the utmost limit when they put it down at that figure. And it is upon this estimate—this somewhat inflated estimate I think—that the Government reckon to pay the interest upon this loan to the end of 1892, out of the credit balance they expect at the end of this year. But, supposing the revenue should fall materially short of their estimate, in what position will the colony be then with regard to paying the interest out of any credit balance? As I have already said, the Premier has referred with some pride to the receipts from our railways, as a source of revenue. But I should like the House to examine these figures a little closer. It will be seen from the schedule to this Loan Bill that we propose to spend a

very large amount upon additional railways. We have one item of £368,000 for a railway down South; another item of £324,000 for a railway to Yilgarn; a third item of £100,000 for a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa; a sum of £60,000 for improvements to our Eastern Railway, and a further sum of £25,000 for additional rolling stock, and £10,000 set down for railway surveys—altogether an increased expenditure of nearly £900,000 in connection with railways. If the Premier is depending upon his credit balance to pay the interest on the loan, I should like to ask whether he thinks these new railways are likely to pay their working expenses? Let us look at a few figures with regard to our existing railways, of which we have about 200 miles including the Bunbury line (not worked), or about 185 miles in working order. It is now proposed to construct about 350 miles of additional lines. For the information of members who may not have gone to the trouble of working out the figures for themselves, I should like to point out—without reference to interest and sinking fund at all, but simply working expenses—what our existing railways are costing us. I will not go far back. The receipts for 1886 were £35,895, and the expenditure for the same year was £44,580, showing a loss on working expenses alone of £8,685—interest and sinking fund to be added. In 1887, the receipts were £41,104, and the expenditure £57,183, being an excess of £16,079. The revenue for the following year was £40,148, and the expenditure £53,201—a deficiency again of £13,053. In 1889 the receipts were £43,631, while the expenditure for the same year amounted to £62,269, showing a deficit of £18,978. This was not paying working expenses. In 1890—and I am now coming very close up to date—the receipts were £48,625, and the expenditure £62,269, showing a further deficiency of £13,644. The figures I put before hon. members give the actual result of the past few years as regards our existing railways. In addition to these losses there is the interest and also the sinking fund to be provided. These railways have cost us about £850,000 or nearly a million of money. That is for about 200 miles. And the deficiency upon the actual

working of these lines during the past five years has been as follows:—

1886	...	...	£8,685
1887	...	...	16,079
1888	...	...	13,053
1889	...	...	18,978
1890	...	...	13,644
			<hr/>
			£70,439

I hope I have been sufficiently guarded in what I have said. I do not say all this is a loss, but a deficiency. I do not say it is a dead loss, because we all believe that the colony generally has received a good deal of benefit from these railways, and that they conduce to progress and advancement. I have as much faith in the prospects of the colony as any member on the opposite side of the House, provided the Government when they put forward what they call a bold policy, at the same time put forward a sound and judicious policy. I am quite sure they have the best wishes of every member in this House; at the same time I trust they will always meet with a reasonable amount of honest criticism. The Premier made a remark which struck me rather forcibly when referring to the receipts from our railways last year as being a considerable source of income, and the hon. gentleman said he wondered where it came from. But he didn't give us the other side of the question. He didn't put to us the large amount expended on these railways during the same year, £62,000, and wondered where that came from. I can tell him where that came from: it came out of the pockets of the taxpayers of the colony. Without going into the details of the Schedule of this Loan Bill, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the Government estimate of the cost of building these new railways, and furnishing them with proper rolling stock. The estimate, from what I can make out, is about £2,000 per mile. [The PREMIER: More than that.] Not much. [The PREMIER: Oh, yes. £2,500 for one line.] One of them, at all events, is put down at not more than £2,000,—the Yilgarn railway, I only hope that when these lines are undertaken, or any portion of them, they will be constructed efficiently and supplied with ample rolling stock for this sum. But what has been our experience in the past? What have our railways cost us per mile in the past?

Members will say, we have had to construct them over very difficult country. No doubt; but it has not all been very difficult country. It was not very difficult country between Fremantle and Guildford. It was not very difficult to construct the line from the Clackline or from Spencer's Brook to Beverley,—it was fairly level country; and it was not very difficult country, so far as engineering went, between Geraldton and Walkaway. But what has been the cost of our railways up to the present time? The cost has been about £850,000. If you divide that by the 200 miles of railway we have to show for it, it will give the cost per mile at £4250. I am no engineer—not even an amateur engineer—but I shall be very glad to see these other railways built and equipped for the estimate given in the Schedule. It will be reducing the cost just one half, or thereabouts. I very much doubt if it can be done; and that is one of my reasons, or will be one of my reasons, when we come to deal with the Schedule, for opposing the Government, as I am afraid I shall have to oppose them, as regards some of these items. We may then have figures that will convince us—and I am open to conviction; but I am afraid, sir, we shall find that these railways will not be built for anything like this money, and the result will be another little Loan Bill, for very like the same amount, or perhaps half as much again, to enable us to finish these railways and equip them properly. The Premier also told us that the Government do not intend to borrow this money all at once, unless it is found advantageous to do so; but he says they intend to push on these works as fast as possible, and have them finished in five years, which will be at the rate of £250,000 a year. It is attempted to be shown that the borrowing and spending of this money will at a very early date lead to a permanent increase of population and increased settlement. My experience, or the conclusions I have arrived at from the experience of the past, has been this: that while loan money is being expended on public works nearly all the available labor of the colony is mainly utilised in carrying out those public works. And I believe that will be the experience of the future. The laboring population we have here will be

mainly employed on these works. They will be attracted to these works from other avenues of employment, from the farm and the station; and why? Simply because the wages they are paid will be higher than the agriculturist or the viti-culturist, or the pastoralist can afford to pay. That has been the experience of other colonies, and it will be the same here. It goes then without saying that while this money is being expended there will be very little increase in the cultivation of the soil. There cannot be, because you will not have the labor to do it. Has there been much increase of settlement and cultivation of the soil in the past, since 1884 or 1885? What was the result in connection with the railway from Beverley to Albany, a distance of 240 miles? How many people settled on the land while that line was being constructed?

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest): They couldn't get the land; it was locked up.

MR. LOTON: We were told last night by the hon. gentleman himself that there had been very few people inquiring for land at all of late. The reason is plain: they can get better paid elsewhere, at other work, as he himself pointed out. As I have said, I am not afraid to borrow a reasonable amount of money, and spending it on useful public works; but I do say this—and I say it in the face of hon. members on the Ministerial benches,—it is not to my mind the soundest policy that can be placed before this country to propose to borrow over a million and a quarter of money, and expend it on these works. At the same time, I believe it is desirable and that it would be good policy to borrow a lesser amount, and undertake some of these works; and I think, if the Government had not been in such a hurry, and had given the matter a little more consideration, and had brought their Loan Bill forward towards the close of the session,—I think if they had done that, and gone into the matter a little more fully, we should not have had this Schedule as it is now. I think they would have acted wisely if they had considered in the first place how much money the colony could fairly afford to spend in connection with new railways, and, having done that, they might then have decided and agreed—if they could

have agreed, which possibly they could not—which of these lines would have been of the greatest utility to the colony, in inducing population and settlement. If they had done this, and brought in a Loan Bill for a lesser amount, they possibly would have had very little opposition. I think they would have done wisely if they had considered the matter more fully, in the best interests of the colony—not in the immediate present or the very near future, not while this money is being spent, but afterwards, when this million and a third has been all expended, and we have to provide the interest and the deficiency on working expenses. If they had considered the matter in this light I think they would have been wiser. If our present railways, starting as they do from our principal port and running through the main centres of population, and through the settled districts of the colony and through some of the best land in the colony,—if these lines do not pay working expenses, how much less likely is it that these railways which it is now proposed to be built will pay their working expenses?

MR. TRAYLEN : Mr. Speaker—my views have been in the main so well expressed by other members who have spoken this evening that I shall have but little need to add many words to what has been already said. I will address myself, in the short time I shall occupy, to a phase of the question that has not yet been put forward by any hon. member, and it is this: whether there is any good substantial ground for the firm faith that some hon. members possess in a permanent increase of population resulting from the expenditure of borrowed money in a country? Happily, I am not, in considering and answering this question, limited to the experience of Western Australia. I am able to turn to the experience of our neighboring colonies. I may remark that the returns to which I have had access to do not come up to a very late period, because such are only published very much in arrear; but they come up to two or three years ago. I find that in Tasmania, with loans aggregating $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, there was an increase of 5,322 in the population in the year 1889—yet we are expected to increase at that rate, or even at a greater rate, with loans aggregating $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions.

In 1886 the public debt of Tasmania was increased by £669,000, and the total increase to the population of the colony, by excess of immigration over emigration, was the enormous number of 769. In 1888, notwithstanding that loan moneys continued pouring into the colony, and the expenditure of it went on merrily, only 930 persons were added to the population of the colony by excess of immigration over emigration. Victoria, notwithstanding her borrowing, actually lost 12,672 persons by excess of emigration between 1871 and 1880. South Australia, notwithstanding her borrowing, lost 9,920 persons by excess of emigration over immigration in the three years, 1886, 1887, and 1888. Therefore, I think that the assumption that a large increase of population certainly follows borrowing is without that proof we have a right to demand before we ought to saddle this colony with a further debt of £1,336,000.

MR. SCOTT : I should like to say a few words with regard to the policy adopted by the Government in relation to borrowing at the present juncture. I cannot help thinking that the Government, in this respect, occupy a position in which they command the sympathy of this House. They seem to me to have studied the requirements of the colony from North to South, and they have done so to such an extent as to have been spoken of by one hon. member as a Ministry that will be best known to posterity as the "sop" Ministry. In common with other members, I cannot help thinking that if the policy of progress and of extensive public works in all parts of the colony will cause them to be known hereafter as the "sop" Ministry, they will have no cause to regret it. I, for one, think they have only done what every Ministry ought to do, and that is, study the wants of the colony generally. In the framing of their loan policy it is only right that they should study the wants of the country from North to South. In connection with this question of the distribution of loan money, one thing seems to me worthy of note, and it is this: once any district obtains a railway for itself, it is the very first district to cry out that we ought not to borrow any more money. I cannot help thinking that is the secret of a great deal of the opposition to some

of these new lines, and more especially the line to Busselton. Why should not the Southern districts have their railway as well as the Eastern districts? There is a large population permanently settled in these Southern districts, and I think that not only are they entitled to our sympathy but also to our votes, for I consider the Government are pledged to the people of the Southern districts to favorably entertain the project of a railway to that part of the colony. It may be said, perhaps, that the amount which the Government propose to borrow does seem rather large for the resources of the colony at the present juncture; but the more carefully I have considered the subject, as a representative of one of the centres of population, the more strongly have I come to the conclusion that the Government could not possibly have come forward with a smaller amount and give a fair consideration to the requirements of all parts of this great colony. I must say I agree with the hon. member for York that our great object, our main idea, ought to be the opening up of our mineral resources, for the simple reason that I believe these resources are most calculated to give us practical results. But, in saying this, we cannot at the same time forget the duty we owe, and the pledges we have given, to people already settled on the soil in a part of the colony where a railway is a real necessity, if the cultivation of the soil is ever to be made a success. The hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Loton) has spoken about the expensiveness of our railways in the past, and with some truth; but I think our present Government will profit by the experience of the past, and will manage our railways more cheaply than they have been managed. We all know that one great reason for the costly character of our present main line of railway is to be found in the very heavy gradients, which make that line a very expensive one—exceptionally so. I think the hon. member for the Swan left that out of consideration. This drawback will not present itself in regard to either of the proposed lines, the line to Yilgarn, or the line to Busselton, as the country to be traversed presents no such engineering difficulties; and there is every reason to suppose that the cost of these lines will not be anything like the cost of

the Eastern Railway, between here and York. While agreeing with many of the remarks that have fallen from those who have spoken from an opposition point of view, I cannot but think that the Government, on the whole, deserve our sympathy in their endeavors to meet the wishes and wants of the country, and I certainly am strongly inclined to support their policy, generally, as regards this question of public works.

MR. A. FORREST: As one who in the debate on the Address in Reply gave a general support to the loan policy of the Government, I may perhaps be allowed now to state, in as few words as possible, the reasons why I think the Government should undertake the works enumerated in the Schedule of this bill. I think, in the first place, the Government have not altogether taken the most sanguine view they could of the revenue they are likely to receive from land, during the next few years. It must be remembered that for some years past we have had millions of acres, of some of the best land in the colony, shut up from selection—I mean the land along the line between Beverley and Albany. On the first of March, 1892, all this large tract of land, except what has been selected by the Land Company, will be thrown open for selection; and, from my knowledge of the country, I believe a large extent of this land will be at once taken up, either on the deferred payment system or by direct purchase. So that from this source alone a large amount of revenue will be received by the Government, because the Government will be able to give more liberal terms than the Company, and settlers generally prefer dealing direct with the Government than dealing with a private company or syndicate. Then again there is the Midland Railway concession. There are millions of acres there, too, which will be thrown open for selection within the next three or four years, between here and Champion Bay; so that, before long, we shall have about 600 miles of country, for 40 miles on each side of these two lines, thrown open to selection. Surely the Government may expect to receive a large amount of revenue from these lands, with a line of railway running through them. There is another source of revenue which the Treasurer, in his Budget Speech, did not make as much of

as he might have done, and that was this: the rents which the Government will receive from some of the leasehold lands will shortly be increased by 50 per cent., which means the addition of a large amount of money to the exchequer. I should think that the revenue the Government will receive from these two sources—the lands that will be thrown open to selection, and these increased rents—will not be less than £40,000 a year; or nearly sufficient to pay the interest on the loan which the Government now propose. As to comparing this colony with Tasmania, it is absurd; such an argument is hardly worth noticing. We know that Tasmania is fully stocked up, and that there is no room there for anyone. In Victoria it had the name of producing nothing but young ladies; it was the home of pretty girls, but no place for young men to make any sort of a livelihood. That is my opinion of it too. But here we have an immense extent of territory undeveloped, and splendid openings for young men at the North, in the South, or in the East; and to compare this colony with a forsaken place like Tasmania, is perfectly absurd. This colony, during the last ten years, has been gradually catching up with Tasmania, not only in population and stock, but in everything; and in a few years I believe it will be in advance of Tasmania. A great deal has been said to-night by the hon. member for the Swan about our railway returns; and I compliment the hon. member on his facts and figures, for I must say they rather staggered me. But I hope and trust that under the new order of things, and with the able management of my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways, we shall see not only a large increase in the traffic on our railways, but also a large reduction in the cost of working and maintaining them. If he finds that the traffic on our present railways is carried at too low a rate, I hope he will increase the rates so as to make our lines pay. I think if a private individual had the running of these lines he would be able to show a credit balance, and I really cannot understand myself why our railways do not pay. They seem to do a large amount of traffic, judging from what you see; and I think that, with careful management, they might be made to pay. I shall give my

hon. friend the Commissioner a fair show, and wait until he has been another year in office, and see if he cannot give us better returns. The Schedule of this bill, on the whole, has my entire support, because I believe in a progressive policy. Without it, I say this colony cannot do any good. I believe in borrowing money and spending it, where I can see a prospect of a fair return upon the outlay. This seems to be the policy of the Government, and I mean to support it.

MR. THEROSSELL: I rise, sir, to move the adjournment of the debate until to-morrow.

MR. RANDELL seconded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest): I hope, unless he has some very good reason for adjourning the debate, the hon. member will not press his motion. We have a lot to do, and the bill has been before members a considerable time now; and I hope we shall get on with the business of the country. I hope at any rate we shall pass the second reading of this bill this evening. From what I can gather, there is no intention to oppose the second reading, and I can see no advantage to be gained in adjourning at the present time.

MR. RANDELL: It is now very late, and I take it that the second reading will be the only opportunity that will be afforded to members to speak generally upon the principles of the bill; and I think if the Government will graciously yield in this matter it will meet with the approval of the House generally.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest): I do not see what is to be gained by it.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. THEROSSELL: I think the debate to-night has proved conclusively that the policy of the Government is one that in the main commends itself to this Assembly. I am rather sorry that the debate was not adjourned, inasmuch as those who have spoken have had rather a long innings, while at this late hour those who follow will have a very short one. It seems to me, sir, that the policy of the Government not only commands a considerable amount of support, but has been so thought out as to take the wind out of the sails of opposition. The Premier in the course of his speech referred to what would be done by individual owners, if this colony with its broad acres belonged to a private person,

—how he would borrow money to improve his estate and to develop its resources. I have no doubt myself that if we borrow money wisely and spend it judiciously we shall find no difficulty in finding the means to pay the interest. I take the same view as the Government as to the future of the colony, and instead of being afraid of launching out into a loan policy I regard it as imperatively necessary to our advancement. At the proper time I shall have something to say as to the different modes in which it is proposed to expend this loan. The Government have been charged with trying to please everybody, and with throwing what are called "sops" all round the country. Well, sir, I can safely say that they have thrown no sop to the district I have the honor to represent, except a railway to Yilgarn, which at present we are not prepared to accept. But I think we may all say this of the Government: if they are trying to please the settlers generally by the proposed scheme of public works, these works give promise in the main of being such as will best develop the varied resources of the country. I say that in general terms—and I cannot do more, speaking at this very late hour—but speaking in general terms the policy of the Government, as indicated in this Loan Bill, will have my hearty support, and I hope it will receive the support of the majority of the members of this House. In saying that, I do not pledge myself to any detail, and there are portions of the scheme that will not have my support, so far as I can see at present, and, possibly, may have my honest opposition. At the same time, I hope I am open to conviction. I recognise the importance of stimulating production by creating a mining population in our midst, which appears to be the main object of the policy of the Government; but I will say, also, that while the opening up of our mineral riches and the development of our goldfields will undoubtedly attract population to our shores, agriculture and the settlement of the soil must be depended on for retaining that population in the colony; and I for one regret the absence from the policy of the Government of such a land scheme as would have the result of settling people on the land—some such scheme as was put forward by the hon. member

for Albany during the late election, or some such scheme as has been put forward in my own district. Not only is it necessary to attract population to our shores, we must also be prepared with some scheme for settling people on the land, otherwise the colony will derive no permanent benefit from this policy. Speaking as I do under the disadvantage of having to address the House at this late hour, I can only say that, speaking generally, I intend doing my best to support the Government in the liberal and progressive policy it has put forward. I believe that with the whole of this vast colony at our backs, we need have no hesitation in incurring this additional liability, or even a great deal more, so long as care is taken that the money is wisely and judiciously spent.

MR. CANNING: I have already stated in this House and elsewhere that I felt convinced that certain public works were imperatively necessary in order to promote the progress and prosperity of the colony, and that the people of the colony generally were almost unanimously demanding it, and that therefore no Ministry coming into power at this time could have come down to this House without making a loan for public works a principal feature of their policy. Consequently, I am not opposed—I wish to state most distinctly I am not opposed—to the general loan policy of the Government, nor am I opposed to their public works policy for which this loan is intended to provide. I am quite in accord with those who have said to-night that there is no comparison whatever to be instituted between this colony and such a colony as Tasmania. The resources of this colony are as yet barely touched. There is reason to believe that they are great and that they are varied, and that their development can only be carried out by the application of capital. It is almost unnecessary, quite unnecessary, to say that from ordinary general revenue we shall not have the means of carrying out any of those great public works that are required for developing those resources. I may shortly say therefore that I shall support the general loan policy and the public works policy of the Government. I do not pledge myself to support all these works that are mentioned in the Schedule of this bill; and I am very glad to learn

to-night that in approving or supporting the principle of the bill we shall not be committing ourselves to all the works that are there mentioned. It has been said that it is the duty of the Government, in framing their public works policy, to consider all parts of the colony. Well, sir, I admit that. I admit that in principle it is the duty of the Government to provide for carrying out works in all parts of the colony where they may be required; but I do not think that simply because there is going to be a large expenditure of borrowed money we ought, therefore, to give every portion of the colony a share of that expenditure. What should be kept in view is the absolute necessity or otherwise of these works. It does not follow, because a large sum of loan money is to be expended say for harbor works or for a railway in the neighbourhood of Perth or Fremantle, that, therefore, Derby or Roebourne, or Kimberley, or the Northern districts should have a considerable portion of the loan expended upon those districts. But if there are any public works there that are absolutely needed, then I say that the needs of those districts should certainly be attended to. I hold the opinion that it is a mistake, in the present circumstances of this colony, to endeavor to do too much; that is, to spread the resources of the colony over too large an area,—I mean its financial resources. The capital and the principal ports of the colony have a permanent claim upon the attention of the Ministry. In every country there must be some chief place, there must be some main centre of population and of industrial wealth, and activity; and, although it may be urged by the residents along the Northern coast, at Geraldton, Cossack, Roebourne, and those places, that they should have their ports attended to, still we must look at what is practicable. It may be desirable that these places should have help, and have improved harbor accommodation if necessary; but we must look at what is possible, at what is practicable, with the means at our disposal; and I do not think that, for some time to come, our resources, whether from loan or otherwise, will admit of our carrying out any very extensive works of that character along the coast.

MR. RICHARDSON: What about the revenue those parts contribute?

MR. CANNING: It is not so very large compared with the revenue of this part of the colony. After all it is human beings we must count. Those places have not a large population. I think the attention of the Government should be directed mainly to providing a good harbor at Fremantle, and that something should be done to promote the prosperity of the capital. I have also strongly advocated, on repeated occasions, the construction of the Bayswater-Busselton railway (as it is called),—or the South-Western railway (as it might be called)—and I shall certainly support it now. With regard to the Yilgarn railway, I think we may very fairly ask for some further information before pledging ourselves to that work; also the Mullewa railway. I should also like to ask the Government to give us some more detailed information as to the manner in which they have obtained their estimate of the cost of carrying out the last named works; also whether any trial surveys have been made for these two lines. Probably the Government will furnish us with all necessary information on these points when the Schedule comes before us. I should like further to add that, in order that our railways may be really reproductive, something must be done to encourage the introduction of population into the colony, and the settlement of that population on the soil; for it is only by settling them on the land that we shall have a permanent population. Doubtlessly mineral discoveries are most useful in attracting population, but they are seldom the direct means of settling population on the land; and I think the Government would show a proper appreciation of the present situation in this colony if they were to submit some plan for the more rapid settlement of population upon the land generally. By that means shall we bring about that traffic which is necessary to make our railways pay. My opinion is that the great hindrance to the profitable working of our railways is this want of sufficient traffic. We must have a continuous stream of traffic to make our railways pay, and where is this traffic to come from unless we settle population on the land? The working expenses at present

are nearly as great as if the traffic were to increase five or even tenfold; and, consequently, the secret of the present unprofitable condition of things with regard to the working of our railways is really the want of sufficient population to create the traffic that can alone make railways profitable undertakings, from a commercial point of view. I do not entertain any apprehensions as to the eventual successful working of our railways, for I believe that by the measures now about to be taken in connection with public works and otherwise we shall do much to promote the progress of the colony. It is to a large increase of population alone that I look, firstly, to bring about the successful and profitable working of our railways, and, secondly, to furnish the means that will enable us to bear the increased burthen of taxation that the construction of these works will necessarily bring with them. I shall therefore support the general loan policy and public works policy of the Government.

MR. PIESSE: While agreeing as to the necessity for the introduction of a Loan Bill, I cannot altogether accept the schedule of works put forward by the Government in its entirety. When the bill is in committee we shall have an opportunity then of agreeing or otherwise with each particular item; I will therefore refrain at this late hour from entering upon a criticism of these works in detail. We have heard a great deal this evening about railways being an important factor in promoting the prosperity of a country; but I do not think it can be said that so far as some of our existing lines are concerned they have contributed as much to the settlement and cultivation of the land as we were led to anticipate. There are very large areas of land adjoining the Great Southern Railway still unoccupied. No doubt that when these lands come to be thrown open for purchase and selection many more settlers will be induced to take up land, on more liberal terms than those now offered. I agree with those members who have advocated the introduction of some scheme that will have the effect of settling people on the land, after attracting them here. What I should like to see is more permanent settlement; and anyone who brought forward a successful scheme of colonization that would have that result would in my

opinion confer a great benefit upon the country. I think we have already quite sufficient land available for the settlement of a very large population, land within easy reach of a railway, and it seems to me folly to go on constructing miles of fresh railways while we have the land already available unoccupied and undeveloped. At the same time if it is the wish of the country to have this railway to the Southern districts, in order to open up more land for settlement, I do not know that I shall be prepared to oppose it. But I think we ought to give the lines already established a fair trial before embarking in any further undertakings. There is another matter which I think requires the careful consideration of the Government. I notice with regret that no provision is made in this Schedule for roads. I think it is very necessary that in addition to railways we should make provision for the formation of roads, to enable these railways to be fed with traffic. I should have liked to have seen £50,000 or even £100,000 set down in this Schedule for that purpose. How are our settlers to reach these railways unless they have roads? A railway is not likely to prove a very profitable undertaking unless it has some feeders. I should also have liked to have some provision made for water conservation in connection with these roads. At present the great difficulty experienced in travelling along most of our roads is caused by the want of water. I know that on the old Albany road and also on the roads constructed by the Railway Company, the water difficulty is our great trouble, absorbing all the funds of the Roads Boards. Possibly there may be an opportunity later on of assisting us in this direction. This question of roads and water is a very serious matter for country districts, and I hope the question will receive the attention of this House and of the Government. It was with regret that I heard one hon. member this evening condemning the colony on the ground of the expense of living here. It seems to me that if this statement goes forth to the world it will be calculated to do us a great deal of harm; it certainly is not calculated to attract people to our shores. I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for the Swan, when he referred to the fact that one of the results

of the carrying out of the public works in the past had been the withdrawal of a large amount of labor from the agricultural districts, and the paralysing of agricultural operations, owing to the higher scale of wages obtainable on these works; and this is a phase of the question that the Government should not lose sight of in connection with their present public works policy.

MR. DE HAMEL: I think that the way in which the Government have treated this bill to-night has proved more conclusively than could possibly have otherwise been proved to this House the necessity which exists for a vigilant Opposition. The policy we are asked to endorse, so far as this bill is concerned, is to my mind simply a policy of trust. We were told by the Premier in moving the second reading of the bill that he did not intend to touch upon any of the items of the Schedule; nor did he do so, and we are asked now to vote £1,336,000 with our eyes blindfolded, without knowing in the least whether the estimates of the Government as to the cost of these works, or as to their probable reproductiveness or otherwise, are based on any sound or solid basis or not. It is simply a leap in the dark, so far as this House is concerned. All we have had given to us by the Premier is this: that it will be competent for any member to object to any of the minor details when the bill goes into committee. But, sir, can we regard the question of the construction of a railway to Busselton involving the expenditure of some hundreds of thousands, or the construction of a railway to Yilgarn involving the expenditure of hundreds of thousands,—can we regard these questions as questions of minor detail? Are we—and I hope the Government will answer this question before the second reading of this bill is agreed to—are we, if we affirm the principle of the bill by passing its second reading, pledging ourselves to anything more than the general principle? Are we committing ourselves to the principal works enumerated in the Schedule, and leaving ourselves free only to deal with questions of minor detail? I think this is a most serious question, because there are many members in this House who are opposed to the Busselton railway, and others who

are opposed to the Yilgarn railway, and others to the Mullewa railway. But if we are in committee to be limited to questions of minor detail, then it appears to me that having swallowed this Schedule to-night we shall find ourselves committed to it. Therefore I say it is a policy of trust that the Government are asking us to accept, when they ask us to read this bill a second time with the information now before us. One hon. member says he intends to give the Government all the support in his power, and why? Because he hopes and believes that Yilgarn will prove a permanent goldfield. Sir, in a deliberative assembly like this, are we, because we hope and because we believe a thing, but have not the slightest proof, not the slightest scrap of information put before us,—are we, simply because we hope this and hope that, to vote away £300,000 for a railway to Yilgarn, simply because hon. members, some of them, hope and believe we have a permanent goldfield there. And on what, pray, do they base their hope and belief? Why the deepest shaft ever sunk on the field is not more than 130ft.; and it is on this paltry depth of 130ft., which is the extent of the test applied to this field as yet, that this House is asked to vote away £300,000 to build a railway to it. We are asked to-night to commit ourselves to such a scheme as that, and on estimates which, as was shown by the hon. member for the Swan, cannot be relied upon. We know that the estimate of the cost of this line is at the rate of £2,000 per mile, although we cannot get away from the fact, as proved by the hon. member for the Swan, that the 200 miles of railway now in existence has cost the colony £850,000, or, in other words, over £4,000 a mile. If our previous railways have cost us £4,000 per mile, why should we believe that the Government are going to have these new lines constructed and equipped at half that cost? The Government have no Engineer-in-Chief at the present moment, and on what is their estimate based? I think the Government have treated this House very badly to-night in not having gone into any details at all with regard to these works, and in asking us to swallow this bill holus-bolus, and then in committee limiting us to object to minor details. The hon. member for

Kimberley has also told us that he is going to support the Government policy because he hopes our railways will pay in the future. This change of Government is certainly going to work most wonderful things, in the opinion of some members. Not only is it going to make our goldfields permanent goldfields, it is also going to make our railways which have been worked at a heavy loss all these years,—it is going to make all our railways pay large dividends, and make them a complete success from this day forward. Sir, neither Responsible Government nor that of a Crown colony system can work impossibilities. I have the greatest trust and the greatest confidence in the present Government; but they cannot work impossibilities. They cannot force people to travel, or to send their goods by these railways, any more than their predecessors, under the other form of Government, could. Although they may be able to economise in the management of their railways, it will be a very hard thing to make up the large deficit shown on the working of these railways in the past. We are asked to take all this on trust. It is evident from what has fallen from more than one hon. member, that it is on their hopes and beliefs that they are going to give their adhesion to the Government as regards this bill. If we are assured that the Government will not confine us in committee to minor details, if we are then to be free to go into the whole of these works fully, and not to be in any way restricted to minor questions, then some of my opposition to the bill falls. But I do maintain we ought to have had some further information laid before us—some further facts and figures—before we are asked to vote this large amount; otherwise we may find, as stated by the hon. member for the Swan, that when this money is all spent, we shall have to go into the market again to borrow another half a million, or three-quarters of a million, in order to complete the works we undertake to initiate by agreeing to the second reading of this bill to-night.

MR. KEANE: After the speech we have just heard from the hon. member for Albany, I must really say a few words. The hon. member told us several times he did not like to trust to the "hopes" and "beliefs" of members; but the hon.

member gave us a great deal of "trusts" and "confidences" himself; and I do not exactly know where the difference comes in. It was all trusts and confidences with him, and all hopes and beliefs with other members; so I do not know where the difference lies. I think the Premier gave us a distinct understanding to-night, in his speech, that any item in that Schedule could be rejected by a majority of the House in committee.

MR. DE HAMEL: I did not understand him so.

MR. KEANE: That was how I understood him; and I think we may find that this bill, when it comes out of committee, may be considerably hacked about. It is not my intention now to dwell on the particular works enumerated in that Schedule; we shall have an opportunity of doing so in a few days, and of threshing them all out in committee. But I must say that I think the hon. member for the Swan rather tried to lead members astray when he was talking about the cost of our railways, and about their not paying working expenses. The reason of that is not far to seek. We had a gentleman here a few days ago, who, I think, is a very good authority on railways (Mr. Mais), and he said that he never saw in all his life—in any part of the world—a railway like our Eastern Railway, and that it would be utterly impossible to make such a railway as that pay working expenses; that the expense of working such a line with such gradients must always exceed anything you can expect to carry over it in the shape of traffic. That was one reason why our railways did not pay. As to the price per mile at which the proposed new lines can be built, I suppose when we go into committee on the bill the Government will be prepared to give us some figures to go upon. If not, I suppose that when the special bills are brought in, proper plans and estimates will be laid on the table of the House. I suppose the Government when putting down these amounts opposite these works have had some information to guide them, and have satisfied themselves as to the probable cost of these lines. We all know that the Eastern Railway has cost a large sum of money, for each section; but I think myself if these same lines were tendered for now they would be done, for

about half the money. I think the hon. member for the Swan ought to be on this side of the House, for he says he is in favor of progress and advancement; and I am sure that is what we all want. But how we are going to have progress and advancement without spending money, I don't know, and I do not think the hon. member himself can tell us. I think he has been spending money all his life, and will probably continue to do so, and we have in the hon. member himself a very good example of the advancement to be made by spending money judiciously. The hon. member for Greenough, I think, does not want to spend any money at all, but would have us remain in the same position as we always have been, without making any further progress; but I do not think the hon. member will carry the day on that point. I must say I agree with the hon. member for Williams (Mr. Piesse), and should like to see a sum placed on this Schedule for roads, for in my opinion roads should go hand in hand with railways. It must be a long time before we shall be able to put out feeders for our main or trunk lines, and in the meantime it is absolutely necessary we should have roads to connect the settlers with the railway, if we expect any traffic from the interior of the country. The hon. member for York does not seem to me to have grasped the idea that the Government fully intend to go in for developing our mineral resources. He does not seem to understand that in addition to the railway to Yilgarn we have a sum of £100,000 put down for developing our mineral resources. The Government evidently mean to do all they can to develop the mineral wealth of the colony, and hope that by doing so they may also settle the country. As to whether the expenditure of the last loan did the colony any good or not, I think we have only to turn to the revenue returns for the last few years to see that; for I think it cannot be denied that our last loan has produced a good effect upon the revenue. Again, what is it that has given so much stimulus to agriculture and cultivation in our Eastern districts, around York and Beverley, Northam and those places? Is not that the result of the expenditure of the last loan, in giving these people a railway to enable them to get their pro-

duce to market? As to this railway to Yilgarn, the hon. member for Albany says there is only one shaft that has been sunk as deep as 130ft.; but I think if the Government were to offer bonuses to the owners of these mines we should have a great number of shafts tested to a deeper depth than that; and I think the Government would do well to offer these bonuses at once, so that there may be some stimulus given to this important industry by the time this line is completed.

MR. TRAYLEN: I rise in explanation. The hon. member who has just sat down was good enough to say that I am apparently opposed to any borrowing of money for public works. No member in this House has said more emphatically than I have that a loan is an absolute necessity.

MR. CLARKSON: As I have already expressed an opinion in this House as to the policy put forward by the Government, it is not necessary that I should now delay the House very long. I will therefore only say that it is fortunate for this colony that her first Ministry under the new form of Government should shadow forth such a progressive and comprehensive policy as we have indicated in this Loan Bill. Had the policy of the first Ministry under self-government been a timid policy, I consider it would have dealt this colony a very severe blow at this particular period in its history. With regard to the various public works mentioned in the Schedule, I cannot say that I agree with them altogether; there are some of them with which I disagree; but on the whole I consider it is a highly satisfactory programme. I am not inclined to go into figures this evening; I have heard it said that figures may be made to prove anything, and I think we have had proof of it this evening. I am not one of those who think it necessary before any public work is undertaken to show that it will be immediately reproductive, or that in the case of a railway it is necessary to show that it will at once pay its working expenses, as well as the interest on the capital invested in it. I think if we have reasonable grounds to believe that at some future time a railway will pay its working expenses, that ought to be sufficient to warrant its construction. In the

meantime we must be content with the indirect advantage to the community, which is no doubt very great. I really do not see that we are incurring any great risk or embarking on any very great venture when we propose to borrow a million and a third for developing the resources of this great colony. Those resources, we know, are large and varied, and for the most part are in a state of undevelopment. With our goldfields in the East and at the North, with our tin mines at the South, with lands (both agricultural and pastoral) which are second to none in Australia being rapidly developed and improved, I think we have very little need to fear for the future of Western Australia. So far as I am concerned, I have none whatever. As to the amount of the proposed loan I should have been pleased to have seen it made a million and a quarter, just for the sake of rounding off the figures. I feel sure if the colony is not worth that she is not worth anything, and the sooner we clear out the better.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I should like just to make a few remarks so that I may not be misunderstood with regard to this question of borrowing money. For my part, I think the policy of borrowing for the purpose of developing the natural resources of a colony such as this is a wise and proper policy; but what I do take exception to is the borrowing of such a large sum and not having placed before us any information that will enable us to judge whether the Government are justified in asking us to agree to these works being undertaken. I give every credit to the Government; we know they have not had much time at their disposal since they got into harness. It has taken all their time, I suppose, to pick up the routine work of their departments, and it was more than the most sanguine could have expected to find them coming down with full information with regard to all these public works, scattered as they are all over the colony. I say we could not have expected that they would have been prepared with the fullest information about all these works at this time; but what we might have expected, and what we had reasonable ground for asking of them was, that before calling upon this House to sanction the building of a rail-

way to Yilgarn, or to Busselton, or to Mullewa, they would have had these lines examined and provisional estimates drawn out, and have some authoritative opinion to place before us as to the probable cost. At present we do not know but that these works may not cost three or four times this amount. The members of the Government are not professional engineers; as they have not had time to obtain this information, I think it would be better in the interests of the colony, and that in doing so they would be supported by the colony generally, if they had come down and said "We propose to borrow this amount of money, and when we get the necessary information we will tell you on what works we propose to expend it,"—so long as they had decided upon the nature of the works to be undertaken. [The PREMIER: We know what we are about.] I rather doubt it. I do not expect that railways in a new country like this are going to pay their working expenses at once, but I do think we ought to have some information to guide us as to whether these lines are likely to eventually pay. As to the policy of the Government being a "sop" policy to every part of the colony, I do not think it can be said so, so far as the Northern districts are concerned; for I notice that only £154,000 out of the whole of this loan, including the Mullewa railway, is to be expended North of Geraldton, in districts which I think will yet prove to be the backbone of this colony. I am sorry there is not a sum placed on the Schedule for duplicating the line to the Eastern districts, so as to do away with the present steep gradients which we are told will always be a source of expense. I believe it would be money saved, in the long run, if this deviation were made. We may some day have to pay in compensation through some serious accident on this line more than would suffice to make this deviation. With the information now before us I do not feel myself bound in any way to any of these items in the Schedule. I think if the Government, instead of introducing this bill at the present time had got through the necessary work of this session and then adjourned for a couple of months so as to enable them to procure all necessary information as to these works, it would

have been much more business-like and much more satisfactory to the country. From what information I can gather I am led to believe that these works will cost four times the amount set down here.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Sir, the time at my disposal, at this late hour, will not allow me to deal with this bill at the length I should have liked; and I will confine myself to briefly replying to what has been said by way of opposition to the policy put forward by the Government. I think I shall be able to show the House that we have good reasons for putting forward a bold and progressive policy, and that we are justified in borrowing this large sum and spending it in the manner proposed. The hon. member for York, in the course of his remarks, stated that he also had great confidence in the future of the colony,—in fact, that his confidence in the future was quite as great as the confidence entertained by those on these benches. The hon. member also agreed that it was necessary that foreign capital should be introduced for the inauguration of a comprehensive system of public works—a policy which had been adopted in all these colonies. But the hon. member thought that in proposing to borrow this amount which the Government asks this House to sanction we were inflicting upon the inhabitants of the colony a burden which, he thought, they would find it difficult to bear. The hon. member, I think, admitted that there was a general desire on the part of the inhabitants of the colony to borrow money for public works, while at the same time the hon. member with his usual consistency twitted the Ministry with endeavoring to meet the wishes of the country in this direction. I ask him whether, if he had occupied the position of Premier in the first Ministry, he would not have endeavored to meet the wishes of the people of the colony? I ask him, would not his policy have been an endeavor to gratify the desire of the country in this direction? Would it not be the policy which any Ministry anxious to promote the welfare and prosperity of the colony would have put forward? Would the hon. member, if he had occupied the distinguished position now held by my hon. colleague, the leader of

the Government, have come forward with a policy which was not in accord with the general desire of the country? Sir, I do not think it was fair nor chivalrous on the part of the hon. member to twit the Premier, and those who hold office with him, that we had simply brought this policy forward because we thought it would keep us in office. I can tell the hon. member that we were actuated by worthier motives, that we were animated by more patriotic intentions, than he has attributed to us. We have brought forward this policy, not for the paltry object of retaining our seats on these benches, but because we felt it was the desire of the people of the colony—as he has himself acknowledged—that a loan policy should be immediately initiated, and a system of public works inaugurated. I think the hon. member might have given us credit with being as perfectly independent of the spoils of office as he is. When the hon. member twitted the Government with proposing to borrow so large a sum as £1,336,000, surely the hon. member must have forgotten that he himself when addressing his constituents and seeking their suffrages advocated the raising of £1,000,000. The Ministry have not gone a great deal further than the hon. member himself proposed; we have not so far exceeded his own modest estimate that he need cavil at the amount. The hon. member says that the policy of the Ministry should be to borrow and spend this money in such a manner as will have this result—to induce people to settle upon the soil. I would ask him whether it is not necessary in the first place to attract people here, before you can hope to induce them to settle on the soil. And I would ask by what means he hopes to attract them here except by the introduction of capital for the initiation of public works? The hon. member twits us with having in this Schedule exhausted the list of public works which the colony will require for some time to come. If so, if we have exhausted the works that the colony requires, perhaps he will tell us what he himself, if he had occupied a seat on this bench, would have offered them in addition to what we are offering them, to attract them to our shores. [Mr. PARKER: A colonization scheme.] I should like to know what his precious coloniza-

tion scheme would have been worth. I am afraid it wouldn't have been worth much. Sir, we also have our colonization scheme. Our colonization scheme is to attract people here by developing the mineral and other resources of the colony, and by a comprehensive system of public works. The hon. member in the course of his speech said a great deal about the importance of developing the mineral wealth of the colony. He said this ought to be a cardinal feature in the policy of the Government. Anyone would think the hon. member was propounding some new idea. Anyone would imagine that this had been omitted altogether from the programme of the present Government. Has the hon. member not even looked at the Schedule of this bill? Is he not aware that we propose spending the modest sum of £100,000 in the development of our mineral resources? Is he not aware that we are also going to spend £324,000 in building a railway, for developing our mineral resources? Does he think that the construction of this railway will not have the effect of developing our mineral resources? The hon. member has told us that he has faith in the future of Yilgarn; if so, does he think the expenditure of this money in the construction of a railway to that field will not do more than anything else that could possibly be done to develop that gold-field? What greater impetus could be given to the development of the mineral resources of that part of the colony, or what will be more likely to attract capital and population to our shores, than the construction of this railway? We hope that when we do attract population here, a fair proportion of them will be induced, by the advantages which the colony offers for agricultural settlement, to settle here, and become permanent colonists. That is what we hope. We propose to give them every encouragement. The hon. member for York has alluded to the fact that a certain amount of depression followed upon the expenditure of our last loan, or rather upon the cessation of that expenditure. It is perfectly true; a certain amount of depression did follow upon that expenditure, and I will tell him the reason why. The reason was because we had not at that time a Government that was free to continue the

policy of public works which it had inaugurated. The Government at that time was not in a position to go and borrow more money to enable it to continue that policy of public works which it had entered upon. Had we possessed the same form of Government then as we do now, and been able to have gone into the money market for the prosecution of other necessary works, that depression would not have taken place. A continuous policy of useful and necessary public works would have kept people in the colony, and our progress and prosperity would have been largely stimulated. The hon. member for the Swan in his speech this evening—and many of the hon. gentleman's remarks were very much to the point—alluded to the expenditure for the year 1890, and said it was £14,000 in excess of the revenue. Perhaps the hon. member will agree with me that at any rate it was a good thing that we had the money to spend. But I would point out that the year 1890 was an exceptional year in this respect: that we had a great many claims upon us which did not come under the head of ordinary expenditure, such as the expenses of the Delegation to England in connection with the Constitution Bill, followed by the Proclamation ceremonies; there was also a large expenditure on rolling stock for our railways, and there was the construction of a road to Yilgarn, and other expenses altogether outside the ordinary expenditure. It is a source of satisfaction that, notwithstanding these exceptional charges upon the public revenue, we found ourselves at the end of the year with a handsome credit balance still in our favor. As the hon. member for the Swan went somewhat largely into figures, to show how the public expenditure of late years had generally exceeded the revenue, it may not be out of place if I also went a little into figures. I will promise members that I will not, at this late hour, weary them at any length. I find that the estimated population of the colony on December 31st, 1883—which was the end of the year previous to our borrowing our last £525,000—was 31,700, and that our population on December 31st, 1889, six years afterwards, was 43,698, or an increase of 11,998 souls in the course of six years, equal to 40 per cent. Now,

assuming—as I think we may fairly do—that the increase during the six years following 1889 will be in the same ratio as it was during the six years preceding 1889, namely 40 per cent., in that case the population of the colony on the 31st December, 1895 (or five years from now) may be estimated at 61,177. This is only calculating upon a proportionate increase as took place during the six years prior to 1890. But, surely, under the present very much improved order of things our prospects ahead are much brighter than they were at the beginning of 1890, and I think all hon. members will agree with me that if our population increased 40 per cent. between 1883 and 1889, we may safely anticipate that the ratio of increase during the next five years will be a progressive one, and that it is not taking too sanguine a view of it, if we put it down at from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. If these anticipations are realised—and I do not think there is any reason to doubt it—the population of the colony at the end of 1895 will be 65,000 or 70,000,—the latter much more likely than the former. So much for the population. Now as to the revenue, and the probable effect of this increased population upon the revenue of the colony. I find that the revenue for 1883 was £276,113 19s. 7d., whilst that of 1889, six years afterwards, was £382,213 8s. 2d.,—or a difference of £106,099 8s. 7d., equivalent to about 39 per cent., or as nearly as possible a corresponding increase with the increase of population during the same six years. It will therefore be seen that during the six years preceding the year 1890 the population of the colony and the public revenue of the colony increased in about the same ratio. Surely we are safe in estimating that the public revenue during the next five years from now (or six years from 1890) will certainly increase at a corresponding rate. We may safely rely upon that at least. Should it only do this we shall have a revenue from all sources in the year 1895 of not less than £535,000, or about £153,000 more than the revenue of last year, 1890. But I would point out to hon. members that during the back period I have been alluding to, most of our best lands were shut up from sale, and that a great part of these lands will be thrown open for selection and sale at the end of this year

(October); so that from this source we may anticipate a large increase in our territorial revenue,—an increase out of all ordinary proportion with the usual annual increase. Nor is this all. Hon. members are aware that in 1894 and 1895 the Government will be receiving a largely augmented revenue consequent upon the increased rentals for pastoral leases. This must also unduly swell our receipts from our lands. Added to this, we may reasonably hope that the largely increased facilities offered for settlement and transport will have a marked effect in the immediate future on the progress of the colony, and be another factor in increasing the public revenue. Then again as to the expenditure of borrowed capital. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that between 1883 and 1889 (the period already referred to) we borrowed altogether a sum of £600,000, a great part of which was expended during that time. Now we propose to borrow more than double that amount, which we propose expending during the next four or five years on public works which cannot fail to have a beneficial effect in developing the resources of the colony. The great and wholesome impetus which all this must give to the colony and to trade of every description must more than all tend to swell our revenues during the next five years. Looking at all these favorable prospects, looking at all this combination of auspicious circumstances, I do not think I need hesitate to predict that, as with our population so with our revenue, we shall have, at the end of 1895, an increase in revenue of at least 40 per cent. as compared with our revenue at the present time. I do not think I should be in any way exaggerating if I were to set it down at 50 per cent., or probably even 60 per cent. In that case our revenue for 1895 may be estimated to approach the very handsome sum of £600,000. I have gone into these figures very carefully, and I care not who analyses them, there they are. They cannot be controverted. I have taken them as regards the past six years from the Blue Books of the colony. And I think when we look at the present prospects of this country it cannot be said that I have over-estimated the probable increase both in population and revenue during the next five

years. I do not think I have taken at all a too sanguine view of the future. I feel convinced myself that time will prove that I am rather under the mark than over it in my estimate. I only hope that whoever at the end of that time will occupy seats on these benches, or whoever may occupy seats on the other side of the House, may find that my predictions have been verified, and that the figures I have quoted were correct. If these results are realised, I think whoever may then be in office will be ready then to give credit to the present Ministry for initiating a policy which I venture to think will have proved an important factor in bringing about those results. I do not think it would serve any useful purpose at this late hour to detain the House at any greater length. I will only add that I hope this bill will pass with a large majority, and in fact without a division, so as to give the Government the satisfaction of knowing that they possess the confidence of the House, —a knowledge which cannot fail to strengthen their hands and make them feel that in adopting a policy which has been called a "bold" policy they are carrying out the wishes of the country, and not only of the country but also of the representatives of the country in this House.

MR. RANDELL: I am sorry I have to address the House at this very late hour; I think it is impossible for any member addressing the House at this late period of the night to do justice to a subject so fraught with importance to the future prosperity of the colony. I am therefore sorry that the proposal to adjourn the debate was not accepted by the Government. I have listened very attentively to what has been said in the course of the debate, and I take this opportunity—probably the only opportunity that I shall have—of stating what position I propose to take with regard to this question. I should be sorry to say, with one hon. member, that I will be prepared to give my unqualified support to the Ministry and their programme. I cannot go so far as that. I am here to give a discriminating support to the Ministry. I believe they deserve at the hands of every member of this House the utmost consideration in carrying out that policy which they consider best in the

interests of the colony; and I think, judging from appearances, they may rest assured of having that. I am sure there is no intention to offer any captious opposition to their policy; and I am sure that they would be the last to despise fair and honest opposition, or to refuse to give due weight to the representations of the members of this House. The Premier says they are animated by the best of motives, and that their only object is to do all in their power for the furtherance of the best interests of the country committed for the time being to their care. He has told us that it has not been the emoluments or the spoils of office that have induced them to accept their present position, but a laudable ambition to serve the country to the best of their ability. I think we may accept this assurance in all sincerity. Indeed, the emoluments of office are not sufficient, in my opinion, to attract men of high calibre who have other avocations to follow. I think that is rather a blot upon the Constitution, the fixing of these emoluments at so low a rate. But possibly it was felt that the circumstances of the colony did not warrant their being fixed at a higher rate. That being so, I think the colony is to be congratulated that men in whom it has such confidence as it has in the members of the present Ministry should have been ready and willing to come forward to serve it at this important stage of its history. I have followed with a great deal of interest the very able, comprehensive, and I may say, instructive speech of the hon. member for the Swan—a speech which, I think, has conferred a great benefit upon members generally, although, perhaps, it may not influence any of their votes when they come to deal with the Schedule of the bill. With regard to the policy of the Government as indicated in this bill, I think, while we all admit that money judiciously borrowed at a low rate of interest, and wisely and carefully expended, must tend to promote the progress and prosperity of the colony; yet I think we must all admit that the expenditure of loan moneys in the past did not answer the high expectations we had formed concerning it. I am quite certain that some of the figures that have been used in the course of this debate have been erroneous—I will not say, mis-

leading—and that the results have not been in all cases attributable to loan expenditure. It has been put forward in the columns of the public Press that we added 10,000 to our population as the direct result of borrowing our last loan of £525,000. I do think that nothing could be more erroneous than such a statement as that. What has been really the case? Since 1884—when we borrowed that £525,000—we have had another public work of great magnitude carried out—the Great Southern Railway—which was specially designed with the view of attracting immigration and settlement; and we have also had a further expenditure of some thousands of pounds in connection with the Midland Railway. These are factors which should be borne in mind when we are dealing with the increase of population. In addition to that, those who have maintained that our last loan had such a wonderful result in increasing our population have entirely ignored the increase from natural causes. In 1890 alone, the increase of births over deaths gave us an additional population of something like 900 souls. I mention these facts because there is a tendency, I find, on the part of Ministers, and of many who support them, to anticipate very much larger results in the way of progress and prosperity from a loan policy than can fairly be attributed to such a policy, judging from past results. I confess to a considerable amount of misgiving as to the results of a loan policy in these respects. If we find that the result of our borrowing is increased taxation, and to make the strain of life greater than it was before, and that there has been no increase of general prosperity, what do we gain by entering upon a bold, and I may say, speculative policy of borrowing money for the construction of public works? I am talking now of permanent gain, and not the more ephemeral benefits derived from the circulation for the time of a considerable amount of capital. I am referring to permanent and abiding benefits. We must bear in mind that if these works are not of a character that will promote settlement and develop the resources of the country, then we are adding very materially to the burdens which the colonists have to bear, and, instead of fostering and promoting the

general prosperity of the colony we shall be hindering it. If that is to be the result of this bold policy, then the responsibility will largely rest upon the shoulders of Ministers, shared in by this House. I may perhaps be permitted to refer, and I will do so very shortly, to some of the items contained in the Schedule of this bill, as I shall not have an opportunity of doing so when in committee. Before doing this, I should like to mention that one of the most reassuring things in connection with the present condition of the colony that I have come across lately is to be found in the Progress Reports of the Agricultural Commission, of which the present Minister of Works and Railways was the chairman. More especially have I noticed with satisfaction the sturdy feeling of independence shown by the greater part of the agricultural witnesses examined before the Commission, and the evidence of general prosperity existing among the farming community in this colony. These Progress Reports afford abundant evidence of that, and I think it is most satisfactory and reassuring. I think we may come to the conclusion that the country as distinguished from the town is in a very sound and healthy state, and that what depression has existed has been confined to our towns, where people were attracted by that loan expenditure that has been referred to, and which, when it ceased, produced somewhat disastrous results. Coming to the loan Schedule of the present bill, I was glad to hear from the Government that they do not propose to borrow the whole of this money at once and spend it at once, with the probability of the same disastrous results, but in a larger measure, as followed upon the sudden cessation of the expenditure of borrowed money before. At this late hour I must leave unsaid a great deal I should have liked to have said as to this policy of borrowing and its ultimate results. I must refrain from doing so, if only out of consideration for yourself, sir, who have had to sit in that Chair during all these weary hours. But as to the works enumerated in the Schedule I may briefly indicate my views. I understand that although the Bunbury and Busselton Railway is the first work appearing on the Schedule it does not necessarily follow

that it will be the first work to be undertaken, but that the Government will exercise their discretion as to the order in which these works shall be taken in hand. My own opinion as to this Busseton Railway has not altered since I addressed the House on the subject some time since. I shall require a great deal more information than I have at present before I shall be able to give my approval to that scheme, not only because I think the character of the country has been over-rated but also because I think no good reason has been shown for the construction of this line. As to the character of the country, I may even refer to a report that emanated from the Premier himself when he occupied the position of Commissioner of Lands, and the tone of which I may generally characterise as apologetic. [The PREMIER: Certainly not.] As to the Yilgarn Railway, our hope of rapid progress in the near future must, as has been already said, depend largely upon the development of our mineral wealth; but whether these fields are sufficiently rich to warrant the construction of a railway I am not at present prepared to say. But the feeling in my mind as regards this work is, that if information is forthcoming of a reasonable character as to the richness and permanency of these goldfields, I shall feel inclined, in the best interests of the colony, to give it my support. But I must say this—I think the estimated cost of constructing this line is very much below the mark. The late Commissioner of Railways, in a report presented to this House dealing with the outlines of a scheme for extending the railway system of the colony, says: "The increasing importance of our Eastern goldfields will, in all probability, be the first call on our attention in the way of providing increased facilities for transport, necessitating probably an expenditure of at least £600,000." That is a sum considerably in excess of the amount placed for this work in the Schedule to this bill, £324,000. It is nearly double that estimate. I take it that if we are to have railways at all we want serviceable railways, and not railways that will be a constant source of expenditure, requiring to be continuously repaired. With regard to the proposed Mullewa Railway, I cannot offer

any opinion, being utterly without any information that would justify me in forming an opinion. But so far as I can gather, from some reliable sources outside the Government, I am inclined to think it would be better in the interests of the country to have this line running from some point on the Midland Railway, rather than from Geraldton. I am very pleased to see that it is proposed to set apart a large sum for improvements to the Eastern Railway, including stations and additional rolling stock. There is no doubt that this railway for some time past has been literally starved for the want of additional rolling stock, with the result that the income of the line has suffered considerably. I think the sooner the gradients on this line are altered the better will it be for the country. Without anticipating any disasters occurring, resulting in loss of life, we know very well that the expense of working such a line, with the heavy wear and tear, must be enormous; and I think this most important work should occupy the attention of the Government when this loan is floated. I think it would be in the best interests of the Railway Department, and in the best interests of the country, that this work should be taken in hand at the earliest possible opportunity. With regard to some of the other works mentioned in the Schedule, it is desirable that we should give facilities for shipping at all our ports, but, in the absence of any information as to the character of the improvements proposed at Fremantle it would be premature at this stage to express any opinion on the subject. There are other works on the Schedule which, although desirable, might I think be deferred. The lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin, for instance. Although I believe I was the first in this House to suggest the erection of a lighthouse at this point, in the interests of commerce and navigation generally—and that was some years ago—still, seeing that the shipping that would benefit by it belongs largely to other parts of the world, and that we have other claims upon us, I think this work might, at any rate, be deferred for the present. In conclusion, I can only express a hope that whatever schedule of public works may ultimately be adopted, it will be arrived at only upon

the fullest and most explicit information. I believe that Ministers will be willing to give this information to the utmost of their power, so as to enable members to form a sound judgment upon these works. I trust that whatever may be the works determined upon and whatever may be the course pursued, either under our present or any future Ministry, it will all be in the direction of tending to promote the best interests of the colony. In the carrying out of this policy I place very much reliance on the honest discharge of the duties of administration. I believe that a great deal will depend upon the way in which these works are carried out. I think large sums of money may be wasted if Ministers or those who are appointed by them to superintend the construction of these works are not honest and capable men. A great deal of the future success of these undertakings will depend upon their being honestly carried out. Therefore I trust that Ministers will exercise their best and soundest judgment and make every effort to secure for the working head of the Works and Railway department, which is becoming one of the most important departments of the service, an officer who is not only competent to attend to the construction as well as the working of our railways, but also a man who will be honest in his dealings between contractors and the public.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at 12:30 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 6th February, 1891.

The Delegation to England: Letter from Sir W. C. F. Robinson—Crown Claims Ordinance Bill: second reading—Parliamentary Privileges Bill: first reading—Protection to Parliamentary Printers Bill: first reading—Apportionment Bill: second reading—Yield of Gold from Eastern Goldfields: Return—Standing Orders: Explanation by the President—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THE DELEGATION TO ENGLAND— LETTER FROM SIR W. C. F. ROBINSON.

THE PRESIDENT informed the House that he had received the following reply from Sir William Robinson, expressing his thanks for the resolution passed relating to his recent services in England:

"Government House, Perth,

"27th January, 1891.

"I have received, with much gratification, your letter of the 23rd inst., informing me of the resolution passed by the Legislative Council, with reference to my services in London in connection with the passing of the Constitution Bill. It was a great pleasure to me to have an opportunity of assisting the delegates from this colony to the best of my ability in the important and interesting mission with which they were charged, and I highly appreciate the expression of thanks which you have been so good as to communicate to me on behalf of the Legislative Council.

"I have, &c.,

"W. C. F. ROBINSON."

CROWN CLAIMS ORDINANCE BILL.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I have the honor to move the second reading of a Bill intituled "An Act to amend the Ordinance to facilitate proceedings by persons having claims against the Government, (31 Vic. No. 7)." I shall not, sir, detain the House very long; although I shall endeavor to show hon. members why I believe this Act necessary. I may state that I have not brought it forward in connection in any way with the Government, or any member of it. In the 31st year of the reign of the Queen—and I