

amined before the select committee, I pointed out the division which had taken place in this House upon the property qualification question,<sup>1</sup> and I pointed out that a large majority of the elected members, who represented the people of the colony, had voted against property qualification, and that it was only carried by the nominated members and the Government; and that I felt I might safely assure the committee that as soon as we had Responsible Government, not only would this question of the abolition of member's property qualification be brought before the Legislature, but also the question of the reduction of the franchise; and I regret extremely to find that the Premier, who, I may say, has posed as a Liberal leader, comes forward now with a policy which gives no indication whatever of the intention of the Government in this matter. I feel it will be my duty, if no other member does it, before the session closes,—it will be my duty, in the face of the representations I made before the select committee at Home—representations which had some weight, for they were afterwards quoted in the House of Commons, and I believe smoothed the passage of the Bill—I say I feel it will be my duty, in the face of these representations, to bring the matter before this House. I do not mean to say that I should be in favor of manhood suffrage, pure and simple, but I am in favor of so reducing and extending the franchise that every man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow should have a vote and be represented here. Sir, I have no doubt I shall have an opportunity of discussing the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite on some future occasion; I shall therefore content myself on the present occasion by saying that I thank the Government and I thank hon. members for so kindly listening to me at the rather great length I have spoken.

**MR. RICHARDSON:** After the very fitting, very able, though rather quibbling speech of the hon. member for York, I feel some difficulty in getting up to criticise the speech of the Governor; but I hope to criticise portions of it, though I hope it will be in a friendly way, and that the few remarks I have to make may have the effect of remedying what I consider to be blunders or blem-

ishes in the face of the Speech. I suppose we may take it simply as a skeleton of the future policy of the Government, just an outline and nothing more, without entering into details, which we may expect will be filled in hereafter. It appears to me to contain a number of mistakes, and I will first refer to what more intimately concerns my own district. I regret that in the schedule of public works mentioned there is no specific reference to any part of the colony north of Geraldton, or, at any rate, north of the Murchison as being likely to receive more than very little favor from the policy here enunciated. I do not believe this was intentional; I do not believe it is the intention of the Government to overlook the claims of the Northern districts. But I think it would have been very much better if they had favored these districts with a fuller expression of what they intended to do for them. I find that the only Northern work mentioned is that of harbor works at Cossack, which is very indefinite. Possibly our wants may be included under the general head of the "development of goldfields and mineral resources." But that will hardly satisfy the Northern people, for the district I represent have some bitter recollections as to the manner in which they were treated when the last vote was allotted for the development of goldfields. They have rather a bitter recollection of the way in which their claim to a fair share of that vote was disregarded, and of the generous way in which other parts of the colony were treated on that occasion. As I say, I regret to find no specific mention of the intentions of the Government as regards their policy towards the North, though I feel sure it is no intentional slight on their part, but rather a desire to be brief. I do not believe they intend to deal ungenerously with the Northern district. Possibly we may come in for something under the head of "public buildings at various places," but that also is rather vague, rather indefinite; and we would have been much more satisfied if the Northern districts had been more specifically mentioned. I hope that Ministers yet will give us an assurance that these districts are not going to be left out in the cold, when this loan money is being allotted. It will be my duty, as one of the repre-



sentatives of these districts, to see that this is not done, and to remind the House that a large portion of the taxation that will have to go to pay the interest on this loan money comes from these districts, and that they are entitled to a fair share of the benefits to be derived from judicious public expenditure upon public works, and that they ought not to be forgotten when the distribution of this loan money is made. I take exception to the remark of the hon. member for York when he says that the proposed works are intended simply as so many sops to the various constituencies and that these works are not necessary. I think they are mostly works that are needful to the progress of the various districts concerned; and my only regret, as I have said, is, that the Northern districts of the colony are not more specifically mentioned in this public works schedule. I have no wish at this stage to revive the old cry of Separation. Fortunately that cry has subsided of late years, but there has been a feeling of discontent lately, which has again led to a renewal of the cry; and I hope the present Ministry will show the Northern people that there is no ground for it. With regard to what has fallen from the hon. member for York, in his criticism of the policy of the Government, I think the hon. member should try to sustain his reputation for consistency. We know the hon. member for York is nothing if not consistent. But I am afraid that in his speech this evening he has shown some glaring inconsistencies, when he remembers what he told his constituents, only a few weeks ago. The hon. member has asked for quarter as regards the resurrection of his "Hansard" speeches; but I think the hon. member has no right to cry for quarter as regards his election speeches. Speaking at York on December 1st, only a few weeks ago, the hon. member himself advocated the borrowing of £1,000,000, and though now he seems to object to almost every work included in the schedule proposed by the Government, he does not inform us what other works he would substitute, to be included in this expenditure of one million. The hon. member is apparently opposed to the whole public works policy of the Government; even the Yilgarn railway he now regards as a doubtful

undertaking. But, when wooing the suffrages of the York electors, I find him saying this: "I do not think that any reasonable person can doubt that we have at the present time"—the hon. member this evening said he would want to be satisfied, and the Government satisfied that there was a payable goldfield at Yilgaan before embarking in a railway—but at York his words were: "I do not think that any reasonable person can doubt that we have at the present time a payable goldfield at Yilgarn. It is situated apparently about 162 miles to the eastward of York, and we can build a railway from York to the fields for an amount quite within our means." Then he says to the York electors: "What will a railway like that mean to you? It will mean almost an unlimited market for all your agricultural produce. In the interest of this community, of mining and of agriculture, and in the interests of the farmer and of the working man"—of course it would be nothing without the hon. member bringing in his 'working man'—"a railway from York to Yilgarn is the grandest thing that can possibly be initiated"—for the colony? No!—"for the Avon districts at large." At that time at any rate the hon. member was strongly in favor of one part of the public works policy of the Government, this railway to Yilgarn; he was quite prepared to go on with it; it would be the grandest thing that could possibly be initiated. But this evening the hon. member entirely condemns the public works policy of the Government, and even with regard to this particular railway he thinks it ought first to be submitted to a joint committee of both Houses before anything is done in the matter. The same with all other public works. At York he was in favor of borrowing a million of money for public works, but this evening he is opposed apparently to every public work proposed by the Government.

MR. PARKER: I rise to order. The hon. member is misrepresenting me. When an hon. member quotes from another member's speech he should do so fairly, and not pick out isolated passages. I particularly said that before any other measures I advocated a public works policy.

MR. RICHARDSON: I simply say



that at York, when addressing the electors, there was no doubt in the hon. member's mind as to the necessity for building this Yilgarn railway. But the strongest objection which the hon. member seems to have to the public works policy of the Government, is the proposed railway from Bayswater to Busselton; but I cannot help thinking there is a great deal of what to a layman is nothing but a lawyer's quibbling in his remarks on this railway, as well as his other remarks, as to the public works policy of the Ministry. Though at York he was prepared to borrow a million of money, he stands aghast at the proposal of the Government to borrow £1,336,000. As this odd £336,000 would about cover the cost of the railway to Busselton, there is only this difference between his loan policy and the policy of the Government; and as he is apparently opposed to every project in the Ministerial programme, it would be interesting to know upon what works he proposed to spend the £1,000,000 which he himself considered we might safely borrow. Perhaps the hon. member would tell them.

MR. PARKER: Wait until he sits opposite.

MR. RICHARDSON: The hon. member admitted that at one time he did advocate this railway line to Busselton, but says he did so in a time of depression, in order to find employment for people who would otherwise leave the colony. It was only for that reason,—simply to provide labor for the unemployed. Not because he thought the railway would be a reproductive work, or that the country required it, but simply to find work for people who were unemployed. The hon. member poses as a statesman, but if that is his idea of a statesmanlike policy, the hon. member it appears to me is relying upon what I call a rotten policy. If his idea of sound statesmanlike policy is to spend hundreds of thousands upon a railway simply for the purpose of finding work for the dissatisfied, the hon. member stands forth as the advocate of a most rotten policy. But, as a matter of fact, when the hon. member first proposed this Busselton line there was no sign of any depression; there was no cry of the unemployed. It was years before, and the hon. member himself was the first to introduce the

proposal for the favorable consideration of the late Legislative Council. Not only did the hon. member bring it before the House, but he very nearly carried it through; and there was no sign of depression at that time. Yet now the hon. member, with his usual consistency, strongly condemns this same proposal. We cannot enter into the workings of a man's mind, but it certainly would be interesting to know by what process this transformation has come about.

MR. PARKER: I supported the construction of two sections of the line.

MR. RICHARDSON: On the first occasion, the hon. member advocated the whole line, to Busselton. But now he will have none of it. This is one of his political inconsistencies. As to the loan policy of the present Government, as indicated in the Governor's speech, I think it is a little bit too bold perhaps; but we may find, when we come to consider the scheme, that we may be able to reduce it to within a few pounds of £1,000,000. If we do that, then I say this colony, with its present prospects and its past experience, need have no fear to borrow that sum. I am no optimist; perhaps rather the other way, a bit of a pessimist, but I will say this: the man who is afraid, with all the resources of this immense territory at his back,—the man who would stand forth and say we are not justified in borrowing a million of money, and expending it wisely and judiciously on good useful public works, would be almost a political coward. It would be an admission that we are living in one of the most pitiable lands within the British dominions. I think the Government are to be complimented for showing that they have sufficient faith in the colony, notwithstanding the croakings of others, not to be afraid of borrowing at least a million of money, and spending it on good reproductive works. The hon. member for York referred to taxation in the course of his remarks. The hon. member held up extra taxation as a sort of bugbear or scarecrow to frighten us against borrowing this money. Let us investigate the question in a practical manner. Some years ago we thought it wise to borrow £500,000, upon the basis of a population



of some 30,000 people. [MR. PARKER: It was under 30,000.] We then raised taxation to the level of £42 per head of the population. Well, sir, we have lived down that taxation until we have reduced it to £30 per head. I do not think that can be considered anything very dreadful when we look at the taxation of our neighbors. New Zealand has been held up as a warning, a sort of scarecrow, against borrowing, because the taxation there is £66 per head. But I would point out that within the last few years New Zealand has been making tremendous strides towards recovery, and she may be said to be now in a good sound condition. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why?] I dare say it will be said, because she has given up borrowing. I say that is not the reason. The fact of their having given up borrowing did not lessen the amount they already owed; it did not lessen the principal, and it did not lessen the taxation necessary to pay the interest on that principal. That is not the reason of their recovery. It is because they are now beginning to reap the benefits of the expenditure of their loan money. That expenditure is now beginning to fructify. It will be the same with us, if we see that we expend our money wisely and judiciously. If with a population of 30,000 we could afford to borrow £500,000, and afterwards reduce the taxation per head from £42 to £30 owing to an increased population, surely we need have no fear in borrowing another million at the present time. We have now a population of 45,000, and, as about five years must necessarily elapse before all this money is expended, we may reasonably hope by that time to have a population of 50,000; and, on the basis of that population, our taxation then would not be so very heavy. I hope members are not going to be frightened by this scarecrow of extra taxation. If we show ourselves afraid to borrow a million of money for useful and necessary public works, at this stage of our existence, we shall simply go on blundering in the old humdrum way, and most of us will be grey before we see the colony making any material advance. If we borrow, and, what is of more importance, spend wisely after borrowing, I do not think we need fear the consequences. If we want a simile in private life, take the

case of a pioneer squatter, without spare capital, but in possession of a large and more or less fertile run, totally unimproved, but which he is anxious to stock. If that man be afraid to borrow a little money to enable him to fence his run and to stock it, he will simply go down to his grave a poor man. But if he has sufficient boldness to borrow money for improving and stocking his run, and he has sufficient judgment to spend that money wisely and judiciously, he will soon have a valuable property, capable of carrying a large amount of stock, and yielding him a good profit on his money, and in a few years he may become a wealthy man. Substitute the colony for the squatter's run, and convert his stock into population, and you arrive pretty much at the position of this country at the present time. We have an immense territory, but we want to spend a lot of money on it to make it what it ought to be, and what it is capable of being made. The question is—are we going to let it remain, like the squatter's run, unimproved; or, are we, with judicious borrowing and judicious spending, going to develop it? It is simply a question of whether we are content to go on in the old humdrum way, plodding along, but making no material advance; or whether we shall show a little courage, show a little faith in the country, borrow money to improve it, and, in the end, find ourselves, like the squatter, a prosperous and wealthy colony.

MR. PARKER: I believe it's a well-known fact that many who borrow to improve their runs simply come to grief. The hon. member must not forget that.

MR. RICHARDSON: There are many causes for failure, without reference to the inherent fact of borrowing money. I do not advocate reckless borrowing, nor reckless spending. I am talking about judicious borrowing, and a wise and prudent expenditure. There is not much fear of our coming to grief then. But if we are content to go on in this humdrum way that we have been going on for so many years, and, at the very turning point in our career, are afraid to make one bold effort to develop this great country; if we mean to say that borrowing a million of money would swamp us altogether, then I say we



must be living in such a rotten country that the sooner we burst it up and clear out of it the better. I cannot help thinking that if the hon. member for York was sitting on the other side of the House, with a seat on the Treasury Bench, he would take a very different view of the position of the colony from what he apparently does this evening. The hon. member would not talk about being afraid to increase taxation by a few pounds per head; he would not be afraid of borrowing for necessary public works; he would not cavil at this work and that work, and call it a sop for each district. No, sir. If the hon. member sat on those benches he would sing a different tune. If he didn't, he would not sit there long. If he were at the head of the Government at this juncture, and he came forward with a public works policy that included nothing but a railway to Yilgarn, I believe he would find that his Government would not last many days.

MR. PARKER: I think the hon. member must have entirely misunderstood me, if he thinks I am opposed to borrowing, so long as the money is judiciously expended.

MR. RICHARDSON: I believe the hon. member has some hobby in his own mind with regard to some colonisation scheme. For myself, I would have no faith in any colonisation scheme that would simply ship whole shiploads of the class of people who seem to have the hon. member's sympathies—and also my own sympathies, so far as that goes; I say I would have no faith in any colonisation scheme that would simply send us whole shiploads of London paupers in the hope of converting them into useful colonists. Though the poverty of these people is no crime, nor is it of itself anything against them; still the fact remains that their very poverty and their antecedents have prevented them from acquiring any of that knowledge or experience necessary for successful colonisation. To attempt to shoot shiploads of this class into the colony, and call it colonisation, would in my opinion be simply disastrous. We would simply have to keep them when we got them, and the burden of keeping them would cost more than the interest on this loan.

MR. CANNING: Sir—in the few remarks I propose to offer, I shall confine

myself to that part of the Governor's speech which embodies the policy of the Ministry. We are aware that some few days before the meeting of Parliament there were whispers that the policy about to be enunciated by the Ministry would be a bold and a vigorous policy, but above all a bold policy. Well, sir, it cannot be said that it is not a bold policy. On the contrary, I do think it is a singularly bold one. I think that the Ministry in coming forward with such a policy as we have here have shown remarkable boldness. It is a policy, however, which it is impossible to criticise in detail. It consists of one article of faith, and one only. The only portion of their programme that can be called a policy must necessarily have been the policy of any Ministry coming into office at this juncture of our affairs. No Ministry would have ventured, in the face of public opinion, to have come before this House, without proposing a loan for public works. I shall not criticise at any length the policy of the Ministry with regard to these works which they have put forward as their programme; but I must say that in the way in which they have presented it, it has singularly the appearance of a sop policy. Many Ministries have been remarkable for some one thing. There have been Ministries which were remarkable for their peace policy; there have been Ministries which were remarkable for their war policy. But I think it has been left to the first Ministry under Responsible Government in Western Australia to go down to posterity with the distinction of having brought forward what may be called a great *sop* policy. It is nothing more. I do not at the present time object to the various public works proposed; the question we have to consider is the sufficiency of the means to the end,—whether the amount proposed to be borrowed will be one-third enough to cover the cost of the works Ministers propose to carry out. It is impossible to speak favorably of such a programme, which consists of one single article of policy. Ministers could not have been ignorant of the popular feeling in favor of the immediate amendment of the Constitution Act. They must have known that every member of this House who contested a seat at the late election—I think



I am right in saying that—is pledged to use every effort to bring about an immediate amendment of the Constitution Act, by the abolition of the property qualification of members, and the extension of the franchise in such a way as to put the residents of this colony on a footing of equality with the people of the other colonies. But there is not a word in the Ministerial programme with regard to these amendments. But in addition to all this, there is a very grave matter to which I feel that my duty to the country, and my duty to my constituents, compels me to call attention. It has been said outside this House, by persons of opposite political leanings and of diverse sympathies in many respects, but who by their profession and training are qualified to speak with authority, it has been said by these persons that a grave constitutional error has been committed at the very outset of our political existence, in the way in which appointments to the Legislative Council have been made. I do not intend, sir, to speak in disparagement of the appointments in themselves; I am now only going to speak as to the manner in which the appointments were made. I shall be as brief as possible. I will at once then ask members to refer to the 6th section of the Constitution Act. In that section it is laid down: "Before the first meeting of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly the Governor in Council may in Her Majesty's name, by instruments under the public seal of the colony, summon to the Legislative Council of the colony such persons, not being more than 15, as he shall think fit, and thereafter may from time, as vacancies occur, in like manner, summon to the Legislative Council such other persons as he shall think fit, and every person so summoned shall thereby become a member of the Council." That section enacts in the most clear and unmistakeable language that before the first meeting of Parliament, the Governor-in-Council shall summon to the Legislative Council a certain number of persons who shall thereupon become members of the Council; and it goes on to say that the Governor-in-Council may afterwards, from time to time, as vacancies occur, but "in like manner" as in the case of the persons originally appointed, summon such

other persons as he may think fit. The wording of the clause is so clear, so explicit, so very free from ambiguity, that I marvel that any question should ever have been raised as to its construction. It is clear that the Governor-in-Council—that is, in a Council composed, chiefly at all events, of representatives of the people—should nominate the members of the Legislative Council. That, I think, is perfectly clear. Neither dogmatic assertion nor ingenious sophistry can alter the fact one jot. What happened? The contention that the members of the old Executive Council which ceased to be on the 21st October last, that is to say when our new Constitution was proclaimed, could be held to constitute such a Council as the Act contemplates has, I believe, been given up.

**THE PREMIER:** It has not been given up. The Executive Council is not mentioned in the Constitution Act. It is formed by the Governor, under the Royal Instructions.

**MR. CANNING:** I do not think the hon. gentleman can contend that the Constitution Act contemplated that the Council could have been other than a representative one, and the Royal Instructions could not over-ride an Act of the Imperial Parliament. The clause lays down the rule for all time, so long as the Legislative Council is non-elective. The appointments, in case of vacancies, are to be made "in like manner" as the original appointments were made, by the Governor-in-Council. If a vacancy occurred in the Upper House to-morrow, could it be said for a moment that the appointment to the vacant seat could be made "in like manner" as the original appointments were made. It would be made by the Governor-in-Council, but in a Council representative of the people. If it should be found that the Legislative Council of the colony under the new Constitution was not appointed in accordance with the Constitution Act, if that be admitted, I say then, sir, we are face to face with a very grave difficulty. The hon. the Premier laughs. He may find it a more serious question that he imagines. The question is whether, as the Legislative Council forms an essential part of Parliament, any acts done or measures enacted by Parliament may not