

very satisfactory, and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe that the increase will keep up, mainly, of course, through people coming to seek for gold. Some of them we hope will ultimately settle on the land. As to the gold discoveries, they are of a startling nature. Bayley's Reward Claim startled the world, and on top of it comes the Londonderry, which is said to be of equal, if not more so, fabulous richness. This will prove a further inducement to people to come to us, and I hope it will be a good thing for the colony when they do come. I observe that many works are referred to in the Speech, but I should also like to have seen some proposal to erect a new courthouse for the city of Perth. Such is very badly wanted, and I hope the Government will yet consider the matter. I look on the present Supreme Court-house as a disgrace to the colony. It is bleak, badly ventilated, and has not the necessary accommodation. With regard to the question of establishing a Land Bank, I may say that I know very little of the subject. It is necessary that some financial aid should be available to farmers, and, as when the financial clauses of the Homesteads Bill were before us I supported them, I hope also to be able to support the Land Bank. I need say nothing further, except to repeat that I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of the Hon. Mr. Henty.

**THE HON. H. MCKERNAN:** As a new member of the House I may, perhaps, be permitted to say a word or two on His Excellency's Speech, and the matters contained in it. At once I may say that generally I approve of the schemes therein pointed out, and I endorse, to a great extent, the remarks which have fallen from hon. members generally, and particularly those of my hon. colleague, Mr. Henty. I have no desire to criticise; I rather prefer to say something which has not yet been said. In the first place a good deal has been said in regard to a Land Bank; but it strikes me that without details before us (which details the Government doubtless possess) this House is not in a position to deal with the question. I do hope, however, that when the details do come before us we shall find that instead of having a Land Bank we shall have a bank of another name—a State Bank. When we say a Land Bank,

I take it that it is to be a bank for a certain class of people. In the province which I have the honour to represent, there is a large number of farmers who have deserted their farms and have taken up the calling of carriers to the Murchison gold-fields; but in time these people will have to return to their lands, and they will the more quickly do so when they have a cash market for their produce. Such being the case, it is my opinion that the Land Bank should take another form, that of giving some encouragement to the farmers, not by way of advances, but by way of bonuses on the products they are able to get out of the soil. I was present in another place when the Premier was asking for an increase of duty on flour; but I thought at the time that this was a great mistake, because if we consider the great number of people who are coming to this colony, it is evident that products such as wheat must be imported, because here the supply is not equal to the demand. I think it would be in the best interests of the colony if the duty on flour were abolished altogether. It is a question whether the duty confers any benefit to the wheat-grower, and if we gave instead of it a bonus for all wheat grown over a certain quantity, it would be a direct incentive to the farmers. Therefore, in preference to a Land Bank I would rather see an out-and-out State Bank; and I would further favour a bonus to farmers, so as to induce them to go upon the land, and the colony would then produce more of what it now has to import. There is no getting away from the fact that the colony is bound to import for the next three or four years. I should just like to say a word as to the railway policy of the Government. The railway proposed to be constructed from Mullewa to Cue has a greater significance than appears at first sight. I have heard it stated over and over again, and sometimes by responsible persons, that the time will arrive when a grand trunk line will be started from some point in this colony and which will traverse the Australian Continent. When we come to look at the matter calmly and dispassionately, I think the starting point, having in view the future, should be Geraldton. We should, therefore, consider whether it is not desirable to have a line of railway

constructed from Geraldton to Cue, instead of from Mullewa to Cue, and whether the line should not be a broad gauge one. Whilst not opposing the proposal to construct a railway to the Collie coalfield, I should be glad if the Government accompanied their proposals with such information as will entitle hon. members to support the line. I shall be very glad to receive such information as will permit me to support that railway, but until it is forthcoming, I shall object to the expenditure of any more money in that locality. A railway to Bunbury was constructed last year, and I should like to see the returns of the traffic, in order to gain an indication of the value of the work, so as to see whether we shall be justified in extending it. On the whole, I am very glad to support the motion of my hon. friend Mr. Henty.

**THE HON. F. T. CROWDER:** The policy disclosed in the Speech before us is a most liberal one, and shows that our position is second to none of the colonies in the Australian group. The Ministry have done, in the past, all they possibly could to help on Western Australia; and they are, therefore, deserving of all good wishes; but it will be admitted that they have had more than their ordinary share of luck.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. S. H. PARKER):** Hear, hear.

**THE HON. F. T. CROWDER:** Had it not been for that large measure of luck, we should not be here discussing an address which breathes such high hopes for the future prosperity of the colony, but we should rather be considering a Speech asking our sanction to further taxation, in order to pay the interest on the money which has been expended on public works, because I think it will be admitted that but for the discovery of Coolgardie the present railway line to Southern Cross would have been simply a white elephant. Luck has followed the present Ministry in more ways than one. Even yesterday they had only to say in the Speech that the winter rains were late, and immediately the heavens opened. In regard to the borrowing policy, I am not at all frightened, because I consider the colony has a grand future before it; but the money should be expended in a way that will bring in a return. I am in favour of the railways to the

goldfields, but only on a pledge from the Ministry that such rates will be charged as will pay not only the interest and working expenses, but provide a sinking fund to repay the capital in from twenty to thirty-five years. These railways are not agricultural lines, upon which the Government may be justified in charging low rates of freight; and I am sure that the remarks made by the Commissioner of Railways to a deputation recently, met with the approval of the great majority of the community. As I said, in my address at Albany, people are quite content to pay £3 per ton for carriage until the Government take over the lines, and then they are not satisfied with a charge which is 15s. per ton less. But if these railway lines are going to be built, and the freight fixed at the same rates as on the agricultural lines, I, for one, will use my endeavours to oppose them being made. In regard to the railway to the Collie, I cannot support it unless it be first proved that there is a good paying coalfield there. Seeing that coal is as valuable to the colony as gold, the Government should take steps to prove the field. If it is proved that the field is valuable, then, of course, a railway will pay handsomely. At the same time, the Government should not overlook the indications of coal found near Albany, as, if coal is discovered there, it will not only benefit Albany, but the colony as a whole, more so than coal at the Collie. In regard to the Land Bank, if established on commercial lines, it will receive my support, for I think it is really necessary that something should be done to help the staple industry of the colony. My hon. friend Mr. Henty said that the goldfields were the backbone of the colony; but I beg to differ with him, the produce of the soil being, in my opinion, the backbone of the country. We must consider that at the present time we are not producing one-third of what we consume, and, until we do that, and have a surplus that we can export, the colony cannot be said to be on a sound footing. I regret that there is no proposal for a tax on gold. I would like to see the Government remove the charge for miners' rights and place a tax on gold, which would yield a revenue of five or six times more than the present receipts. At the present moment we are taxing men for