

last Loan, proving beyond a doubt the good opinion held by the great financiers of the world as to the stability of our Government and the unbounded resources of our colony. We must one and all deplore the dry season we are now experiencing—I do not know that I should say that *now*, looking at the welcome change that has taken place since this morning—but the dry season we have had up to to-day. More especially has the want of rain been felt on our Eastern goldfields, where, I believe, ample provision has been made by the Government for the storage of storm waters. I join in the hope expressed by His Excellency that we may yet be favoured with a bountiful season. Mr. Speaker, I have now nearly finished. I will merely add that if the past good work done by the Government is an indication of what they will do in the future, we shall be justified in giving them a very full measure of support, at all events as regards their general policy. In minor matters of administration their actions may not always commend themselves to many of us. Even the warmest supporters of the Government may honestly differ from them occasionally; and, so far as I am concerned, I reserve to myself the right of full, but I trust impartial, criticism. I am sure that so long as members confine themselves to these lines the Government will respect their convictions. I trust, sir, that the present Ministry will long continue to hold the confidence of this Assembly, and of the country, because I think that in them we have an Administration whose integrity and good intentions are beyond question. I will now read the Address which I propose to submit for the approval of the House in reply to His Excellency's Speech, and which, I feel certain, will be carried unanimously:—

*“ To His Excellency Sir William Cleaver
 “ Francis Robinson, Knight Grand
 “ Cross of the Most Distinguished
 “ Order of St. Michael and St. George,
 “ Governor and Commander-in-Chief
 “ in and over the Colony of Western
 “ Australia and its Dependencies, &c.,
 “ &c., &c.*

“ We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia,

*“ in Parliament assembled, beg to assure
 “ Your Excellency of our continued
 “ loyalty and affection to our Most
 “ Gracious Sovereign.*

*“ We thank Your Excellency for the
 “ gracious Speech which you have been
 “ pleased to address to Parliament.*

*“ Our most careful consideration and
 “ attention will be given to the impor-
 “ tant matters referred to by Your
 “ Excellency, and all other matters that
 “ may be brought before us; and it
 “ shall be our earnest endeavour to so
 “ deal with them that our labours may
 “ result in the advancement and welfare
 “ of the colony.”*

MR. KEEP: Mr. Speaker,—In rising to second the Address-in-Reply, I have to acknowledge with thanks the courtesy and the honour extended to myself and also to the constituents which I represent, in being asked to do so. I feel the honour all the more because I am one of the infant members of the House, and the constituency I represent is one of the new-born children of the Constitution Act of last year. I may say that I felt some hesitation in accepting this honour. As I sit here, an independent member on the Opposition side of the House, I had some doubt as to whether I should be able to agree with the policy sketched out in His Excellency's Speech. But, on a perusal of it, I am glad to say that I find nothing, or very little, to which I can take much exception, and I think it will meet with the approval of the majority of the members of this House. As we have heard from His Excellency's Speech, and also from the mover of the Address-in-Reply, the population of the colony has been added to, during the last twelve months, by some 15,000 souls. I think everyone will agree that this influx of population may be attributed to the attractions of our goldfields. It will be necessary, therefore, and wise policy on the part of the Government, to give every facility and encouragement to capitalists and to working miners who come here from the Eastern colonies either to invest their capital or to put in manual work in the development of our goldfields. I think it is the duty of the Government to give these people absolutely every facility that is possible for the successful carrying out of their operations. These facilities have, to a large extent, been provided for, or

are contemplated, by the Government, as set forth in His Excellency's Speech. The returns lately coming in from the goldfields amply warrant the Government in the proposed construction of railways both from Southern Cross to Coolgardie and from Mullewa to Cue. Whilst on the subject of gold-mining, I should have liked to have seen some mention made in the Governor's Speech of the intention of the Government to make some reduction in the fees now charged, not only with regard to miners' rights, but other mining fees, and also business licenses, on our different goldfields, and more especially those outside our Southern boundaries. The Government, I notice, propose to expend a considerable sum of money on the goldfields; I trust that when they are apportioning this expenditure they will not forget the claims of the parent goldfields of Western Australia. I refer to the Kimberley goldfields and also the Pilbarra goldfield. The former, no doubt, first of all attracted population to the colony. It was the first goldfield discovered in Western Australia, and a very large number of people were attracted to it. Many of them, no doubt, went back disappointed; others went down to Pilbarra, and prospered—some of them exceedingly so; and many of them are now on our Southern or Eastern goldfields. I think that a substantial proportion of the Government grant devoted for the development of the goldfields should be allotted to the development of the Northern fields, both as regards providing facilities for carrying on the work of mining generally and for the construction of roads and the conservation of water. So far as the Collie coalfields are concerned, I am very glad to learn from His Excellency's Speech that the coal is of commercial value, and that it is likely in the future that a large coal-mining industry may be established in that district. I am given to understand that the Government have accepted a contract for boring on this coalfield, to test the value of the deposits. Should this test be favourable, and the field is proved to be a payable field, no doubt the railway proposed to be constructed to the field by the Government will be justified. With regard to the Loan policy of the Government, I see it is proposed to borrow another million and a half. Many

people consider that this amount is more than the colony can at present stand; but I am of opinion that when we find an increase of 20 per cent. in the population of the colony within twelve months, and when we look at the very satisfactory financial position of the colony, that this amount is not at all too large to embark in to develop the vast resources of the country. The Government and the country at large are to be congratulated upon the public works that have been prosecuted and completed during the past year. One of these undertakings, the Fremantle harbour works—and I speak feelingly on this matter—is a work of the utmost importance; it is a national work, and a work that is being carried out in such a way as I am sure must commend it to everybody. The absolute necessity for the immediate completion of these harbour works was, I think, accentuated by the recent block in the goods traffic at Fremantle, though I am pleased to say that the vigorous steps taken by the Government within the last few days to cope with the congestion of traffic have reduced it considerably. Turning to another part of His Excellency's Speech, there can be no doubt that the agricultural interest in this colony should be assisted and fostered in every legitimate way, and I think that the proposed Land Bank, if established and carried out on a thoroughly commercial basis, will prove of vast advantage and benefit to agriculturists, in the Southern parts of the colony. The Government are, no doubt, to be sincerely congratulated upon the very satisfactory financial statement they have put before us to-day. I only trust that in the future the colony will continue to go on prospering and progressing, so that the Government may be able to show the same satisfactory balance-sheet at the commencement of future sessions. In conclusion, sir, I must congratulate the members of the Ministry, individually and collectively, on their return to power. I can only express the hope that the same kind Providence, which has assisted them in the past, may continue to do so throughout the remainder of their term of office. [Mr. R. F. SHOLL: They'll want it.] I now, sir, formally second the Address-in-Reply, moved by my hon. friend the member for West Perth.