

**THE SPEAKER:** In the meantime we are governed by the rules and practice of the Imperial Parliament. I should be very glad if members who have private bills to bring in would first confer with me on the subject. At present, I do not think this bill can be introduced as the hon. member proposes.

#### THE ADDRESS IN REPLY.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

**MR. PARKER:** I need hardly say, Mr. Speaker, that it is with very great pleasure I rise on this occasion to address the first Assembly that has been elected under Responsible Government. When I think that for some years past I have in some measure been instrumental in agitating this question of self-government, it is a source of great gratification to me to at last find our hopes fulfilled, and that we are now on a par with the other self-governing colonies, and in a position to federate with them on equal terms; and I sincerely trust that the hopes and anticipations expressed in the Governor's Speech with regard to the future welfare of the colony under this form of Government may be realised. I feel, sir, that so far as this Address in Reply is concerned we might under ordinary circumstances very well allow it to pass without much comment. The address simply conveys our thanks to His Excellency for the speech he has been good enough to deliver to the Legislatures of this colony. But perhaps—although we are not following the precedent of past years, a precedent which has been abolished, I believe, by the Imperial Parliament, of making the Address in Reply a reflex of the speech itself, dealing with every topic in it—perhaps although on this occasion we are not following that precedent, but simply as I say conveying the thanks of the House to His Excellency for his speech, still perhaps on this occasion it would be convenient if members were to so express themselves as to afford the Government some idea whether the House is in favour of the policy sketched out in the speech or not. That being the case, although I in no way cavil at the proposed Address, yet I feel it my duty to make some comments on the policy shadowed forth in the speech. I can

quite understand, sir, that Ministers—our first Ministry especially—should have been anxious to do all they could with the view of gratifying the hopes that had been engendered in the minds of the people of the colony with regard to self-government. I can quite understand that Ministers were aware that the country expected a great deal from the adoption of this form of Government, and I cannot help thinking that it is mainly in consequence of the high hopes and the great expectations of the country at large, that we have, I will say, something more than a bold policy put forward in this speech. I have not examined these various public works proposals carefully; I have not made any careful estimate, nor am I in a position to do so; but with the rough estimate I have made of the probable cost of the various works proposed for adoption in the future—I do not know whether in the near future or not—I cannot help thinking that the probable cost of these works, instead of being £1,336,000, is more likely to be something like £3,000,000. When I look at the list of public works proposed to be undertaken by the Government, I cannot help thinking that the Ministry must have just looked round the colony with the idea of doing something for every constituency. They have apparently commenced at the South, and gone right through up to the North, scattering public works on every hand. They seem to have said to themselves, "We will catch the vote of every member; we will give them all something. We will catch the Bunbury people with this railway line; we will catch Albany with a steam dredge; we will catch the votes of the Kojonup and Plantagenet people with a telegraph line; we will catch the people north of Geraldton with a railway to Mullewa"—a great many members, I believe, never heard of Mullewa until they saw it mentioned in this Speech; "and we will catch other constituencies by giving them harbors." I notice they propose providing harbors not only at Fremantle, but all over the colony; and when we find that enthusiastic admirer of Sir John Coode, my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Marmion) a member of the Ministry, we can only presume that all these Harbor

Works are to be Sir John Coode's harbors, and that these alone will involve the expenditure of many millions of money. I observe that the Ministry also hope to catch other votes by means of sundry telegraph lines, and they propose a railway line to Yilgarn—I do not know whether that is with the idea of catching my vote or not. In fact, the Premier and his colleagues seem to me to have looked round the whole colony, casting their eyes at every constituency, and said to themselves, "We will leave no one unsatisfied; we will catch the vote of every member, no matter where he represents." [MR. HARPER: How is the hon. member for York to be caught?] He has not been caught yet. It will be observed from the Governor's Speech that Ministers say that they have not had much time to prepare anything in the way of new legislation, their excuse for that being that their whole time, since the 29th December, when they took office, has been devoted to taking over their respective departments, and investigating the financial position of the colony. So far as that is concerned, I do not know that this investigation involved any serious labour, seeing that there was a credit balance of £45,000 at the end of the year. They also say they have been busy "preparing their policy." I should have imagined that a policy like this would not take much time to prepare,—simply to read the speeches of the various candidates at the election, and adopt all their suggestions. It seems to me they read not only the speeches of those members who were likely to support them, but also the speeches of those who were likely to oppose them; and they said, "We will give them all something; we will catch every vote we can." That, apparently, has been the result of their labors since the 29th of December; and having, as they thought, satisfied the wants of everybody, by promising them all something, they go on to say that "they have been unwilling to commit the colony to anything more than was absolutely necessary." They ask us calmly to agree to this long list of public works, scattered over all parts of the colony—apparently, as I say, to catch everyone's vote—and they then say they have been unwilling to commit the colony to anything that was not absolutely necessary.

I venture to say that not only are a great many of these works not absolutely necessary, but many of them were not even dreamt of, except, perhaps, in the particular localities where the works are likely to be undertaken. Yet they say they have been unwilling to commit the colony to anything that is not absolutely necessary.

THE PREMIER: Read on. The hon. member is misrepresenting the Government. We say we were unwilling to commit the colony to anything more than was absolutely necessary until we were brought into personal communication with Parliament. We did not mean, for ever.

MR. PARKER: I am not responsible for the Ministry's English. There it is. Ministers evidently thought all these works that are here enumerated—railways, telegraphs, harbors, lighthouses, steam-dredges—they thought every work mentioned in this list was "absolutely necessary" to the interests of the colony. That was all I intended to convey. I think, myself, that a great many of them are not at all necessary in any way, and that the major portion of them will be entirely unproductive. Of one thing we may be certain; they will conduce to a great amount of taxation. We shall be so taxed that it will not only tend to burden the present inhabitants of the colony, but also have the effect of debarring us from receiving any increase to our population in the way of colonisation; for we may be sure of this, that the first inquiry of any intending colonist is as to the amount of the taxation in the country he proposes to go. If we tax the people of the colony in such a way as to make it a burden to them; if we tax them to such an extent that each individual finds he has to pay more than he would have to pay in any other colony, we may feel sure this will do a great deal to prevent people coming to this colony at all. I think that one great idea we ought to keep in view is to make our colony attractive; I do not mean merely to the emigrant alone, but to the intending colonist—the man who intends to settle on the soil. And, in order to do this, we must keep down taxation. The first thing we must do is to keep down taxation, and the price of living. Coming to the 7th paragraph of the speech, it appears to

me somewhat obscure. "At the same time," it says, "my Ministers are keenly "alive to the importance of a vigorous "though prudent policy in regard to "public works,"—I am sorry they did not show a little more of that "prudent policy" in their programme of public works; "and after careful consideration "have decided to submit to you a Loan "Bill to authorise the raising of a total "sum of £1,336,000, to be expended on "the works enumerated in the schedule "of the Bill." [The PREMIER: That is so]. Very well. That being the case, this Loan Bill will go home to England where we hope to raise the money, and these works will be enumerated in the schedule. That is how I understand it. [The PREMIER: Hear, hear]. Then I will call the hon. gentleman's attention to paragraph 9, which says: "You will "understand of course that the money "will not all be raised at once, and that "the Government in raising it will take "advantage of the state of the market to "do so from time to time on terms most "advantageous to the colony. Further- "more, the specific sanction of Parlia- "ment will be sought for each separate "Railway as soon as the Government is "prepared to undertake it, and in all "other items Loan estimates will be sub- "mitted to you before the works are un- "dertaken." I take it that the meaning of the Government is this: that we shall show in the schedule of our Loan Bill say £300,000 for a railway from Bayswater to Busselton; but the Government say, "Although you give us that sum for this work, in the Loan Bill, we shall not spend any of the money until you have given us a special Act." I ask members not to be caught by such claptrap as that. Do members think that after passing a Loan Bill with its schedule of works, we are going to stultify ourselves afterwards by refusing to sanction these works by a special Act, or by diverting the money to something else? [Mr. MARMION: What about the Fremantle harbor money?] I will speak of that presently. Do members think that after raising the money for particular works, after telling those from whom we borrow the money that it is to be spent on these particular works,—do members think it would be morally right for us to divert the money afterwards to other works?

Would it be fair to the lenders of the money to expend it otherwise? Are members likely to so stultify themselves, after once agreeing to this Loan Bill? It is simply ridiculous for Ministers to tell us that we shall have a further opportunity to vote each particular amount for each particular work. If we once pass that Loan Bill we shall be pledged to all these works. The Commissioner of Lands just now said, "What about Fremantle harbor works?" I remember that in the scramble that took place over the last half-million loan, a sum of £100,000 or £105,000 was allotted to provide Fremantle with a harbor, and that this money, or a great deal of it, was afterwards spent on something else, in another part of the colony. It was known that such a sum would be perfectly useless for carrying out the harbor works which the hon. gentleman had in view; and it was simply allotted to Fremantle in the same way as the other portions of the same loan were allotted to other districts, as a sop to the constituencies. As the hon. gentleman himself admitted afterwards, the amount would have been perfectly useless for such a work as he contemplated. [Mr. MARMION: I never did anything of the sort.] Perhaps not in so many words; but when it was proposed to divert the money to build a useless telegraph line—[Mr. MARMION: Which the hon. member advocated with all his might]—when it was proposed to divert this money to build the Kimberley telegraph line, which has turned out as useless as its expenditure at Fremantle would have been, the hon. gentleman agreed to it, and, in doing so, he virtually admitted that £105,000 would be perfectly useless for constructing harbor works at Fremantle. [Mr. MARMION: Nothing of the sort.] If the hon. gentleman thought otherwise, if he thought it would have given him any decent sort of harbor, his duty to his constituents should have led him to oppose the diversion of the money. It is true I advocated it. I was very glad indeed to have it diverted from such a purpose as to waste it in harbor works such as had been recommended by Sir John Coode. Sir, I am afraid I am diverting somewhat from my subject. Amongst the works proposed to be undertaken by the Govern-

ment, the very first set down here is a railway from Perth to Bunbury and extensions up the Preston river from Boyanup to Mininup Bridge, and from Boyanup to Busselton,—a sop for my late constituents. This railway was before the late House. I do not care to refer to the debates of that House, now defunct, more than I need; in fact, I shall appeal to the Speaker not to allow any of the debates of the defunct Legislature to enter this House. I think we shall do better without them; so I will not refer to what took place in the other House. But this railway had been talked of, and written of in the Press. It was talked of in a time of great financial depression, when it was felt that some public work ought to be undertaken, when people who had come out here as immigrants had become chargeable to the public funds, or were leaving the colony being unable to find any employment. This railway was first advocated with the view of giving employment to these immigrants as a sort of relief work, and retaining them in the colony until some more profitable employment could be found for them. At that time, in that period of depression, I was one who advocated this line, and I did so specially with the view of providing employment for these people, so as to induce them to settle in the colony, instead of leaving it, and giving it a bad name. But at that time the Government of the day would not listen to the proposals made. The Government of the day was absolutely despotic. It may be we shall find that the present Government is equally despotic. But the Government at that time refused to have anything to do with the line. Some years have elapsed since then, and the state of the colony now is very different from what it was then. Man is said to be a progressive animal; but I must say that whatever my views may have been in the past with regard to this line, they have not been progressive. I have gained wisdom by experience. I think the building of such a line along the sea coast down to Busselton would be most disastrous to the colony. It may be said: "You have given a railway to the Eastern Districts, and why not let these poor Southern settlers have one?" But I will ask members to consider this—I will say nothing now about the land:

but I ask the House to remember this,—that hundreds of tons used to be brought down those roads from the Eastern Districts before we thought of building a line of railway. There were hundreds of teams employed along those roads, and it was in consequence of the vast amount of traffic on the road that the Legislature of the day determined to make a line of railway to the Eastern Districts, being of opinion that the line would be a payable one, and being also of opinion that the valley of the Avon was *the* agricultural district of the colony. I ask members to consider what amount of traffic is there from the South. Pinjarrah is six miles nearer Perth than York; but do we ever have any teams from there, bringing any produce? I ask is there not a timber mill at Jarrahdale, near to Pinjarrah, and, I ask this: can the local producers supply even the wants of that one mill? We know they do not. Not only do they not bring anything to market here, they actually cannot supply a timber station at their own doors. I believe it is admitted on all hands that the major portion of the land between here and Pinjarrah is inferior land, but it is said there is an oasis in the shape of some good land about Pinjarrah. If so, why does not the district emulate the Eastern Districts, and send us some produce down; or why do they not even supply the lucrative market at their own doors. Between the Murray and Bunbury, what good land is there? We have only to read the report of the late Commissioner of Crown Lands, the gentleman who now occupies the position of Premier, to see that the amount of good land between this and Pinjarrah is of a very limited extent, and the major portion of it is in the hands of private individuals. There is hardly any agricultural produce north of Bunbury that is brought into Bunbury. Where then is the good land that this railway is going to tap? I challenge the hon. gentleman to have a Commission of Inquiry into this very question, and I venture to say he will find there is not enough good agricultural land to warrant the construction of a tramway, much less a railway. When we get down to Bunbury, I believe there is a good deal of good land, which, with the expenditure of some capital, would yield

good profit. But if this land were cultivated, so near Bunbury as it is, is it likely that the produce would come up by rail, when they could send it by water? If a producer had a thousand tons of potatoes, he would not be likely to send them by a railway when he could get them carried by steamer at a much lower freight. We all know that sea transit is much cheaper than land transit, and that a railway cannot compete with water carriage as regards freight. If these tin mines down South turn out well, and there should be a large area of agricultural land brought under cultivation, the bulk of the produce would be shipped at Bunbury and not sent by this railway. I ask members to bear in mind the difference between such a line, running in competition with water transit, and the line to the Eastern Districts, which has the monopoly of the whole traffic. Is it likely that when this railway is built—if you are going to build it—is it likely that the steamers that now run down this coast will cease to run any further than Fremantle? Is it likely that they will land their Bunbury cargo at Fremantle, to have it sent down by this railway? I ask members again to bear in mind this great distinction between this line and the line to the Eastern Districts. In one case you have the steamer traffic and water transit to compete against, whereas in the other case everything that is imported into the Eastern Districts, and everything that is sent down from those districts must come by rail. It may be said, and I dare say it is true, that at the present time, steam communication along the coast is far from what it ought to be. But if our tin mines are developed, as we expect they will, and we have a large population there, and if the towns of Bunbury and Busselton also increase in population as we hope they will, we may rest assured that steam communication will improve as rapidly as the requirements of the districts. They will then have a cheap, rapid, and constant means of communication with Fremantle; and the railway would have to compete with a very much superior steam communication by sea. I have spoken so far of this line because it is the very first work mentioned by the Government. We are also told that lands are to be

opened up for agricultural settlement—we are not told where. No one in this House desires to see agricultural settlement extend more than I do; but there is no occasion for us to build railways 50 years in advance of settlement. We have during the last few years built a railway hundreds of miles long between Beverley and Albany, with the special object of agricultural settlement; and we are now building another line from Guildford to Greenough with the same object in view. Millions of acres are now open for settlement along the first of these railways, and in a few years we shall have many more millions available for settlement. What I should like to see is this: before we go spending any more money in building railways for encouraging agricultural settlement, let us first see some agricultural settlement take place along these other lines of railways; let us see these undertakings turn out a success, before we enter upon any more. Don't let us try to cut the throat of these other undertakings by promoting others and throwing away our money with the view of inducing agricultural settlement upon land which is very far inferior to that opened up by the present line of railway. The next work mentioned in the speech is a railway to the Yilgarn goldfields. I believe a railway to Yilgarn is as likely to prove in the best interests of the colony as any work mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. We know that what attracts population more than anything is a goldfield. We know what attraction their minerals have proved in the case of the other colonies. We know that Victoria and New South Wales were populated and settled in the rapid manner they were because of their mineral riches; and if we have extensive goldfields at Yilgarn, nothing will sooner help to develop these fields than a railway. There is perhaps one thing which these fields at present are more in need of, and that is a good water supply. First give them a permanent water supply, and, being satisfied that you have a permanent, valuable, and extensive goldfield there, then provide them with railway communication. I believe that the result of giving them a proper water supply, combined with a railway, would be to rapidly increase the population on

these fields, many of whom after making their fortunes on the goldfields would settle down and become good and useful colonists. Nothing would give a greater stimulus to agriculture, nothing would tend more to agricultural settlement, than the presence of a large consuming population; and nothing will give us a large consuming population so rapidly as the development of our goldfields. Therefore it is in the interests of the colony at large, in the interests of producers, in the interests of agricultural settlement, in the interests of the pastoralists with their surplus flocks,—it is in the interests of every section of the community that these goldfields should be developed. Therefore, I say, one of the first things which the Government of the country ought to take in hand is the development of these goldfields, if they are satisfied of their being permanent and extensive fields. I am not prepared to say that at present we would be justified in doing this, in going to all this expenditure. I think we want a great deal more information; we want a great deal more inquiry, before we undertake these large public works; and what I would suggest is that the Government here should adopt the same course of dealing with public works as some of the other colonies have adopted. Under the provisions of the Public Works Acts of those colonies, no public funds can be expended upon such public works as these without the consent of a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament, who first take evidence on the subject and then report upon the proposed work to Parliament. It has been found necessary in the neighboring colonies to adopt this system of dealing with their public works. So much pressure was brought to bear upon Ministers, and upon members by their constituents, that it was found that the interests of the country demanded some such safeguard against unnecessary and reckless expenditure. This has been the law in New South Wales for two or three years, and I see that last year they have adopted the same thing in Victoria. [Mr. BURT: They are going to repeal it.] They have not repealed it yet. It has acted well in New South Wales, and saved the colony thousands of pounds; and I think it would be well for us to start at once

with this Public Works Act. I feel sure, if such an Act were in operation here, we should need have no fear of public money being spent on works that would be absolutely useless and unproductive. We are very fond of following in the steps of the other colonies in many matters; and I think it would be an excellent thing if we were to follow their example in this respect, before committing ourselves to any reckless public works expenditure, and before our financial credit is completely damned. The next work I find mentioned is a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa. I am not going to say that this might not be a very good work,—at any rate I think it ought to take precedence of the railway to Bunbury. But whether or no it is a really desirable work to undertake, no member I think can say without further inquiry and further information; and I ask the House not to rashly pledge itself to these works without first satisfying itself as to their necessity and their utility. I believe this Mullewa line would serve a large number of settlers, of pastoralists, and I am told there is a traffic of some 5,000 bales of wool that could at any rate be depended upon. I am not prepared myself at this stage to say whether the line would be a payable one; but I believe it will be a unique thing to have a railway built simply to serve a number of pastoralists. I am told that the Midland Railway at some point or other runs at a distance of only about 60 miles of where it is desired to have this line, some 60 miles of a station called Warrawarra. [THE PREMIER: More likely 120 miles.] At any rate, if the Government think this line would be reproductive, why not negotiate with the Midland Railway people to have a line constructed on the land grant system? I shall not say a word about harbor works at Fremantle. The subject is an immense one, and I should have to speak for some hours; and I should be sorry to excite my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Marmion) at this early stage of the session. I shall therefore refrain from any further remarks on this subject until we have this Loan Bill before us, and until we hear what sort of harbor the Government propose. Possibly they may intend to have it inside the river; at all

events, we know nothing about their proposals yet, and I will not say anything more on the subject. The same remark applies to the proposed harbor improvements at Geraldton, Carnarvon, Ashburton, Cossack, and other ports. That "other ports" seems rather vague. The Government, apparently, do not even know yet where they are going to construct harbor works. I am not going to say anything now about the proposed telegraph lines, only it seems to me that if it is proposed to have a line from Beverley to Broome Hill, it would be as well to carry it all the way to Albany, and utilise the posts of the Great Southern Railway. There is also to be a telegraph line from Busselton to Cape Leeuwin. If they are going to build a lighthouse at the Leeuwin—which I agree is necessary—I think this telegraph line might be made. But I disagree altogether that this colony should bear the entire burden of the cost of that lighthouse, which will be of far greater benefit to other colonies than this. I understand the cost of this work would be about £16,000, and there will afterwards be the cost of maintenance. I cannot but think that if this matter were fairly represented to the neighboring colonies, they would be prepared to help us, and contribute their fair share towards this work, which is really a national work, required in the interests of the whole of Australia, like the fortification of Albany. Then there is the completion of the telegraph from Derby to Wyndham. I only hope the Government will be able to complete it, and when they complete it to maintain it in order at some reasonable cost. So far as I understand the position of affairs up there, it will require a force of about 300 Volunteers, armed with Martini-Heury rifles, to keep away the natives from destroying this line; for I understand that, as fast as the contractor erected the line, the natives broke the wire down for their spears, and that such is the nature of the country that it is almost impossible to capture these natives. I only hope the Government will be able to solve the problem satisfactorily. I notice in this paragraph that after enumerating all these works I have referred to, the speech goes on to speak of "other projected undertakings," including the devel-

opment of goldfields and mineral resources. I do not know exactly what is meant by these words "other projected undertakings," and whether their cost is included in the £1,336,000. [The PREMIER : Certainly.] Then, if so, what I have already said as to the estimated cost of all these works being nearer £3,000,000 than £1,336,000 is further strengthened. I am sorry to see the development of our goldfields and mineral resources placed so low down the list, and only included among "other projected undertakings." I think it would be better if the Government transposed some of these items in their programme, and put the development of our mineral resources the first on the list. Then, again, there is to be something done in the way of immigration. I hope the Government are imbued with the idea of doing something in the way of colonising the country, and settling people upon the soil, and not merely going in for immigration. We have an immense territory and a very small population settled on it. If the Government think that by spending a few thousands on immigration they will satisfy the people of the colony, I think they are mistaken. What we desire, and the country desires, is to see the Government undertake a system of colonisation, a system under which the proper class of persons will be selected at Home, brought out, and settled on the soil. If the Government are going to spend some thousands of pounds simply to introduce labor for the labor market, then I think the money will be very ill spent. We shall find that these laborers will very soon leave our shores for the other colonies, as they have done in the past. Any money expended in this direction, unless with the idea of settling people on the soil, will in my opinion be money wasted; it may just as well be thrown into the sea. I hope and trust the Government will not dream of borrowing any money for immigration, unless it is with the idea of carrying out some system of colonisation. Then we are promised some improvements to the Eastern Railway and to the Perth and Guildford railway stations. I believe that improvements are necessary, but I presume the Government will be prepared with every information as to how this money is to be spent.

Next we are promised "surveys of railway lines, and of lands for agricultural settlement." I only hope and trust that in conjunction with this work the Government will take in hand the colonisation of these lands, otherwise all their surveys would be of no value. What we want is colonisation. [Mr. CLARKSON: Paupers?] The hon. member says "paupers." I don't know that it is any great crime to be a pauper. It is no detriment, if a man is an agricultural laborer, that he should come here from the old country a pauper. I think it is purely an erroneous idea to imagine that because a man may be poor, or because he may be what is called a pauper—a pauper from no fault of his own, but a pauper owing to an overcrowded population—I think it is an entirely erroneous idea to imagine that this man may not become a good and profitable settler in a colony like this. Don't think that because a man is a pauper, in the light of the word in England, it is any detriment to his character, so long as he can turn his hand to honest work. I think, myself, there is great deal of false sentiment entertained on this question. Sir, I have felt it incumbent to speak at some length on this occasion, not only to express my views as to the policy of the Government but also to explain my own views, more especially when I see so few hon. members as yet occupying seats on this side of the House. I again ask members to bear in mind the way the Government propose to raise this money. I fail to see why the Government should not first decide what particular works they intend to come to this House with, and have each work included in the schedule, instead of asking us to vote the money and afterwards coming to us to say how they want it spent. That appears to me to be putting the cart before the horse. If a private individual intends to build a house or to improve his property, he does not go to borrow money first without deciding what his house is going to cost him, or what improvements he is going to carry out. It seems to me that what the Government intend doing is to raise this large sum of money, and then come to this House to decide upon what works it shall be spent. I am afraid it is simply pandering to the popular idea that as soon as we got Responsible Government

we should go and borrow a large sum of money. It seems to me they mean to borrow this £1,336,000, and then cast about to see upon what we shall spend it. [The PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.] I will read the paragraph again: "You will understand of course that the money will not all be raised at once, and that the Government in raising it will take advantage of the state of the market to do so from time to time on terms most advantageous to the Colony. Furthermore the specific sanction of Parliament will be sought for each separate Railway as soon as the Government is prepared to undertake it, and in all other items Loan Estimates will be submitted to you before the works are undertaken." Is not that perfectly plain? Having raised their £1,336,000, they will come here and ask the House to decide upon what works the money shall be expended. That is what I call putting the cart before the horse. There is one particular matter with regard to this Speech which I regret extremely to find no reference to it in the Speech. I regret extremely to find that no mention is made of the desire which has been generally expressed for an amendment of the Constitution Act in the direction of the abolition of the property qualification of the members of this House. I can quite understand that the Government may have thought that at the present time it would be inopportune to bring in a bill with the view of amending the Constitution during the present session. I can quite understand that the Government thought—and I am not prepared to say they did not think rightly—that the first thing to occupy the attention of the House was a public works policy; but I did expect to hear something said that they intended to carry out this constitutional change hereafter—not only the abolition of the property qualification of members, but also the reduction and extension of the franchise. I feel it my duty to speak on this subject. It is a subject that came prominently before the members of the select committee of the House of Commons. Every member who spoke on the subject appeared to be entirely opposed to these two provisions in the Bill—the property qualification of members and the £10 franchise. When I was ex-



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-