

be given a certain time to demonstrate the wisdom of his own system. The criticism which Mr. Bath has directed towards the Mechanical Engineer is in quite a different direction from that taken by the late member for Hannans last year. Reference is made to a certain amount of extravagance in the purchase of locomotives—new locomotives are purchased and others are laid aside. Owing to the ever-increasing traffic on our railways and the lack of engines in the past, many locomotives have exceeded their usefulness, and many have had to be laid on one side to make way for engines of greater carrying power, faster steaming power, and everything else. In the report of the special committee of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines, I find this sentence:—

A large portion of the locomotive stock is unfitted for the present requirements of the department, being incapable of handling the trains efficiently, both in respect to power and speed, and it must very shortly be a matter for consideration what steps shall be taken to replace them. To continue them in service means additional risk, increased train mileage, and consequently an abnormal expenditure. Your committee recommends that every effort be made to secure the completion at the earliest possible date of the workshops now in course of construction, and that immediate steps be taken to provide the farther accommodation required by the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

I think the report by the committee of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines is a complete reply to the criticism directed by the hon. member towards the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

MR. BATH: You ought to go and have a look at the railway yards.

MR. REID: The criticism directed last year died away, and I feel confident that in 12 months from the present the wisdom of the Chief Mechanical Engineer in endeavouring so far as he can to provide suitable locomotives for traffic going on at the present time will be shown. I have taken more time than I intended when I commenced. There is only one recommendation I wish to make, and that is in connection with the Mining Bill about to be introduced. I would impress upon the Minister for Mines that as far as he possibly can, in formulating the necessary clauses of this Bill, he will pay every attention to the ventilation of mines. It is a matter of the utmost importance. There is nothing more important to the miner than plenty of fresh air. We

know at the present time, through the quantity of explosives used in mines it is absolutely necessary to have good ventilation if the miner is to retain good health. Noxious fumes are given off after explosives are used, and unless there is a good system of ventilation it must ultimately work to the detriment of the employer and the employee. I would impress upon the Minister the advisability of seeing that ventilation receives a prominent place in this Bill. I certainly think it would not be inadvisable at the present time if a commission of experts were appointed to examine into and report upon the system adopted in ventilating the mines at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Some valuable evidence could be collected, and the Minister would have the benefit of the information in formulating his Bill. If this is done, and prominence given to the subject of ventilation in the Bill to be brought forward, it will be for the welfare of the people who are compelled to earn their bread in the bowels of the earth, and will not be against the interests of the employer.

MR. J. ISDELL (Pilbarra): In rising to address the House, I must crave the indulgence and courtesy usually accorded to a member when making his first speech. A residence of many years in the bush as a pioneer prospector does not tend to keep one's faculties on the alert, for there are not many opportunities for public speaking, and in such circumstances it is a difficult task for me to speak before what I may suppose to be the best debating society in the country. With reference to the policy declared in the Governor's Speech there seems to be on both sides of the House a concurrence of opinion in its favour, and certainly I am in favour of it in some respects; but it has other features to which I do not see my way to agree. In the first place, the policy looks to me not broad enough. I expected a more progressive and a broader policy, considering the prosperity of the State. The point of view of the framer of that policy takes in but a small portion of the country. What we may call his sphere extends only from Bunbury in the south to the Murchison in the north—one-third of the whole State—and leaves out two-thirds of Western Australia, and a most prosperous part of it. I do not see why the large pastoral

and mining industries of the North-West especially should be totally ignored by the Government, even in the Governor's Speech. Had they been only mentioned, it would have shown that the Government recognise their claims in some shape or form. As to the other planks in the Government platform, there are some on which I do not intend to speak, because I am not qualified. I shall speak on those topics only of which I consider I have sufficient knowledge to entitle me to express opinions. Regarding the Trans-continental Railway and the broadening of the gauge between Perth and Kalgoorlie, I cannot say I am in favour of the work. To my mind that is not in any sense a really reproductive work, nor yet a business proposition. This is a young State, and every penny that has to be spent in it should be spent on works which are either directly or indirectly reproductive. In the first place, this work will not reduce the cost of living, or the freight on mining, farming, or any other commodities which we require. In the second place, it will not increase the revenue, will not increase the gold output, nor will it increase the population of this State; and without these or other advantages I do not see how we can reap any benefit from the enterprise. The broadening of the gauge of the line to Kalgoorlie will cost thousands of pounds; and I would far sooner see the money spent in opening up fresh railway communication to new inland goldfields and to farming districts, as we should then have a fair prospect of a larger revenue. It must be remembered that the debt of the State is very heavy, totalling £68 per head of population. To every penny which adds to that debt we should look for some return; but in this instance I cannot see whence the return is to come. That railway is proposed to be carried out as the result of sentiment; and I cannot give my aid to a sentimental railway. I must compliment the Government on the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into State forestry. There is no doubt its recommendations will lead to the forests being dealt with in a proper manner, and will also afford a basis for legislation to prevent the wholesale destruction of timber, at the same time encouraging our present large export timber trade. As to the land policy of

the Government, I must congratulate them on the vigorous and energetic manner in which they have settled people on the soil. But it is imperative that in carrying out this policy they must be exceedingly careful and cautious; because the cry is now "Go on the land"—a repetition of a cry raised many years ago in other colonies. Years ago Victoria and South Australia encouraged and even induced people to settle indiscriminately on land which was totally unfit for farming purposes, with very disastrous results to those colonies. People were granted land on a very liberal extended payment system; but that land had not the conditions essential to successful farming. The climate was against it; consequently instead of being a blessing to Victoria and South Australia, the schemes turned out a detriment to their advancement and the ruination of many hundreds of people. I am well aware that a settled population is essential to the prosperity of this State, and that population can be provided if the conditions are suitable. But it does not matter how enlightened and energetic is the management, nor how good the soil, unless there be a sufficient and consistent rainfall farming enterprise will result in failure. The Government should divide the State into zones according to rainfall, and allow settlement in zones suitable to the conditions—suitable for cereals, mixed farming, and pastoral pursuits respectively. It is ridiculous to induce farmers to settle on country which has not a sufficient rainfall. Such a scheme looks very well on paper; but it remains on paper, because the paper is all we get back from it, and no return of any value. I am glad to see by official statistics that the mining industry is still on the up grade; and I should have much preferred to see more progress made in giving railway communication to many of the mining centres, for I am sure the result would have been an increased output of gold and a larger settled population on the fields. The State batteries seem to have been a great success, which is due to the Minister for Mines. The Government have taken a step in the right direction in sending a geologist to the northern portion of the State, and I am certain his report, when received by the Government and the people of the South, will astonish them

because few have any conception of the real extent of rich auriferous country which there exists. After that report comes to hand, I am certain that the proposed railway in the North will soon be an accomplished fact, whether it be built by the Government or by private enterprise. And I hope that as a result of the report we in the North will get one or two State batteries. I am in favour of the Morgans-Laverton Railway. Though I have never been along the route, I know from public reports that the line is well worthy of construction; and I hope that when it is completed other lines will be taken to auriferous and wealthy centres. Regarding the Collie-Goldfields Railway and the Woodmans Point line, I am not in a position to express an opinion. I should be foolish to express it, because I have never seen the country and know nothing about it; and I consider that the man who expresses an opinion on a subject of which he knows nothing is simply useless for any purpose. From what I can learn, I am in favour of those railways being built; but how a man can form an opinion as to their utility unless he sees the ground, I am at a loss to understand. Had there been any reports on the table regarding population, land settlement, and the area of Crown lands and of private lands in the districts concerned, a person might have had some means of arriving at a conclusion; but in their absence, I cannot do so. Hence my vote will be simply a persuasive vote, and not the result of experience. The man who can persuade me best is bound to get my vote. I am pleased to hear that most members in this and the Upper House have expressed opinions in favour of the construction of the Port Hedland to Marble Bar railway, and that similar opinions have been expressed by the metropolitan newspapers also. It seems strange to me that though it is favoured by so many members in this and the Upper House, and although other influential people and all the metropolitan papers are agreed as to its construction, they still qualify their acquiescence by saying it should be built by private enterprise. If they think that railway of so much importance to the welfare of the State, why should private enterprise and not the Government reap the benefit? Why should not the Government build it

themselves? That is what I could not understand, or did not until a day or two ago. There is only one man who has given any reason why the line should be built by private enterprise; and he happens to be a member of the present Government—the Hon. Walter Kingsmill. Referring to this railway, he said the other day in the Upper House that the line from Port Hedland to Nullagine was particularly fitted for construction by private enterprise, because it was outside the southern railway system of the State. That is an illustration of the result of centralisation, and it could not have been more forcibly exhibited by the most ardent advocate of centralisation, because it showed that if we in the North had been anywhere within reach of the southern railway system we should have had our line years ago. But I consider it terribly rough and very hard and unjust that those pioneers who have for years worked there in an uncongenial climate should be so long denied railway communication. It must be remembered that the work they are doing is not for their own benefit only, but for that of the whole country; and it seems curious that those people who are undergoing such hardships should be forbidden railway communication, cheap living, and kindred blessings, simply because their line cannot be joined to the southern railway system. But I will say this for Mr. Kingsmill. He was quite right in stating that the enterprise is outside the sphere in which the centralisation policy of the present Government has been carried on. At the same time, I must recollect that I am only one amongst all the members of this and of the other House, not to speak of the metropolitan newspapers; and it is no use my knocking my head against a stone wall, nor do I intend to. I will fight for that railway, whether I get it in one way or in the other; and having heard the opinions of so many influential people, I shall not fight against its being built by private enterprise. I only hope that members in this and the other House who have expressed themselves in its favour will, when the Bill for its construction comes before them, give it their cordial support, and in no way block its passing into law. I should like to mention one or two subjects which have not been referred to in the Governor's Speech.

One is the alien question. Most people in the southern part of the State consider the Nor'-West a hotbed of alien immigration. Very forcibly I can prove that to be wrong; and representing that portion of the State, it is my duty here to give the proof. Since I have been in Perth I have made it my business to investigate the alien question with respect to the southern portions of the country, and I can find in Perth more Chinamen and other Asiatic aliens on a few acres of land in the centre of the city than in the whole of the Nor'-West, including Broome. With a specific purpose I stood at the corner of one of our streets for an hour by my watch, and counted 68 aliens going in one direction only during that hour. I did not count those going the opposite way, for some of them may have repassed. That is more than one will see in twelve months' travelling through the Nor'-West, outside of Broome at all events. Another thing: I notice by the statistics for five months of this year that 632 aliens arrived in this State and 181 left. That leaves a balance of 451 in five months. I cannot see what that is due to. There must be some leakage, and I think it is the duty of the present Government to make inquiry. There is another question which I have not heard dealt with, and that is relating to rabbits. Rabbits are one of the greatest curses and pests that ever entered Australia. When I was in Perth 20 years ago, I spoke to Mr. Maitland Brown and Mr. W. Paterson, now of the Agricultural Bank, and several other gentlemen on that question, because I had been in the midst of the trouble for some years then, and I knew what I was talking about. I told them of the dangers of it, and they would not believe me. Since that, to a certain extent the Government have taken the matter in hand, but we know nothing of what the Government intend to do—whether they will stop the incursion, destroy the rabbits, or not. Rabbits are going to cost this country many hundreds of thousands of pounds. People who do not know them cannot see the danger, but I have been in it and know what it is, and I say it is the duty of the Government to try to check the rabbits. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, because I have no more to say with regard to politics, and there is no question

outside that I wish to speak of. I thank members for the generous way in which they have listened to me. (General applause.)

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): I have no wish or desire to prolong this debate, and I intend to be brief, consequently the observations that I have to make will be short. The first thing that struck me on reading the Governor's Speech was that it was a very ambitious programme which was foreshadowed therein. I found on looking through it there were something like 20 most important Bills, and Bills of a highly controversial character. We are asked to read, debate, and pass if possible a Bill in reference to the Transcontinental Railway question, a Bill in respect of the broad gauge line between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

THE PREMIER: Oh no. That is in connection with the Transcontinental Railway.

MR. PURKISS: Very well, two in one. A Bill with reference to the Constitution, a redistribution of seats Bill—Bills of a highly controversial character; a Bill with reference to electoral reform, another measure of a highly controversial character; a Bill regarding a line from Collie to the Great Southern, which no doubt will be discussable on account of the battle of the routes; a Bill for a railway from Woodmans Point to some point between the ocean and the South-Western line. Then we are promised a consolidation and amendment of the Mines Act, that is an amalgamation of a number of Acts on the statute-book, together with several important amendments—a perfect volume, and no doubt partaking in its various amendments somewhat of a controversial character. We are also asked to pass a Bill for the consolidation of all the land Acts on the statute-book with various important amendments thereof. Also there are foreshadowed several consolidation Bills which are not mentioned. Then we have a new Loan Bill to come down. One Bill we are asked to deal with—and I hope we shall have an opportunity of doing so and of thoroughly threshing it out on account of its vast importance—is in relation to the metropolitan water supply and the extension of sewerage facilities to various other centres. Then we have higher education,