

ment shown by the Government in this matter. He thought no one could deny that a tremendous amount of money had been frittered away on our railways in the past, and that it was high time we had a change. A great deal had been said as to the Government having underestimated the cost of the works they proposed to carry out. Surely this schedule had not been put forward without due consideration as to the probable cost. He had heard it said—and he believed there was some degree of truth in it—that there was an offer to construct these two lines, the Busselton railway and the Yilgarn railway, right through for something over £2,000 per mile. If that was correct, he should like to know what had become of all the money that had been spent in constructing our other railways? There must have been some serious mismanagement—he did not say incompetency—somewhere. It was evident that we must have had at the head of affairs men who, whatever their other qualifications might be, did not understand the working of railways in a country like this. Therefore, he said he hoped there would be no sentiment in dealing with these officers who were going to be displaced. We could not afford to deal in sentiment. Something had been said about increased taxation; if we decided on going to go in for sentiment, and to find billets for a lot of people we did not really want, we should certainly require extra taxation. He did not mean to say that all our Government officers were over paid; many of them were under paid, he believed. But there should be fewer of them, and we could then afford to pay them better.

MR. A. FORREST said, before speaking to the Address itself, he should like to congratulate the House, and the colony generally, on the inauguration of Responsible Government. He thought they must all feel proud—especially those who had worked hard for the last three or four years to bring about this change—to find that their efforts had at last been successful, and that they were now on a par with the other colonies. He felt certain they would all, now that they had the change, work together for the benefit of the whole colony, and that they would not see introduced in that

House what he would call factious opposition. They had now at the head of affairs a responsible Ministry; and he could say, himself, from an intimate knowledge of these gentlemen all his life, that they deserved the confidence of the country. He hoped hon. members would avoid all factious opposition, and would give the Ministry a fair chance at any rate, before seeking to turn them out of office. Members might cavil at their programme; but if they objected to the policy of the present Ministry they would have to look round and see what other Ministry they could put in their place. At the present juncture of affairs it was absolutely necessary that we should all go to work with one will, and see what we could do for the colony. A dissolution just now would be a disastrous thing. The colony had been at a standstill long enough, and we could not afford to turn out the Ministry and plunge the country into a dissolution at the present moment. It would be simply ruinous to the best interests of the country. Therefore, he hoped members would agree to pull together, now that we had got the management of our own affairs. The programme of the Government was a liberal one and a bold one, and he thought it was entitled to receive a fair and reasonable support. A great deal had been said with reference to this Bayswater and Busselton Railway. He thought he could fearlessly say that he knew a little about the country between here and Busselton. He had been in the House some four years, and he had advocated this railway on three separate occasions, and always voted for it, and intended to vote for it again. The hon. member for York, who used to be a strong supporter of this line, told them he had grown wiser as he got up in years and that he could not support this railway now. He (Mr. Forrest) also had grown in years since he first advocated this work, but he did not think he had grown less wise, and he meant to support it still. He hoped hon. members would not think he had lost his senses because he was going to support this line, as he always had done. The hon. member might have grown wiser as he grew older, but he did not seem to grow more consistent. He had great faith in this railway himself, and he intended to



support the Government in it, and, when the time came, he hoped to induce other members to do the same, because he believed the building of this railway between Perth and Busselton would be one of the best works ever undertaken by this country. He did not say this without having facts and figures to prove it, when the Loan Bill came before them. He would only say this now: that one-fifth or one-sixth of the whole population of the colony lived along this railway route. He thought when he said that, he said a great deal. These people were entitled to some consideration. Whether people lived at the North or at the South, they contributed their fair share of taxes through the Customs, and they were entitled to a fair share of the expenditure. This railway project had been before that House for four years, and the last time it was brought forward a private firm offered to build the line, and the House was unanimous on the subject. But the Government of the day were opposed to it. Every other member of the old Council voted for it, and as there were 18 of those members out of 30 in the present House, he hoped those hon. members would be true to their colors; if they were, then they would get this railway to the South. He might say that he had little or no interest himself in Bunbury, but he thought it was only right and proper that these people should have a railway. They had been waiting for it for many years, and it was time they should have what had been promised them. They were an industrious race these people who lived down South, and they deserved a little encouragement. He hoped this would be the first work which the Government would bring forward, and that they would stand or fall by it, and let those who put them out stand the brunt of facing the country. He would not mind betting his all that not one of those who opposed it would see the inside of that House again. The Government had come forward with a very progressive policy; they proposed to borrow no less a sum than £1,366,000. Would it be said that the colony did not want this expenditure on public works? During the last two years there had not been a sixpence of loan money spent in the colony on public works, and the country had been

at a complete standstill, looking forward for this change of Government, hoping it would put an end to the stagnation of the last few years. The late Government would do nothing, and everybody had been looking forward for the time when the country would go into the money market, and start some public works, and see if we could not make some little progress. Every member who came before a constituency promised to support a Loan Bill; and he would ask anyone, either in the House or outside it, whether the public works mentioned in the Governor's Speech were not necessary works. He would ask any member to point out any other work outside these works which the colony stood in more need of. He thought he knew as much about this colony as any man that stood in it, and he would say this: no one could say that there was any work of pressing necessity—unless it be some minor work that could be dealt with without reference to that House—which was not included in the schedule. He did not at present feel called upon to support the schedule as a whole; but he should be prepared, when the right time came, to give his general support to the Government, if he found they could produce sufficient evidence to warrant it. As to the Mullewa railway, the only question to his mind was as to the starting point, whether from a point on the Midland Railway or from Geraldton. If this point could be satisfactorily settled in his opinion, he should support this Mullewa railway, because he believed it was a good line. It would open up the best pastoral district in the colony, and be the means of giving a great stimulus to pastoral pursuits. In a few years he believed that instead of having 5000 bales of wool to send down, they would have 50,000 bales. At the present time the heavy cost of the carriage of wire and other materials for fencing and improvements on a station made wool growing almost prohibitive. This railway would do away with that, and enable the settlers to improve their stations, so that in a few years we should find runs that only carried one sheep now carrying ten; and he hoped to see this railway some day extended to Roebourne. If our northern goldfields turned out as was expected, we should find the Government would be



compelled to extend this line farther North. He admired the policy of the Government in doing all they thought necessary for the country districts; he was sure they would have received very little support from country members if they had not given them those necessary works which their districts absolutely required, and especially those improvements along the coast. He was also pleased to find that the Government intended to place a new wire on the telegraph line between Derby and Wyndham. He moved in that matter in that House on a former occasion, and stated publicly that the wire being used in its construction was useless, and that it would have to come down; but he was not listened to. It had since been proved that he was right. The Government now proposed to have it re-wired, otherwise the whole thing could not be worked. He believed that up to now only about six messages had been sent over this line, owing to interruptions; and he was pleased to find that the Government intended doing this much for the district,—a district that in the near future would grow more sheep than all the other districts of Western Australia put together. He had been rather amused with one part of the speech of the hon. member for York. For the last seven years that he had known the hon. member he had this one particular hobby of settling people on the land, as he called it. Settling people on the land was a good thing if you could get the right class of people to settle on it. But the hon. member could never get up in that House or anywhere else without trotting out this hobby of his about settling people on the land. The hon. member should try the experiment himself. They all knew the hon. member had never interested himself in either pastoral or agricultural pursuits, he had never put sixpence into a farm or a sheep station; because he knew it was not all gold that glittered, and that the owners of sheep stations and those who settled on the land were not millionaires. The hon. member preferred to put his money in something else rather than show he had any faith himself in the settlement of the land. Why did he not show his faith in the country by doing a little settlement on his own account? The hon. member twitted the Government rather unfairly last night about

their public works policy. The hon. member had posed in that House as the leader of the elected members, and he had told his constituents what he intended to do in the way of public works. When he spoke at York he told them he would have a railway built to Yilgarn, but last night when the same thing was proposed by the Government he was not in favor of it. At any rate, he so colored it up that it was difficult to know exactly whether he was in favor of it or not. When he was standing for the Vasse, if his memory served him—though the hon. member now said not—but if his memory served him he was almost sure that the hon. member must have promised the Vasse people to support the Busselton railway. They knew he had more than once brought it forward and advocated it in that House. From what he (Mr. Forrest) knew of the Vasse people, they were not likely to support a candidate who was opposed to their own interests. Several members in the course of this debate had expressed their regret because there had been no mention in the Governor's speech about a change in the constitution as regards property qualification and the franchise. He did not regret that himself. He would stand there, if he stood there alone, as the representative of a Northern constituency who did not want an amendment of the Constitution Act,—he would stand there, if he stood alone, and would oppose any such amendment. He had no hesitation in saying that the people North of here, bar Geraldton, were opposed to an alteration of the Act, and more especially as regards the franchise. He would not be against an alteration in the property qualification of members, but he did not think much of it; and certainly so long as he represented a Northern constituency he should not vote for manhood suffrage. He might say in conclusion that he was very pleased to see His Honor the Speaker occupying the Chair again, for he believed he was the very best man we could have had at the present turn of affairs to preside over the business of that House. He also congratulated the Government on their strength, and he hoped a large majority of members would support them in their loan policy. He meant himself to do all he could to help them when the schedule came before the House.