

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

what they may never find, whereas, if we placed a substantial tax on gold found, no one would feel it, and the colony would derive a large revenue. I will not detain the House longer.

THE HON. R. W. HARDEY: I will just give my ideas on a few of the heads in the Governor's Speech. In the first place, I think it is a cause of congratulation that this colony has increased in population in the way stated; but, while we are getting a flow of population, we must endeavour to retain a good percentage of the new-comers in the colony, so that people shall not merely come and procure gold and go away to spend it in other parts of the world. We wish to get as many people here as possible, and get them to be *bonâ fide* settlers of Western Australia. Without population we cannot show that progress we ought to do. With regard to coal, I certainly think, with the Hon. Mr. Crowder, that the Government ought to leave no stone unturned to test the Collie seam and others, as coal is quite as valuable to the colony as gold. With regard to the loan, I am not afraid of this £1,500,000 the Government propose to raise. I hope they will not want to borrow more for some time to come; but there is no doubt as to our being justified in going on the market at the present time, particularly as the credit of the colony is so good. With regard to the railway to Coolgardie, I am certainly in favour of the line being extended in that direction; but it has occurred to me whether it is a good policy to put down now a good permanent line to that particular centre. I have given some consideration to the matter lately, and have thought whether it might not be better to put down a lighter and cheaper railway. I have thought more of this idea since the discovery of the Londonderry reef, because we do not know, as yet, which is the proper centre to take a permanent line to. A cheap line could easily be replaced by a permanent one if the circumstances warranted it. I think it would be a good thing to put down a permanent line to Cuc. As to a railway to the tinfields, until I hear more in its favour I shall not support it. My own experience of the tinfields was a woeful one, as I spent my money and lost it. It is gratifying that the harbour works are

progressing in the way stated; and I agree with the Hon. Mr. Henty, that it will be a grand thing if we can have a harbour of refuge on the West coast, where vessels can run to in a storm and be perfectly safe. I am glad to see the reference to the conservation of water which, in regard to the Eastern goldfields, is certainly very necessary indeed; and I certainly think, also, that we should spend a fairly large amount of money in boring for artesian water. If we strike artesian water, it will not only serve the goldfields, but a great proportion of the country which is first-class for agricultural and pastoral purposes could then be utilised. I am glad to see the reference to the opening of roads, and I think main roads ought to be laid out at once, and not left until after the land has been surveyed, and then have to be bought back, as heretofore. As to the Land Bank, I want to learn more of the subject; but if I can give it my support, I certainly will do so, because farmers and others engaged upon the soil do need some assistance.

THE HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I did not know that it would be considered the duty of hon. members to express their views on the speech of His Excellency, or I might have given the matter some consideration; but I will do my best to give my opinion on some of the subjects mentioned. I think we have reason to congratulate ourselves on having a Ministry who have taken the interests of the country so fully into consideration and have proposed measures of so great magnitude. It is the duty of this Council, I take it, to consider these measures very carefully, as they will necessitate a very large expenditure of money. I, for my part, do not consider we are justified in borrowing so large a sum, unless we see some prospect of paying off the debt in the future, as well as the interest for the present. No doubt the colony is progressing, but it seems to me an enormous sum to borrow, and I would have thought better of the proposal had the amount been less and there had been a fewer number of works. Hon. members should be careful to satisfy themselves before approving of the works that they will be reproductive. In considering the proposals, I think the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie will be a repro-