

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### THIRD SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT.

*The Parliament was prorogued on the 18th December, 1925, to the 26th March, 1926. It was further prorogued to the 6th May, 1926, then to the 3rd June, 1926, and again to the 29th July, 1926, when it met for the despatch of business.*

*Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.*

### Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 29th July, 1926.*

	PAGE
Opening of Parliament ... ..	1
Governor's Opening Speech ... ..	1
New Members ... ..	5
Bill: Co-operative and Provident Societies Lx. ... ..	6
Address-in-reply, first day ... ..	6

### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments.

### GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3.5 p.m. and, the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber, obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

*Mr. President and Hon. Members of the Legislative Council:—*

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

It is with pleasure that I open the Third Session of the Twelfth Parliament of Western Australia for the transaction of public business, and for the consideration of matters of importance to the well-being and prosperity of the people.

### Finance.

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

The financial position of the State can be considered satisfactory. The revenue for the year ended June 30th totalled £8,808,166, and the expenditure, £8,907,308. The deficit was, therefore, £99,142, as against an estimate of £98,079. Ministers recognise that continued care must be exercised in relation to the finances, and they are confident that the operations of the current year will terminate the long series of annual deficits. At a conference convened by the Commonwealth Government, and held in Melbourne in May last, proposals were submitted to the State Premiers by the Prime Minister involving the abolition of the per capita payments to the States, and the partial evacuation by the Commonwealth of the field of direct taxation. These proposals were unanimously rejected by the Premiers. My advisers are determined to resist any proposal which will deprive the State of a share of the Customs and Excise revenue. The Commission that inquired into the disabilities suffered by this State under Federation made recommendations which, if adopted, would result in considerable benefit to Western Australia. The Commonwealth Government, however, has not accepted those recommendations, and has submitted an alternative proposal much less favourable to this State. Proposals have been outlined by the Federal Government for taking over that portion of the State's territory north of the 26th parallel of south latitude. My Government has not yet re-

ceived details of the proposals; when they come to hand, the whole question will be submitted for Parliamentary consideration. The operations of the Federal Loan Council have been continued with satisfactory results. It is extremely gratifying to find that the sinking fund established for the redemption of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme Loan of £2,500,000, which is due for repayment in January next, will be more than sufficient for this purpose. Every encouragement has been given to secondary industries, and an amount aggregating £62,680 was guaranteed or advanced during the year to nine separate companies. You will be asked to grant temporary Supply, and the Estimates of receipts and expenditure will be submitted to you at an early date.

*Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—*

*Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—*

Public confidence in the future progress of the State and its industries has never been more marked. General developments of permanent character justify the belief that Western Australia will rapidly rise to a position of first importance amongst the States of the Australian Commonwealth.

#### *Migration.*

My Ministers realise that an active policy of migration is essential to the development of the country. Arising out of the new agreement finalised between the Imperial Government and the Commonwealth Government in April last year, and a new agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government in October last, a proposal for an expenditure of £6,000,000 on land settlement (including the present group settlements) and £4,612,388 on public works, was submitted. The Commonwealth Government proposes to appoint a commission to report and advise on these projects, and also upon schemes submitted by other States. My Ministers, however, anxious to proceed with the prompt settlement of migrants and the construction of necessary public works, have obtained approval for an expenditure of £629,000 as a preliminary advance. A supplementary agreement has been signed embodying terms in respect to the existing group settlement scheme which are retro-

spective as from 1st June, 1922. During the year 3,730 migrants arrived within the State. The figures for the preceding year were 3,304. The number of migrants who have arrived in the State to date under the migration agreement total 22,677.

#### *Land Settlement.*

Land settlement returns indicate a continued active demand for agricultural lands. The area selected during the year, exclusive of pastoral leases, totalled 2,023,236 acres, an increase of over 400,000 acres on the total area selected during 1924-25. Surveys of large tracts of country in the Kimberleys, Norseman-Salmon Gums, Great Southern, and Kalkalling-Bullfinch areas have been completed, and preliminary classifications in a number of areas likely to be served by future railway extensions are being made. A large number of applications for light lands served by existing railways has been received.

#### *Pastoral.*

Notwithstanding a falling off in the number of applications for pastoral areas, the pastoral industry is in a healthy condition. During the year the number of sheep within the State increased by 469,000. Considerable financial assistance has been given to small cattlemen.

#### *Production.*

The area placed under crop for wheat for the 1925-26 season constituted a record for Western Australia. Unfortunately, dry weather during the critical growing period prevented the fulfilment of the estimated record harvest. The area under crop this year represents a further substantial acreage increase, and, with a continuance of favourable weather conditions, a record harvest is assured. Authorisations by the Agricultural Bank were issued during the year for clearing 293,380 acres, involving an expenditure of £365,636.

#### *Group Settlement.*

Steady progress has been made in developing the group settlements. Existing groups have been consolidated by legislative and administrative effort, and new settlements have been established. On 30th June the number of groups totalled 135, and the population 9,232.

*Soldier Settlement.*

An agreement, providing for the cancellation by the Commonwealth Government of £796,000 of the State's loan indebtedness on account of Soldier Settlement, has been signed. This agreement has yet to be ratified by Parliament, and, in anticipation, the trustees of the Agricultural Bank and a representative of the returned soldiers are engaged on the revaluation of soldier settler securities.

*Wire Netting.*

During the year a loan was obtained from the Commonwealth Government for the supply of 369 miles of rabbit-proof fencing to farmers, advances being payable by half-yearly instalments over a period of 20 years, free of interest. A new agreement has been arranged, and will require to be ratified by Parliament, by which the State will receive £100,000 per annum for six years. This money will be loaned to the State on certain terms extending over 25 years, and wire netting will be supplied to settlers on terms of repayment over a similar period. In anticipation of this agreement, and as supplies were urgently required, the Government purchased 2,000 miles of netting, which is now being supplied to farmers.

*Agricultural College.*

The erection of the first section of the Muresk Agricultural College buildings will be completed in time for the reception of students in September next.

*Experimental Farms.*

Four additional State experimental farms are being established for the purpose of testing land outside what are regarded as "safe" wheat-growing zones. It is confidently expected that investigations and experiments will prove the suitability of large additional areas for wheat-growing.

*Agricultural Water Supplies.*

The provision of adequate water supplies for the country districts is recognised as a matter of great importance. During the year extensions from the goldfields water supply main, and the provision of supplies to serve country towns and districts, have involved the expenditure of large sums of money. Comprehensive surveys and investigations are being made in other districts.

*Drainage.*

Heavy expenditure will be required in the provision of drainage schemes for the South-Western portion of the State. The construction of drains near Busselton, estimated to cost £205,000, has been authorised, and work has commenced. Other preparatory work has been carried out in several areas, and considerable progress will be made this year.

*Forestry.*

The timber trade has contributed largely to the general prosperity of the State. During the year 145,000,000 super feet were exported, valued at over £1,500,000.

It is satisfactory to note that the special qualities of our hardwoods are receiving wider recognition in foreign countries, with the result that the export value for the past year was the highest on record. For the first time in the State's history, efforts directed at securing the perpetuation of our forest resources are assuming proportions which will render the timber industry a permanent asset of great value.

*Mining.*

The value of the gold and mineral production during 1925 amounted to £2,393,890. Very serious consideration has been given to the best means of reviving the gold mining industry. An offer to assist financially in the supply of electric power from a central power station on the Golden Mile was widely commended. This offer is now receiving the attention of the mining companies. Liberal financial assistance has been extended under the Mining Development Act and the Industries Assistance Act. By relief from taxation, and reduction of water rates, encouragement has been given to companies and prospectors. Diamond drilling operations are being carried out for the purpose of testing country adjacent to the Golden Mile and at other centres. The Miner's Phthisis Act has been proclaimed. At the Federal health laboratory at Kalgoorlie 3,353 miners have been examined for miners' diseases. The Government has taken all necessary steps to provide for men taken out of the mines, and for their dependants.

*Railway Construction.*

During the year the following railways were completed and handed over to the Working Railways Department:—Esperance Northward railway, 66½ miles to Sal-

mon Gums. Piawaning Northward railway, 27 miles. Lake Grace-Newdegate railway, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles. Railways under construction at the end of the financial year were:—Dwarda-Narrogin railway, 36 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Jardee-Pemberton railway (relaying,) 17 miles. Norseman-Salmon Gums railway, 58 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Denmark railway extension, 35 miles. Bills will be introduced for the construction of the—Kalkalling-Bullfinch railway. Kon-dinin Eastward railway. Ejanding Northward railway. Royup Brook-Cranbrook railway.

#### *Road Construction.*

The total expenditure under the joint Commonwealth and State £ for £ road construction scheme is £546,682. In addition, the State expended £100,631 during the year on roads within the group areas. A more comprehensive road construction policy has been agreed upon between the Commonwealth and State Governments. Under this proposal the amount available for expenditure in this State each year for a period of ten years will be £672,000. In accordance with the provisions of the Main Roads Act, passed last session, a Main Roads Board has been constituted, and all road and bridges work will be carried out by the board. Legislation will be introduced for the appropriation of money on the basis agreed upon by the Commonwealth and State Governments.

#### *Harbours.*

Steady progress has been made with the harbour works at Geraldton, and the island breakwater has been completed for its full length of 2,054 feet. The work of enlarging the entrance channel of Fremantle harbour to a depth of 36 feet is almost complete. Substantial progress has been made with the reconstruction of Victoria Quay. Dredging operations have been continued at Bunbury. Surveys are being made in connection with the provision of up-to-date harbour facilities at Esperance, where, in the near future, it is confidently anticipated there will be a great increase in trade.

#### *State Shipping.*

The m.s. "Kybra," the first of the two new motor-driven ships ordered by the Government, arrived from England in May last, and commenced the South-East coast service in June, thus succeeding the s.s.

"Eucla." It is expected that the second new vessel, which will replace the s.s. "Bambra" on the North-West coast run, will be delivered in November next, and commence the service towards the end of the year.

#### *Railways.*

Returns from the operations of the railways for the year were less than anticipated. This is attributed to the lesser quantity of wheat hauled and to a temporary diminution of general goods traffic, a feature which had its genesis in causes occurring outside the borders of the State. The prospects for this year are much brighter. Ten locomotives, estimated to cost £120,000, which are being constructed locally, will be completed during the year.

#### *Tramways.*

Notwithstanding heavy relaying expenditure, the operations of the tramways showed an improvement. Revenue was £5,000 better than for the previous year. In accordance with recommendations made to the Government by a departmental board, the construction of extensions in the metropolitan area has been authorised.

#### *Metropolitan Water Supply.*

During the year the first supplies were drawn from the new hills water supply scheme for the metropolitan area. Despite a severe heat wave in January last and a record water consumption, it was possible, with the increased quantity obtainable from the new sources, to maintain a normal supply to consumers throughout the summer, with the exception of a period of three weeks, when slight restrictions were imposed. In addition to the increased provision for the metropolitan area, the towns of Kelmescott, Gosnells, Maddington, and Kenwick are now supplied with hills water. Since 17th April last no bore water has been used in the metropolitan area. The laying of a large main between Perth and Fremantle was completed during the year. The construction of the Churchman's Brook dam is proceeding satisfactorily, and investigations for proving the site of a large dam in Wongong Brook are nearing completion. During the current year it is proposed to improve supplies by enlarging the main from the Victoria Reservoir and by the provision of large distributing mains to secure better pressure on

the high levels. Satisfactory progress has been made with sewerage work and installations at Perth, Fremantle, and Subiaco.

### *Electricity Supply.*

Greater demands for electricity for industrial and domestic purposes resulted in an increased consumption of 6,000,000 units during the year. Good progress is being made with the installation of additional generating plant, which will enable further extensions to be made.

### *Collie Power Scheme.*

During the current session it is proposed to seek authority to establish and operate a scheme for the supply of electric power at Collie, the object being the development of industry in the South-West. The Government proposes to advance £ for £ on the capital cost, and it appears that the project is now within measurable distance of becoming an accomplished fact.

### *Arbitration.*

The amending Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act, passed last session, is now in operation. The appointment of Mr. Walter Dwyer as the first permanent President of the Arbitration Court, and the appointment of industrial magistrates, have greatly expedited the work of the Court, and relieved long-standing congestion.

### *Education.*

Forty-four new State schools were opened during the year. Including five high schools and the Narrogin School of Agriculture, the attendance now numbers nearly 53,000 pupils. In addition, 1,187 children are receiving education by post, and the correspondence classes are being extended.

### *Health.*

My Ministers consider that the health of the individual citizen, particularly that of the child, is of vital importance to the general well-being of the community. There are now nine infant health centres in the State, two of which are in country districts. During the year the staff dealing with the medical examination of children at school was increased by the appointment of a full-time woman medical officer, who has devoted the whole of her time to country schools. Provision will be

made on the Estimates for similar work to be carried out at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Every effort has been made to provide hospital accommodation and medical attention for people resident in country districts. The erection of new hospitals, or the provision of additional accommodation at existing hospitals, has involved a heavy expenditure during the year. Provision of funds for the maintenance of public hospitals continues to present very great difficulties. Money raised by the Entertainment Tax Act, passed last session, has been devoted to this purpose, but is not sufficient to meet all demands.

### *Soldiers' Mental Home.*

The new mental home for ex-soldier patients at West Subiaco was officially opened early this month. The hospital, which has been constructed on most modern lines, provides accommodation for 70 patients.

### *Mental Reception Home.*

A commencement has been made with the erection of the mental reception home at Point Heathcote. This institution will provide a long-felt need in the early treatment and observation of mental patients.

### *Legislation.*

You will be asked to give consideration to measures dealing with—State Insurance, Hospitals, Timber Industry, Central Markets, Coal Mines Regulation; and to the amendment of the Constitution Act, and Acts relating to—Traffic, Road Districts, Administration, Public Service, and Weights and Measures. I now declare this session of Parliament open, and trust that Divine Providence may bless your labours in the interests of the State.

### **NEW MEMBERS.**

The following new members, elected since the prorogation, then took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll:—Hon. J. W. Kirwan (South); Hon. J. J. Holmes (North); Hon. C. F. Baxter (East); Hon. J. Nicholson (Metropolitan); Hon. E. H. Harris (North-East); Hon. E. H. Gray (West); Hon. W. T. Glasheen (South-East); Hon. G. A. Kempton (Cen-

tral); Hon. Sir William Lathlain (Metropolitan-Suburban); Hon. W. J. Mann (South-West).

### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

**THE PRESIDENT:** For the sake of greater accuracy, I have obtained from His Excellency the Governor copies of the Speech that he has been pleased to deliver. These will be distributed amongst members.

### BILL—CO-OPERATIVE AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [3.45]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to Provide for the Incorporation and Regulation of Co-operative and Provident Societies."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

**HON. E. H. GRAY** (West) [3.47]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—May it please Your Excellency. We the members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.

Before proceeding to address myself to the motion, I wish to enter an emphatic protest against the procedure adopted here to-day. Never before in the history of Western Australia have members had to wait to be sworn in until after His Excellency had delivered his address. Such a procedure is unfair in the first place to the public and, secondly, to sitting members of the Chamber, for it might happen that there would not be a quorum present. To-day we just escaped the possibility of the House not being properly con-

stituted, for there was just a bare quorum present. Also it is unfair to new members, one of whom is invariably selected to move the adoption of the Address-in-reply. Under our old custom new members were given a fair chance of getting the atmosphere of the House. Relatively, I am only a new member and, being a little sensitive, I have always regarded it as an advantage to be able to sit in the House during the opening proceedings and so get the atmosphere of the place. Now I wish to associate myself in welcoming the new members recently elected to the Chamber. I suggest to them that, if possible, they forget the, possibly, conservative war cries on which, maybe, they were elected, and try to permeate the House with the spirit of true progress, and support legislation framed in the interests of the country and its development, and with a view to raising the standard of living and doing everything possible for the wellbeing of the people. If our new members do that, the House will certainly accomplish remarkably good work. His Excellency's Speech may be said to have reached a triumph in recording the excellent progress the State is making, particularly in all phases of primary development. It is up to members of the House to do everything possible to further the development of the State. I think the Collier Government will go down to history as the Administration that accomplished what several of their predecessors attempted in vain, namely, the balancing of revenue and expenditure. During the past two years the State's deficit has diminished to about one-half of what it was when the Government took office. I remember a remarkable address delivered by Mr. Nicholson in this Chamber in 1921. Mr. Nicholson then castigated the existing Administration for the enormous deficit they had built up, to the extent of some £660,000. What a difference to-day, when the Premier and Treasurer is able to come within a few thousand of balancing his ledger, and courageously expects to complete the balancing during the current year.

**Hon. J. Nicholson:** Did not the Premier promise to have the deficit extinguished by the end of last year?

**Hon. E. H. GRAY:** He is able to say that it will be extinguished during the current year. The Collier Government have done wonderfully good work. The progress of the State has been remarkable in all phases of primary development. The de-

sire for land cannot be satisfied. The timber industry is in a very healthy condition. Wheat acreages are increasing every year. All this proves that the country is in sound condition and that the people, even the primary producers, are well satisfied with the work of the Government.

Hon. J. Cornell: You will give the Almighty a little credit, won't you?

Hon. F. H. GRAY: In answer to that, I might quote a remark made recently in another Parliament, and say that, if the hon. member's capacity were equal to his impudence, he would be a very valuable member of this Chamber. I wish to touch on the various activities of the Government, and to say something of their proposed programme. Fremantle is very much interested in the question of a high school for the port. We recognise that, with the Education Department endeavouring to meet the demand for schools all over the State, the establishment of a high school at Fremantle must necessarily be difficult from a financial point of view. However, my constituents still hope that the time will come when we shall have such a school in the Fremantle district.

Hon. E. Rose: Do you not want a bridge first?

Hon. F. H. GRAY: Nobody knows better than Fremantle residents how very serious the unemployed problem becomes at this time of the year. I am glad to know that the Government have been able to conclude with the Commonwealth Government an agreement under which a large sum of money will be made available for the construction of roads in this State, a work that should effectively ameliorate the unemployed difficulty. No Government can hope to completely solve the problem under existing conditions. If the records were searched, it would be found that the Labour Government have done more in that respect than did any previous Administration. I sincerely hope the Government will be able to put into operation at an early date works that will serve to absorb the unemployed. To my mind the greatest curse in the country at present is the unsatisfactory state of the workers in the farming industry. Once we can give those men a decent rate of wage and standard of living, much of the unemployment problem will disappear. We have tried to bring about an improvement by the introduction of measures to bring the workers

in primary industries under the Arbitration Court, and so make the employers in those industries pay decent wages and provide an improved standard of living for their employees. If we could bring that about, we should thereby abolish the great economic waste involved in the constant movement of people to and from the country. It is a great problem, and sooner or later this House must face it. Improved wages and conditions in primary industries would go far to abolish the eternal waste of money in bringing out migrants from the Old Country. Those people, before coming, are misled by glowing statements of the conditions to be enjoyed out here. So, on reaching here and taking up work in country districts, they become dissatisfied and drift back to the city. Quite a large proportion of our unemployed army to-day consists of people from the Old Country. Let me say a word about the work done by the Minister in charge of hospitals. In doing so, I would draw attention to the statement by the hospital committee in this morning's paper. Those people point out the extreme difficulty experienced in trying to accommodate patients, especially in the mental ward, at the Perth Hospital. This is a very old question, but it is imperative that we should face it. I have never seen the observation ward in the Perth Hospital, nor do I wish to see it, for I have heard very many declare that it is a disgrace to the State. When doctors are practically unanimous in contending that some improvements should be effected, it is time the Government and Parliament took a hand in the matter. A great wave of public opinion resulted in the equipping of an institution for mental cases amongst returned soldiers. However, since that institution was built and equipped, the people and the Government alike seem to be quite satisfied with the conditions of the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont. The doctors are now unanimous in fearing to send patients to the Claremont Hospital, because of the lack of accommodation provided there. It is time we did something. I have spoken before on this subject. In the Speech appeared a paragraph to the effect that the Point Heathcote Home had been commenced. I should have preferred to see a definite statement to the effect that it would be completed this year. The question is a serious one, and I hope the Acting Leader of the House will make a note of it. There is about to be a change in the admin-

istration of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, and the opportunity could be taken to amend the Act by which power would be given to a board of doctors to control the institution instead of its being left in the hands of one man. Past experience has proved that one-man control is a failure. While the accommodation at the institution is so restricted, it is not fair to appoint a new man to take charge of it, neither is it fair to criticise the present occupant of the position, because he has not had a fair deal. The past administration of the institution has been a failure. We should take this opportunity to alter the system of control, and appoint a board of doctors, because in the matter of mental afflictions and insanity there is safety in numbers, and the control suggested would give the public a better chance. I now wish to refer to the programme for the present session.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is nearly barren.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The policy with regard to State insurance is an effective reply to the hon. member, when he suggests that the session will be a barren one.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is already accomplished.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have no doubt that the State Insurance scheme will be carried out, because we have made provision under the amended Miners' Phthisis Act and the Workers' Compensation Act for afflicted miners, and because the insurance companies have practically refused to take the business. The companies have been given the opportunity to take it on, but they want conditions that no Government could give them. Seeing that this House carried the amendment to which I have referred, and that the Acts have been proclaimed, and that steps have been taken to get the miners out of the industry, this House must pass a State Insurance Bill to legalise the action of the Government and make provision for the miners concerned. It is one of the most progressive legislative Acts that any Government could bring forward. In the past we have been too long content to allow this kind of business to pass into the hands of private enterprise. In a sense this House has forced the passing of such a measure in order to cope with the business that will have to be done. I hope there will be introduced a Bill to extend the scope of insurance legislation so that the country may progress and, by means of a State Insurance office, money may be saved to the

State. A marketing Bill has been mentioned. That is one we must deal with this session.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The word "must" is a new word here.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I use the word "must," because when anything is urgently needed that is the word to use. A marketing Bill is required, especially in the metropolitan area. It will confer great benefit upon the public as well as upon the producer, and it will have the effect of cutting out the middleman, as far as possible, for he serves no useful purpose. I was very interested in the remarks contained in the Speech concerning group settlement. I think the population involved in this scheme is now 9,000. The Government have taken a forward step in supporting the new co-operative milk company in North Perth. I was one of the members of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Peel Estate. I think the co-operative milk factory will prove a tremendous incentive to settlers on that estate, and will assist in solving many problems facing them. It will also give them bigger returns for the products they have to sell.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I do not think so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I also wish to refer to the recent collapse of the Fremantle railway bridge. I am not the son of a prophet, and did not forecast the destruction of the bridge. The fact remains that the bridge collapsed. The old traffic bridge is an archaio monstrosity. It is so rickety that charabanes over a certain weight must not travel over it at more than eight miles an hour. It is a bad advertisement for the State. Every man and woman coming into the State through Fremantle witnesses a sight that will not be seen in any other part of the world. There is a gang of men kept constantly engaged in repairing the bridge, and when they have reached one end they have to start working back to the other end. Most of the planks on the bridge become loose, and this necessitates a restriction in the speed of the traffic. It would be impossible to see anything like that in any other part of the civilised world. That bridge has withstood all the tests made by the raging torrents passing under it, but the railway bridge collapsed. It did not collapse where we thought it would go, but the collapse has proved that it was not safe, with the result



that the public have lost confidence in it. I live near the bridge. I have always trusted the engineers, and I am awaiting with interest an announcement from the Department that the bridge was effectively patrolled. I am sorry that up to the present no such announcement has been made. All kinds of wild rumours are afloat to the effect that a man, really outside the Department, was responsible for averting a terrible catastrophe which would have led to great loss of life. I believe that when the truth comes out it will be found that the engineers have effectively looked after the structure. Seeing that the flood was washing bridges away all over the country, I cannot think that our engineering authorities would have been neglectful in that regard. I shall await with interest an announcement on the matter from the Department. The public have lost faith in both bridges, and we must face the question of new structures. I expected to see in the Governor's Speech a reference to the question of bridges, which will involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. I should have been better pleased if I had read in the Speech a definite promise to the effect that the construction of a new bridge would be commenced this year. An announcement has been made by the Minister for Railways, and by the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman), but no such announcement carries as much weight as a statement by the Treasurer, who has to arrange for the requisite loan. The public demand will be for a new bridge. No one will be satisfied with the mere repairing of the present structure. The Government will be required to build a new bridge of modern design that will meet requirements for many years ahead. I am sure this House will do good service to the country during the present session, and I am pleased to have been returned to participate in the work. While I am opposed to the principle of having an Upper House, and to the present constitution and franchise, I agree that we here possess tremendous powers for good as well as for evil which will make for or hinder the progress of the State and its people. I look upon every member, no matter to what party he belongs, as sincere in his desire to assist the country. I hope members will be able to shake off any outside influence, get down to business, and support anything from another place that will be of benefit to Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You might set a good example.

**HON. J. R. BROWN** (North-East) [4.10]: It affords me great pleasure to second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply so ably delivered by His Excellency this afternoon. I expect that many benefits will accrue to the State from that Speech. I merely second the motion formally, as I intend to speak on the subject more fully at a later date.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 29th July, 1926.*

	PAGE
Meeting of Assembly ... ..	9
Summons from the Governor ... ..	9
Migration Agreement, Works Schedule ... ..	10
Bill: Soldier Land Settlement, 18. ... ..	10
Governor's Opening Speech ... ..	10
Address-in-reply, first day ... ..	10

### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m. pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk.

The **SPEAKER** took the Chair.

### SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and hon. members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (vide Council report ante), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.