

to see mentioned in the Governor's Speech is the Esperance railway, 66½ miles of which, we are told, will be completed towards December. That distance, however, is not far enough; and I am glad that it is the policy of the present Government to complete the Esperance line to Norseman, thus linking up our railway system, through the two large sections across the Continent, with Rockhampton in Queensland. Another point I wish to touch upon is the matter of a fair rents Bill. As long as people are paying exorbitant rents for their premises, there must be industrial unrest. A scheme should be inaugurated whereby the landlord will be prevented from bleeding the people through the medium of excessive rent. Walking around the metropolitan area one sees premises worth 7s. or 8s. a week rented at about £2. I am glad the Government have this question on their list for the present session. Another gratifying feature is that the cotton industry in the North now promises so well. A few months ago experts told us that cotton could not be grown here, as the crops would be killed by frosts. But countries in which cotton is grown have not more than two or three months' frost, and as cotton can be grown in a space of three or four months the frosts can be avoided. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 24th July, 1924.*

	PAGE
Meeting of the Assembly ... ..	7
Message—Opening by Commissioner ... ..	7
Swearing-in of members ... ..	7
Election of Speaker ... ..	7
Presentation of Speaker elect ... ..	9
Summons from Lieutenant-Governor ... ..	9
Bill: Unclaimed Moneys Act Amendment, 1A. ... ..	9
Lieutenant-Governor's Opening Speech ... ..	9
Address-in-reply, first day ... ..	9

### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant).

### MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A Message from the Commissioner appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor to do all things necessary for the opening of Parliament requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber; and members having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

### SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour Mr. Justice Burnside, having been commissioned by the Lieutenant-Governor, appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 50 members; also writs for by-elections for Boulder, North-East Fremantle, Geraldton, Mt. Magnet, and South Fremantle.

With the following exceptions all the members elected were present and took and subscribed the oath as required by statute, and signed the roll:—Messrs. G. Taylor (Mt. Margaret), A. Thomson (Katanning), and F. W. Teesdale (Roebourne).

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [12.45]: The House being duly constituted, I now move—

*That Mr. Walker do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.*

Mr. MILLINGTON (Leederville): I second the motion.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanoona): I submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination,

The SPEAKER-ELECT, having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion, said: I have to express to the House my sense of the great honour it has done me in elevating me to the dignified position of Speaker of the Assembly. I shall not say more at the present time except that I am grateful for the confidence shown in me and the honour bestowed upon me. I feel that I am scarcely competent to fulfil either my own high ideals of the office or the ideals of members.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [12.47]: May I offer you my congratulations, Sir, on your election to the high and honourable office of Speaker of this Assembly. I am sure, Sir, that you will guide our deliberations in a manner entirely satisfactory to every member of the House. You bring to the discharge of the duties of

your office an unrivalled knowledge of constitutional history. You have had an extremely lengthy, I might almost say unique, Parliamentary experience, during which you have become as well acquainted with the Standing Orders and Parliamentary procedure, almost, as with the alphabet itself. I am absolutely certain that you will discharge the duties of Speaker without fear or favour, and with strict impartiality. I trust, Mr. Speaker, that you will have a pleasant term of office, and that the conduct of members will not be such as to cause you any trouble in presiding over the proceedings of this Chamber. I am sure I speak for all the old members of the Assembly when I say that you can rely upon receiving from them every assistance in the discharge of your duties; and if such an example is set by the old members, I have no doubt whatever that the new members will fall into line with them. I again congratulate you, Sir, upon your elevation to the high and dignified office of Speaker of the Assembly.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [12.50]: As Leader of the Opposition I join with the Premier in all that he has said. We offer you, Sir, our most sincere congratulations upon your appointment to the high and honourable office of Speaker of this Assembly. I know that you will discharge your duties capably, and that you will maintain the office with dignity. You have had a long and distinguished Parliamentary career, and I assure you that members of the House will assist you in every possible way in the conduct of the business. We shall do so because we are aware of your full knowledge of the Standing Orders and of the conduct of Parliamentary business. You will receive our support in every respect. I agree with the Premier that it is a matter of congratulation that we have you, Sir, as Speaker of this Chamber.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [12.51]: On behalf of the Country Party—

Mr. Holman: Which Country party?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Country Party. I desire to add to the congratulations which you, Sir, have already received on your elevation to the high and honourable office of Speaker. We consider ourselves very fortunate in securing a man possessing your wide Parliamentary knowledge, your legal training, and your grasp of constitutional history to preside over the deliberations of this Chamber. I feel certain that the privileges of members of the House will be quite safe in your hands, and also that the assistance of members on these cross-benches will always be available to you.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [12.52]: On behalf of the Independent Country Party I tender congratulations to you, Sir. The

members of this Party feel quite sure, from their knowledge of you as a private member, that in respect of any little trials and troubles that may occur they will be quite safe with you, and that you will deal with them from the Chair in exactly the same way as you dealt with them at all times when you were a private member. We members of the Independent Country Party tender you, Sir, our heartiest congratulations.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [12.53]: As the oldest member of this House I may, perhaps, be permitted to add my congratulations to those which have been so nicely tendered by previous speakers. At one time, Sir, I was the leader of a party of one, and I led that party without trouble. Now, however, I belong to the party of which the member for Northam (Hon. Sir James Mitchell) is the leader. Still, as the oldest member of the Chamber, I should like to honour myself by adding my hearty congratulations.

Mr. SPEAKER [12.54]: Mr. Premier, Sir James Mitchell, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Latham, and Mr. George. If I said that I was proud of the congratulations which I have heard uttered, I should inadequately voice my feelings of appreciation of the good will and the good hopes expressed upon my appointment to this high post. I know that some hon. members desire to be informed of my attitude towards certain aspects of the office in which I have been placed. There is not only the duty usually prescribed by the Standing Orders, but there are certain forms that are as much a part of the Speaker's office, I take it, as any one of the Standing Orders. I have seriously considered the making of some innovations, but as I have thought of the subject I have come to the conclusion that it is not upon me to make any innovations whatsoever in this office, inasmuch as I am not the master, but the servant, of the House. What the House directs me, what the House orders, that I must interpret and apply, and must go no further. I mention this because there are those who think that the wig and the gown, and other adjuncts and ceremonies and paraphernalia of this office are out of date.

Mr. Pantou: Hear, hear!

Mr. Richardson: They are not.

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be so, but whatever ceremonies are attached to this office are within the command and the direction of the House itself. I take that view because the very first of the Standing Orders says—

In all cases not provided for herein after or by sessional or other orders, resort shall be had to the rules, forms, and practice of the Commons House of the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and

Ireland, which shall be followed as far as they can be applied to the proceedings of this House.

Amongst those forms are the carrying of the mace, the reading of prayers at the opening of Parliament, and the wearing of gown and wig. I have to remember that in this position I am to carry out the orders of the House, and therefore to carry out this first Standing Order until otherwise provided for. I must respect the views of all sections of this Chamber. I have no right to overlook even the prejudices of hon. members. There are some who believe it adds to the dignity of the position, or at all events to the appearance, to wear the prescribed form of adornment, if it be adornment, attaching to the office of the Speaker.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: There are those who believe the contrary, but it is not for me to wound the feelings of any member on either side of the House by assuming the position that I am the sole master and dictator of its ceremonies. These are the peculiar possessions and rights of hon. members themselves. If, therefore, alterations in the procedure of the House, or in the circumstances attendant on the office of Speaker, be desired, the matter should go through the usual course of being remitted to the Standing Orders Committee, and then of the House being allowed a voice in the determination of the procedure to be followed. I have explained so much to the House because I feel it is necessary. I wish to offend none. I shall endeavour to make myself the ideal, not being able, I know, to reach it, as reflected in the speeches of congratulation, of an impartial occupant of this Chair.

Members: Hear, hear!

#### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [12.58]: I have to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that His Excellency the Administrator will be pleased to receive you forthwith, together with hon. members who may desire to accompany you.

Mr. SPEAKER [12.59]: I suspend the sitting until I return from visiting His Excellency, the Administrator.

*Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 1.22 p.m.*

Mr. SPEAKER said: I have to report that I have submitted myself to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and that His Excellency has been pleased to express his satisfaction at the choice of the Assembly in the following terms:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.—It is with much pleasure that I learn that you have been elected by the

members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner, and I have the honour to affirm the constitutional rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Legislative Assembly of this State. (Signed) Robert Furse McMillan, 'Lieut.-Governor and Administrator.

His Excellency has also been pleased to give me a commission to swear in members of this House.

*Sitting suspended from 1.26 to 2.55 p.m.*

#### SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

Mr. 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*), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

#### BILL—UNCLAIMED MONEYS ACT AMENDMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) by leave, without notice (by way of asserting privilege) introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Unclaimed Moneys Act Amendment Act, 1924.

Bill read a first time.

#### THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: In company with hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For greater accuracy I have had printed copies of the Speech distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

Mr. PANTON (Menzies) [3.27]: I move—

*That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—"May it please Your Excellency. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly 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"*

It is with some diffidence that I move this motion, because I realise that it will open a flood of oratory in this House lasting for the next fortnight or three weeks.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why for three weeks?

Mr. PANTON: Because my hon. friend is here. I am of opinion that the eloquence we shall hear will not be of very much service to the State generally, and consequently I will endeavour to set an example, which I hope other members will follow, by making my speech as brief as possible. At the outset I wish to tender my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the Speakership of the Assembly. Members will agree that it is a fitting tribute to your long and honoured career in the Parliament of the State. I also wish to tender my congratulations to the Premier and his colleagues on their elevation to Cabinet rank. More particularly do I wish to tender my congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition and his two sub-leaders—for I understand that he has two sub-leaders—and I think I am safe in saying that the Leader of the Opposition and his sub-leaders will be an acquisition to the Opposition benches. I trust they will live long and occupy their present positions for many years to come.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you are in for a disappointment.

Mr. PANTON: It will not be my first. Turning to the Speech, it will be gratifying to the electors to find, by way of a change, that a party have taken over the reins of government who are prepared, judging by the important Bills foreshadowed in the Speech, to put on the statute-book what they have been advocating on the hustings. Members on both sides will welcome the proposed amendment to the land tax, and the Closer Settlement Bill.

Mr. Latham: I notice that the side introducing it are the least likely to pay the tax.

The Minister for Lands: You do not pay any.

Mr. Latham: Yes, I do—a pretty big one.

Mr. Lambert: It is not your fault, if you do.

Mr. PANTON: I am rather surprised to have drawn an interjection of that sort from one of the sub-leaders of the Opposition.

Mr. Lambert: Which party does he lead?

Mr. PANTON: Don't ask me, there are too many of them on that side.

Sir James Mitchell: There are no socialists nor communists, nor Bolsheviks, on this side.

Mr. PANTON: As I say, the proposed amendment of the land tax will be welcomed by members on both sides. If one is to take the Press as a gauge of public opinion, the reform has been advocated for some time. The "Westralian Worker," the "West Australian," and particularly the "Leader," have advocated this measure, and so I think it will be welcomed by all parties. If Parliament believes in an immi-

gration scheme and a land settlement policy, it is obvious that we must have the most essential commodity, namely, the land.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Adam thought that.

Mr. PANTON: Adam thought a lot that, I hope, the Leader of the Opposition does not think. The proposed land tax will be the means of bringing into full use much unused land adjacent to railways. As a representative of a mining electorate, I am particularly pleased to note that the mining industry is to receive special attention. An industry that has produced £150,000,000 worth of gold and has paid over £28,000,000 in dividends, certainly ought to be encouraged. Unfortunately of late years successive Governments have been unable to see over a wheat field, and consequently the mining industry has not been sighted by them. If a Royal Commission is to be appointed, I hope it will inquire into the many leases held idle at present. Another section of leases that, I trust, the Government will take into consideration even before obtaining a report from the proposed Royal Commission is that embracing leases on which the Government have advanced money, and which are now lying idle. Some of those leases have never had a trial. Take the Riverina South. The whole of the money subscribed by the shareholders in that mine, some thousands of pounds, and £5,000 advanced by the Government, was practically all spent on the surface. I am told that at one time there were 40 men on the surface and nine men underground, with two machines. Consequently, the mine has never had a fair deal. To-day there is a mortgage of £5,000 held by the Government. Of course no syndicate is prepared to accept that responsibility, although there are syndicates who, but for that responsibility, would readily give the mine a fair trial. All that the Government have for the £5,000 advanced are the poppet heads and the shafts. The Government should take into consideration the advisability of lifting that mortgage and giving somebody an opportunity to try out the mine. Then there is the question of the treatment meted out to the old prospectors. All will agree that we owe much to the prospectors. If it were not for the prospectors in the back blocks, there would be very little hope of finding new fields. Most of those prospectors have been able to carry on only through obtaining sustenance by pulling a few tons of sandalwood. Notwithstanding all that was promised during last session of Parliament to accrue from the sandalwood monopoly, we find there is grave danger of the bulk of the prospectors having to come into the towns in search of work; for, owing to the monopoly set up by the late Government, and the unique distribution of sandalwood, the prospector has been left without means of sustenance. There were 750 tons of sandalwood earmarked for genuine prospectors. But the number of approved applications for parcels

of that 750 tons will work it out at about 12 tons per annum per man. The vaunted boom of the £16 per ton for the pullers has not by any means been realised. I spent a good deal of time reading in "Hansard" the debates on the sandalwood question last session. It was very noticeable that the speakers, particularly those behind the then Government, appeared to be much concerned about the puller. The then Premier, now the Leader of the Opposition, was much concerned.

Mr. Marshall: He was only pulling the leg of the puller.

Mr. PANTON: I am not a thought reader, so I cannot say what was in the mind of the then Premier. However, I do know that the bulk of the pullers are now receiving as low as £13 per ton for sandalwood.

Mr. Marshall: It would not average that much.

Mr. PANTON: No, I do not think it would. However, a lot of them in my constituency have been receiving £13 and upwards.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why not report it to the Minister for Forests? He would set that straight.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member does not know what has been done. The regulation dealing with the £16 per ton provides that, in the event of the puller having the price of his timber reduced, he has the right of appeal to the Conservator of Forests. But on making inquiries at the department, I found that the system in vogue is this: The company at Fremantle, on receiving a truck of wood and desiring a reduction in the price, applies to the department. The Conservator thereupon sends an inspector to Fremantle, and the inspector decides what price the puller shall get, puts up a recommendation to the Conservator, and the thing is approved. Consequently when, some days later, the puller gets a return intimating that the price of his wood is only £13 or £14, it is no use appealing to the Conservator, because the Conservator has already given his approval and the puller can proceed no further. According to the agreement 6,000 tons of sandalwood have to be hauled every year. The position I do not like is this: if it is possible for the four companies enjoying the monopoly to effect an average reduction of £2 or £3 per ton in the value of the wood it will mean hanging up an amount of £12,000 to £18,000 per annum for someone to make a profit out of.

Mr. Richardson: Has not the Minister power to deal with that?

Mr. PANTON: The Minister may have power to cancel the regulation. That is what I am appealing to him to do, so that this monopoly may be broken down. I have every respect for our departmental officers, but I say that we as a Parliament have no right to allow from £12,000 to

£18,000 to dangle in the air for someone to get hold of.

Mr. George: The £16 per ton was to have been the minimum.

Mr. PANTON: That is not what I find is the minimum. The hon. member may recollect that the previous Government proposed there should be a £16 minimum per ton for fair average quality sandalwood. The remarkable part of the matter is that there has been no fair average quality wood coming down, especially since the elections were over. Apparently it had all been below that standard. The sandalwood is taken out of the trucks and is then stacked. It would be interesting to know whether it is consigned to China as fair average quality timber. I venture to say that every truck of wood, whether it is paid for on the basis of £16 a ton or £13 a ton, is eventually sold to the Chinese buyers for the same price. I trust the Government will immediately take up this question. If they fail to do so we may find a lot of prospectors coming to town asking for financial assistance to enable them to carry on their ordinary avocation, which they may otherwise be prevented from doing. These men have been independent for years, and we as a Parliament ought to be the last to do anything to undermine that independence, and prevent them from obtaining the sustenance to which they have been accustomed for so long a time.

Mr. Mann: Would you like to see them go back to the old position?

Mr. PANTON: No, but I want to see them get their £16 a ton. The hon. member knows that if the monopoly had not been created the Government could have taken other steps that would have ensured the puller receiving not less than this amount. As the regulations are at present a cart and horse can be driven through them, and the cutters do not receive the minimum of £16 a ton. The hon. member must know that quite well.

Mr. Hughes: There will be an increase in the Chinese balance sheet next year.

Mr. PANTON: I know the Government fully realise the position, and I am prepared to leave the matter in their hands. Reference is made in the Speech to the metropolitan water supply. For as long as I can remember this subject has found a place in the Governor's Speech. The electors of the metropolitan area can congratulate themselves that the Government of the day are going to push on this service as quickly as possible.

Mr. Richardson: What are they doing in regard to that?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member had better ask a question of the Minister for Works.

Mr. Richardson: But what are they going to do?

Mr. PANTON: If I had been a member representing a metropolitan district I should have found that out long ago.

Mr. Richardson: I think I know, but would like you to tell us.

Mr. PANTON: I do not intend to go into a lot of details.

Mr. Richardson: Tell the House what you know.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member may listen to me if he likes, or go outside.

Mr. Richardson: I am not going outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PANTON: All will welcome the proposal for State insurance. I do not propose to discuss in detail the various Bills that are to be brought forward, for an opportunity will be afforded us all to deal with them at the proper time. The Arbitration Act Amendment Bill will, I think, also be welcome. The party supporting the present Government is pledged to arbitration, and all members of the Opposition are also pledged to it. Many of those who sent members opposite to their places in this House have invariably suggested the Arbitration Court when they have attended industrial conferences.

Mr. Latham: We do not believe in the employer fixing the hours of work.

Mr. PANTON: Imagine the hon. member saying he does not believe in farmers fixing the hours of the worker! The only thing that worries him is that there is not enough daylight in which work can be done. It is not much use having an Arbitration Act or a court of arbitration to administer it if the court itself is unable to function. Industrialists in this State have, during the last few years, found that the court has become congested and out of date, and that its methods are obsolete. I am not referring to members of the court. I am referring principally to the facilities of the court to hear and try the many cases that come before it. Governments have in the past overlooked the fact that the industrial trade union movement has grown to such an extent that if arbitration is to be the method by which industrial disputes are settled, we must give the court proper facilities for hearing the disputes. Union after union has lodged its plaint with the court, and some of them have had to wait for years to be heard. In some cases the unions have become so exasperated that they have taken the only action possible, namely, strike.

Mr. Marshall: The Chamber of Mines soon got its case before the court.

Mr. PANTON: Of late years it has become somewhat popular to go on strike in order that one party might force itself into the court over the heads of others. I know that the Minister for Labour, with his long association with industrial movements, fully realises the position, and I trust this House

will give him all the assistance possible to enable him to secure an amendment of the Act that will facilitate the work of the court and make it easier for the unions to have their cases heard. The cost of arbitration should not be taken into account. A strike lasting a few weeks, and involving a few hundred men, would soon represent a loss that would more than cover the cost of arbitration for many years ahead. Prior to entering upon the electioneering campaign, I looked into the question of railway freights and fares, and noted several interesting comparisons that could be made concerning them. I also found that some astounding anomalies existed in this State undertaking. From Perth to the terminus in my electorate the distance is 455 miles.

Mr. Mann: Does anyone live out there?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member had better not go there, for if he does he may find someone who is looking for him. I find on investigation that a farmer can freight his super, which is an essential commodity for his particular industry, a distance of 455 miles, for 11s. 6d. per ton. After he produces his wheat, he can have the train brought back that distance for 25s. 6d. per ton.

Mr. Latham: If he had any out there!

Mr. PANTON: I know the hon. member would not go out as far as that to grow wheat. He would get lost. I am talking about farmers, but not St. George's-terrace farmers. On the other hand the miner, who requires explosives as an essential commodity for his particular industry, has to pay 233s. to freight them a similar distance over the railways, as against 11s. 6d. that is paid by the farmer for super.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the freight on ores; is it the same as on super?

Mr. PANTON: I am not here to answer questions. It may be said that explosives are regarded as a dangerous freight, and that therefore they have to be charged at special rates. That, however, is not so, for the same rate applies also to tea, drapery and tobacco.

Mr. Mann: Is the rate on tea and tobacco not the same for the agricultural districts? What is the analogy?

Mr. PANTON: Immediately one compares the rates upon explosives with those upon super, one is told that explosives are dangerous, and must be carried at a special rate. As a matter of fact, this rate is not charged because explosives are dangerous, for the rate for tea, drapery and tobacco, which cannot be said to be dangerous, is exactly the same. The argument that explosives are dangerous, does not, therefore, apply.

Mr. Marshall: Explosives are as essential to the mining industry as super is to the agricultural industry.

Mr. PANTON: Quite so. I do not ask the Government to increase the rate upon super, but I do want them to bring down

the rates upon mining requisites. I discovered an astounding anomaly in connection with excursion fares. When I arrived in Menzies I found that a pamphlet had been issued by the Railway Department, in which it showed the trains by which the women and children of the goldfields could travel on excursion tickets to Fremantle, Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton and the other ports. It appears that the wives and children of the men who reside in the never-never parts of the mining areas may obtain excursion fares along the Leonora-Menzies line on certain specified dates, namely, December 11th and 25th, January 8th and 22nd, and February 5th. On those days only may they enjoy excursion fares to any of the seaport towns. If members will turn to the rate book, and look at the regulations on page 54, they will find that the women and children of the farmers can obtain an excursion fare to a sea port on any day they like for 51 weeks in the year. The only exception is Christmas week, when the railways are usually busy. I cannot see the reason for this differentiation between the women and children on the goldfields, and those in the agricultural areas.

Mr. Latham: You have not read the regulation correctly. It cannot be true.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member will find it is correct if he will look at the rate book.

Mr. Latham: It applies in exactly the same way to the agricultural areas.

Mr. PANTON: That is so, but the people in the agricultural areas can get a trip and back on any day they like during the 52 weeks of the year. The hon. member may shake his head, but I have seen the regulations and a station-master who ought to know his business told me that I was correct.

Mr. Hughes: Don't shout so loudly, or you will wake the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. PANTON: I am very sorry that the Leader of the Opposition was disturbed from his slumbers by my voice, but if he does not wish to be awakened he will have to tell his sub-leaders not to interject. I trust that the Minister for Railways will look into this very important question. I am convinced that he will find that my interpretation of the regulations, and that of the station-master, are correct. There should be no differentiation. I do not propose to keep the House any longer; I have already spoken for a quarter of an hour longer than I intended doing. I have much pleasure in submitting the motion.

Mr. LAMOND (Pilbara) [3.58]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion so ably submitted by the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton). I am glad to see, according to the Governor's Speech, that it is proposed to give special attention to the mining industry. We have a wonderful field in

the Pilbara electorate to prospect and develop. We have there not only gold, but other minerals of considerable value such as asbestos, tantalite, vanadium, scheelite, and tin, and no special assistance has ever been given to develop any of them. I trust also that consideration will be given to this electorate on account of its inaccessibility. In the past, the absence of Government assistance has been very conspicuous. I wish to draw the attention of the House to another serious disadvantage under which the Pilbara district labours—I refer to the high cost of living, which is a serious bar to advancement there. To that must be attributed the fact that many people have been compelled to abandon their vocations in that part of the State; they have been forced to seek their livelihood elsewhere and in other walks of life. This has been brought about largely by the exploitation tactics of the local business firms. While people who reside in distant parts of the State—places like the Pilbara electorate—are compelled to pay exorbitant prices for their stores, we cannot expect them to remain there. Therefore, it is needless to hope for a revival in mining industry under existing conditions. In support of my contention I may be permitted to quote for the benefit of members some of the prices ruling at Marble Bar for necessary commodities, and compare them with existing prices in the metropolis. A 50lb. bag of flour at Marble Bar costs 15s.; in Perth the price is 7s. Wheat costs 18s. a bushel at Marble Bar; in Perth the price is 5s. 9d. Onions cost 6d. a lb. at Marble Bar and 2½d. in Perth. Sugar costs 8d. at Marble Bar and 5d. in Perth. Jam costs 22s. per dozen at Marble Bar and 10s. 9d. in Perth. Milk costs 20s. per dozen tins at Marble Bar and 11s. 6d. in Perth. Matches cost 4s. 9d. at Marble Bar and 2s. 3d. in Perth. Patent medicines—I refer to pain killer, which is very largely used in the distant parts of the State—costs 4s. 3d. a bottle in Marble Bar and 3s. in Perth. Gelnigite at Marble Bar costs £5 6s. 6d. per case, and in Perth £2 19s. 6d. I could quote many other instances of disparity in prices, but these will do for my purpose at present. I consider that the best assistance that can be given to the people in that part of the State is to establish a Government store. Such an institution would help not only those already there, but it would be an inducement to others who have left the district to return to it. There is plenty of room in that part of the State for everybody. It is very sparsely populated. I know many who would go there to-morrow if they were certain of being able to secure their stores at reasonable rates. My sole desire in making the request for the establishment of a Government store at Marble Bar is to reduce the high cost of living that has prevailed there for so long. There is no reason why people who go out to districts like Pilbara should be obliged to submit to pro-

sneering on the part of local storekeepers. I feel sure that the Government will do something in the direction of helping those people who go out into the back blocks to develop the State. The previous Labour administration did more than any other Government for the North-West. They established freezing works and inaugurated a steamship service. I feel confident now that the present Government will give sympathetic treatment to those who reside in the North-West so that that part of the State may advance in the way we expect, an advancement so long waited for. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption for the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 29th July, 1924.*

	PAGE
Swearing-in ... ..	14
Papers: Constitutional opinion ... ..	14
Address-in-reply, second day ... ..	15

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### SWEARING IN.

Hon. Hector Stewart, who was not present when members were sworn in after the biennial elections, took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

### PAPER—CONSTITUTIONAL OPINION BY SIR HOWARD D'EGVILLE.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.43]: I beg to lay on the Table of the House a paper containing correspondence with, and the opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville on certain constitutional points, and I move—

*That the paper be printed.*

Certain constitutional matters arose in this House at the end of the session before last. The paper, the subject of this motion, is very important from several points of view.

We are about to have another Closer Settlement Bill brought before us. This opinion relates on the one hand to the Closer Settlement Bill that we had in this House before. The second part of the opinion relates to the question as to how far this House can go in amending what has been known hitherto as a Money Bill.

The PRESIDENT: I do not know whether the hon. member can make a speech in moving this particular motion.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am entitled to give reasons why the paper should be printed. Many of the most important speeches in history have been made on a formal motion to print a paper. Our Standing Orders provide for this. Standing Order 61 states—

*Papers, returns, and reports of select committees may be presented by members in their places at any time when other business is not before the Council.*

Standing Order 33, amongst other things, states—

*Provided that when a paper has been laid on the Table a motion may be made at any time, without notice, that the paper be printed.*

I think I am in order.

The PRESIDENT: That is all right. I understand you are moving that the paper be printed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes. I think I should give reasons for asking that the paper be printed.

Hon. J. Cornell: The paper will be valueless if you do not explain your reasons.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: During the session before last we had a discussion on a clause in the Closer Settlement Bill placed before us by the then Government. Together with Mr. Kirwan, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Hamersley and other members I took part in the debate. We contended that any member who offered his land to the Government and whose offer was accepted, vacated his seat under the provisions of the Constitution Act. That view was combated very strongly by the then Leader of the House and he was supported in his views by yourself, Mr. President. I moved that your ruling be dissented from and the House did dissent from it. In order to make absolutely certain that we were right or to be convinced that we were wrong, I sent Home the facts of the case and the Bills and asked Lord Burnham, who is President of the Empire Press Council, whether he would get the best constitutional lawyer available to give us an opinion. As a result he sent out to me an opinion given by Sir Howard D'Egville, who, I understand, was the counsel to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and also counsel to His Majesty's Treasury. Sir Howard, too, has written many constitutional works. He has given his opinion in favour of those of us who contended that a member who offered his land to the Government and whose offer was accepted, would vacate his seat as we suggested. The opinion from that point of view is interesting. The second point