

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Second Parliament under Responsible Government was convened for the despatch of business on the 25th July, 1894; and the First Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by Commission.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 25th July, 1894.

Opening of Parliament—Swearing in of Members—
Election of President—Governor's Speech—Defence
Forces Bill: first reading—Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon, pursuant to a proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

The following members took and subscribed the oath of allegiance as required by law, and signed the members' roll:—Sir George Shenton, S. H. Parker, D. K. Congdon, E. W. Davies, T. H. Marshall, E. G. Henty, H. McKernan, C. E. Dempster, R. G. Burges, R. W. Hardey, F. T. Crowder, S. J. Haynes, C. A. Piesse, J. W. Hackett, E. McLarty, and J. C. G. Foulkes.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: Mr. Lee Steere, I have now very much pleasure in proposing that Sir George Shenton take the Chair as President of this Council.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I have much pleasure in seconding the proposition.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I have very great pleasure in supporting the proposition of my hon. friend, Mr. Congdon. Sir George Shenton has already occupied the position for a number of years, and I feel sure that he has given satisfaction to members generally. He is well acquainted with the rules of the House, and his long Parliamentary experience makes him more qualified for the position than any other member present. He has also sufficient leisure, and is otherwise well qualified to occupy the high and honourable position. I congratulate Sir George upon the choice which has been made, and I trust that every member will extend to him their warmest support.

The motion was put, and agreed to unanimously.

The President-elect was then conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion, and submitted himself to the House. He then said: I have to thank hon. members for the honour which they have conferred upon me in electing me as their President. I am fully aware of the responsibility which attaches to the office. This House is now differently constituted from what it was before. Hitherto it was nominated, and the President was appointed by the Governor. Now we are an elected House, and you have exercised your rights under the provisions of the Constitution Act,

and have elected your President. Your choice has fallen upon me, and I thank you again for the honour you have conferred upon me. I trust that the same good feeling which existed in the old Council between the members and myself will exist now, and that each member will do all in his power to uphold the dignity of the Chair; because, unless we carry on our proceedings under strict constitutional law, we cannot expect that the work will go on smoothly. If I have to call members to order, and I trust that will never happen, I hope they will understand that I do not do so from personal motives, but in order to administer the Standing Rules and Orders, under which our debates are conducted. I will now retire to robe, and then we will proceed to Government House to claim the undoubted rights and privileges which appertain to this Council.

The Council adjourned, and upon the return of Members to the House,

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) reported that His Excellency had been pleased to express his approval of the choice of the Council, and had conferred to the Council all the Constitutional rights and privileges of Legislative bodies.

The President then left the chair until 2:55 o'clock p.m.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

At 3 o'clock His Excellency (Sir Wm. C. F. Robinson) entered the Council Chamber, and the members of the Legislative Assembly, in obedience to command, attended the Chamber, whereupon His Excellency delivered the following Speech:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"It is with pleasure I meet you after the first general elections under the extended franchise of the Constitution Act of last year, and welcome for the first time elected members of both Houses of Parliament.

"2. The population is now estimated at 75,919, as against 61,210 on the 30th June, 1893.

"3. The gold discoveries continue to attract population from the Eastern

"colonies and other parts of the world, and the export of gold is rapidly increasing. There is every reason to believe that, not only will new discoveries be made, but the development of the gold mines already working will be attended with great and permanent results.

"4. The coal measures on the Collie River promise to be of great importance to the colony. The area is reported to be extensive, and the coal is a true coal of carboniferous age, and of good commercial value.

"5. The object my Ministers have in view is to promote the progress and development of the mineral resources of the colony by constructing railways, establishing postal services, erecting telegraphs, conserving and obtaining water, and other measures of utility; and simultaneously with such progress and development, to encourage the occupation and improvement of the lands of the colony, by affording increased facilities of transit, so that the markets established on our gold-fields and mineral areas may be supplied from local sources.

"6. With this object it is proposed to submit for your consideration and approval a further loan of about £1,500,000, for the purpose of providing funds for the construction of railways and other important public works and undertakings.

"7. Among the works proposed to be undertaken are the extension of the railway from Southern Cross to the Coolgardie Goldfields, from Mullewa to the Murchison Goldfields, from Donnybrook towards Bridgetown, a Branch line to the Collie Coalfields, the continuation of the harbour works at Fremantle, conservation of and boring for water, public buildings on gold-fields, survey and opening of roads, extension of the telegraph system, the improvement of harbours and jetties, and lighthouses on the coast.

"8. During the past year the public works already authorised by Parliament have been proceeded with. The railway to Southern Cross has been carrying the traffic for some months, although it has not been actually completed, and is proving of great assistance to the development of the mines on the Yilgarn

"and Coolgardie goldfields. The railways
"to Mullewa and to the Vasse are nearing
"completion. The Midland Railway is
"in full progress. The North mole of
"the Fremantle harbour works has been
"extended 2,400 feet, and the Southern
"mole has been commenced. The tele-
"graph lines from Condon to Marble
"Bar and from Geraldton to Cue are
"nearly finished, and communication has
"already been opened between Southern
"Cross and Coolgardie. Public buildings
"have been or are being erected all over
"the colony.

"9. Measures will be submitted to you
"dealing with the law relating to muni-
"cipalities, friendly societies, employers'
"liability, branding of stock, fencing, and
"other subjects of importance.

"10. You will be asked to consider a
"measure for establishing a Land Bank
"for the purpose of making advances to
"farmers, in order to further promote
"the occupation and improvement of the
"agricultural lands of the colony.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"11. The financial position of the
"colony is sound and satisfactory. The
"revenue for the year ending the 30th
"June was estimated at £589,500, and
"reached £681,245. The expenditure
"was estimated at £651,962, and reached
"£656,356. The credit balance at the
"end of the financial year was estimated
"at £669, but was actually £88,020.

"12. The loan authorised last session
"of £540,000 has been successfully
"floated, having been largely over-sub-
"scribed, and realised £103 6s. 1d. per
"cent., showing that our credit in London
"is very satisfactory. The estimates of
"revenue and expenditure for the current
"year will be carefully prepared and
"presented to you, as soon as possible;
"and with the existing credit balance,
"and an increasing revenue, my Ministers
"hope to be able to provide for many
"pressing works throughout the colony.

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE
GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL,—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"13. The scarcity of the rainfall during
"the present winter, and the consequent
"lateness of the season, give cause for

"anxiety. I can only express a hope
"that, although the season is late, it may
"yet prove a bountiful one, and that the
"winter rains, which happily appear to
"have commenced, may yet be abundant.

"14. I now leave you to your respon-
"sible duties, with a firm belief that,
"with the Divine blessing, your labours
"will result in much real and lasting
"advancement."

His Excellency and the members of
the Legislative Assembly then withdrew
from the Chamber, and the President
(Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the Chair.

DEFENCE FORCES BILL.

This Bill was introduced, and was
read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE HON. E. G. HENTY: I have
much pleasure in rising to move an
Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's
Speech. I may say that I regard the fact
of my having been asked to do so as a
very great honour, inasmuch as I am one
of the youngest members of the House.
In dealing with the proposals in the
Speech, it will be unnecessary for me to
dwell upon them to any extent *seriatim*,
as we shall have a further opportunity of
doing so later on. I may, however, touch
lightly upon certain of the clauses con-
tained in it. In the first place, I think
the colony is to be congratulated on the
state of things shown throughout the
Speech. The Government policy, as set
forth, is particularly progressive, and, as
I think hon. members will agree, well
up to the times. The population of
the colony has, during the year, in-
creased from 61,000 odd to nearly
76,000—an increase of nearly 20 per
cent.—and this, in itself, must be con-
sidered as eminently gratifying. During
the same period the gold discoveries have
placed this colony in the front rank of
gold producing countries, and with all
due deference to those who endeavour to
disparage the Ministry, I think they have
done all they could do to help the gold-
fields. They started, perhaps, a little
late; but now that they have made a
commencement they are doing all they
possibly can. Our fields will, no doubt,
prove permanent, and I say this from my

own knowledge of them. I have seen them, and I feel certain that we have nothing to fear as to their future. They will last our time at any rate, and therefore the policy the Ministry have taken up in connection with them is one they are to be congratulated upon. Of the new railways proposed, those to the gold-fields should receive our first consideration. We have a population there which, although taking the gold out of the earth, is helping to swell the revenue and aiding in bringing about a prosperity for the country. And we must not forget that although the gold is being taken away, it is worth no more than granite to us if it is left where Nature placed it. The railways to the fields should be pushed on as rapidly as possible. Many people advise caution in proceeding with these lines, but I think they will prove of lasting benefit to us, inasmuch as we shall open up nearly 800 miles of payable reefing country. As to the railways proposed at the South, I cannot say much in regard to them; but I believe that if the coal measures prove to be as good as the gold, we shall have another great backbone to the country. With regard to the proposal made as to the lands, I quite agree with the efforts of the Government to settle people on the soil. I am quite alive to the difficulty of initiating measures in a new country, but I think the Ministry are doing their best, and in the end, I believe, we shall have a Land Act as much up to the times as our Goldfields Act. In connection with the settlement of the land, there is the question of water supply, not so much at the South as at the North, where there are immense tracts of splendid country lying undeveloped for want of water. These remarks apply as much to pastoral lands as to agricultural lands. If we had artesian bores put down, such as they have in Queensland, this colony would support a large class of settlers, which it cannot support now. The loan of £1,500,000 which is proposed is, I think, justifiable by the several circumstances I have pointed out; and I believe the Government will experience no difficulty in raising the amount, especially when we consider our increased resources. In connection with the Fremantle harbour works, I think it is very necessary that we should have on the coast one harbour

of refuge, even if we do not require it for commerce. At the present moment, all the way from Sharks Bay to Albany, we have not one harbour into which mail steamers can take refuge, and, if for no other reason, I think the Fremantle harbour should be completed. The Land Bank proposed will be useful if it can be worked upon commercial principles. The mode of working it seems to be the greatest difficulty in connection with it, and we shall have to be cautious. If, however, it can be conducted on commercial principles, it will be very useful to a large class of settlers. I need not now touch on the domestic legislation, such as the Employers' Liability Act, which is proposed. I may safely leave these matters to be dealt with when they come before us in detail. I will now formally move that the following Address-in-Reply be presented:—

*"To His Excellency Sir William Cleaver
"Francis Robinson, Knight Grand Cross
"of the Most Distinguished Order of St.
"Michael and St. George, Governor and
"Commander-in-Chief in and over the
"Colony of Western Australia and its
"Dependencies, &c., &c., &c."*

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—
"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful
"subjects, the members of the Legisla-
"tive Council of Western Australia,
"in Parliament assembled, beg to assure
"Your Excellency of our continued loyalty
"and affection to our Most Gracious
"Sovereign.

"We thank Your Excellency for the
"gracious Speech which you have been
"pleased to address to Parliament.

"Our most careful consideration and
"attention will be given to the important
"matters referred to by Your Excellency,
"and all other matters that may be
"brought before us; and it shall be our
"earnest endeavour to so deal with
"them that our labours may result in
"the advancement and welfare of the
"colony."

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: I beg to second the motion made by my hon. friend, the member for the Central Province. From His Excellency's Speech, it seems that both he and his advisers have every confidence in the destinies of the colony, and when we ourselves come to consider the large increases in population

and revenue during the last few years, we must all agree that that confidence is justifiable. It seems that the population has increased from 45,000 to 75,000 in three years, and the revenue has almost doubled itself. Up to a few years ago the colony was practically doing nothing but mark time, but now she has entered upon a quick march along the road of progress, and the programme which has now been put before us shows that we shall have still further prosperity. We have a proposal to connect us with our goldfields by rail. Most hon. members will agree that the fortunes of the colony are largely bound up with the goldfields, and, in a sense, we must sink or swim by them. Even up to the present they have done an immense amount of good for us, and especially have they attracted to us thousands of people, with their capital, who never would have heard of Western Australia unless it had been for the discoveries at the Murchison and Coolgardie. The two railways proposed will, I think, add further to our progress. We all know what Ballarat and Bendigo were to Australia in times gone by. Before the discoveries were made at these places, Australia was nothing better than a sheep-run, and I have every confidence that what the discoveries at these places have done for them, the discoveries at the North and at Coolgardie will do for us. They will raise this colony from her present position to a place in the front rank of the Empire. Then it is proposed to raise a loan of £1,500,000. So far, I am glad to say, our credit stands high in the London market. The last loan was floated at a premium, and I have no doubt but that we shall be able to raise the fresh loan on satisfactory terms. We must remember, however, that although it is easy to borrow money, it means interest. For every million of money we borrow, we have to send to London £40,000 a year in interest, and this proposed new loan, therefore, means that we shall have to send £60,000 every year to London in addition to our present liability, and we have to consider how the money is to be raised. This we do know, that it will have to be paid by the permanent settlers of the colony, and we shall have to consider seriously what steps are necessary for us to take to foster that settlement. I am glad to say that the Ministry propose to

build a railway to one of the best agricultural districts in the colony—the Donnybrook line—which will add more to the real development of the country than anything else, for it will mean that the Southern districts will be able to supply more produce, and thus enable us to escape the necessity of importing so much. I am glad to see that the Collie coalfield is to receive some attention. I do not know whether hon. members are aware that the whole of the coal used by the Government is imported, but it is, and at a cost of about £30,000 a year. If we could raise the coal it would mean that we should keep this large amount of money in the colony; besides which we would be able to give employment to hundreds, or even thousands, of men, and also provide a market for our farmers and agriculturists. I am glad also to see that it is proposed to found a bank to assist farmers, by making them small advances. At present it is exceedingly difficult for people in the country to borrow money; if they are able to, they have to pay high rates of interest for it, which means that many farmers are prevented from developing their properties in the way they would like to. If farmers could borrow money at a low rate of interest they would develop their properties, and the result would be that more food and produce would be grown in the colony. I am glad to see that the Midland Railway episode has been finally closed. A year ago was an anxious time for the colony to know what was the right thing to do; but we may now congratulate ourselves on having done the best thing both for the colony and the company. The other measures referred to are important, particularly an Employers' Liability Bill. At present an employé has no remedy against an employer for any injury or accident caused to him, and when the Bill is passed I am sure it will do a great justice to the working classes. I am sure that all the matters mentioned in the Speech will receive the serious attention and care of all hon. members; and I am certain that we, one and all, shall approach the measures which are put before us with one single idea only before us—the best interests of the colony. For my part I have every confidence that the result of our labours will be not only to add to the

dignity of the House, but also add to the the prosperity of the colony.

THE HON. S. J. HAYNES moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 3.45 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, 26th July, at 3 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 25th July, 1894.

Meeting of the Assembly—Message from Commissioners—Members Sworn—Election of Speaker—Presentation of the Speaker-elect—Temporary Adjournment—Message from the Governor—Supply Bill (£150,000)—Report of the Auditor-General—Fencing Bill, 1894: first reading—The Governor's Speech—The Address-in-Reply—Adjournment.

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The House met at noon, pursuant to Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor, which was read by the Clerk.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONERS.

A Message from the Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:—

Mr. Gale,—

“The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor to do all things necessary for the opening of the present Parliament, request the attendance of the Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber, to hear the Commission read.”

Accordingly members of the Legislative Assembly went to the Legislative Council, where, the Commissioners being present, the Clerk of the Council read the Letters Patent.

The Senior Commissioner (His Honour Chief Justice Onslow) then said:—

“HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“We have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that, at three o'clock this afternoon, the causes of His Excellency's calling this Parliament will be declared to you; and it being necessary that a President of the Legislative Council and a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council, having been duly sworn by the Commissioner appointed by His Excellency, do elect your President, and notify the same to His Excellency; and that you, Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and having been duly sworn by the Commissioner appointed by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker and notify the same to His Excellency.”

Members of the Assembly then returned to their own Chamber.

MEMBERS SWORN.

His Honour Mr. Justice Stone having entered the House, and having been conducted by the Clerk-Assistant (in the absence of the Sergeant-at-Arms) to the chair, handed to the Clerk at the table the commission authorising His Honour to administer to members the prescribed oath or affirmation prescribed by the 52nd Vic., cap. 23, sec. 22. This having been done, the Commissioner withdrew.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. Gale,—I have very great pleasure in proposing that our old friend Sir James George Lee Steere should be appointed Speaker of this House. He is well known to all of us in this colony; and I think I am right in saying that he is the oldest member of Parliament in our midst at the present time. His entrance into Parliament dates so far back as a quarter of a century ago, and during all that time he has held a prominent position in the Legislature, and has been highly re-