

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Second Session of the Fourth Parliament under Responsible Government was convened for the despatch of business on the 17th July, 1902.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th July, 1902.

Opening of Session, the Governor's Speech—Election Returns, Swearing-in—Obituary, the late Premier—Parks and Reserves Amendment Bill, first reading—Address-in-Reply, Mover and Seconder—Adjournment.

OPENING OF SESSION.

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

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

HIS EXCELLENCY Sir Arthur Lawley, K.C.M.G., entered the Council Chamber; and the members of the Legislative Assembly having attended in the Chamber, obediently to summons, His Excellency delivered the following Speech:—

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

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

1. You will join with me in rejoicing at the rapid recovery of His Most Gracious Majesty the King from the serious illness which overtook him upon the eve of his intended coronation. The disappointment occasioned by the post-

ponement of the coronation ceremonies was overshadowed by the alarm and anxiety which that illness created, and our feelings now are those alone of gratitude that His Majesty has been spared to the Empire.

2. It has been His Majesty's pleasure to honour me with a summons to undertake the duties of Lieutenant Governor of the Transvaal, which necessitates my retirement from the Office of Governor of Western Australia. I can assure you that I relinquish that office with a sense of very deep regret, and at the same time of high appreciation of the loyal spirit and courteous consideration which have been at all times manifested towards me by the citizens of this State during the period that I have had the honour of holding this high office.

3. The termination of the South African war, on terms honourable alike to victor and vanquished, has been a most notable and gratifying event. Together with other portions of the realm we extend a hearty welcome to those who have fought so bravely as our foes, and who have now become our fellow subjects.

4. The many testimonies to the worth and work of our Australian troops during the South African war have created feelings of unqualified pleasure throughout the State.

5. With the State I mourn the loss sustained through the death of my late

Premier, the Honourable George Leake, K.C., C.M.G. The sympathy which that event evoked from all sections of the community testified to the affectionate regard in which he was held.

6. The death of Mr. Leake necessitated my summoning Mr. Walter James, K.C., to form a new Ministry. This he succeeded in doing, and my present Ministers were duly sworn in on the 1st July instant, and decided to meet Parliament on the day previously fixed.

7. The year just terminated reflects, in the increasing flow of immigration and the satisfactory condition of our finances, the general advance which that period has witnessed in connection with the main industries of the State. In both Mining and Agriculture steady and gratifying progress is visible, and my Ministers are determined that every effort shall be made to foster and encourage increased development in both those industries.

It is a matter for congratulation that our pastoral industry has escaped the disastrous drought which so seriously affected our sister States.

8. Owing to the resignation of Mr. John Davies, the late General Manager of Railways, my late Ministers were called upon to consider the question of filling that vacancy or of appointing a Commissioner of Railways, as provided by "The Railways Act, 1878." After adequate consideration it was decided to adopt the latter alternative, as offering the best if not only solution of the difficulties which have beset the administration of our railways for years past. Accordingly, under an agreement executed on the 27th day of June last, Mr. William J. George was, on the 2nd day of July, appointed Commissioner, and is now carrying on the duties of that office.

9. In continuation of the policy which my advisers have thought most desirable to adopt you will, at an early date, be called upon to consider a Bill placing the administration of our Railways under three Commissioners. Adequate provision, however, will be made to leave with Parliament the full power of controlling rates and of dealing with all questions involving the interests of the Railway servants of the State.

10. The course of events during the last session of Parliament was not con-

ducive to the attainment of that stability of Government which my advisers believe to be the most essential need of this State. The most pressing necessity is an effective administration, and such an object becomes impossible of attainment unless those into whose hands the work is intrusted can feel assured of a sufficient parliamentary majority to enable their work to be continuous and thorough. To endeavour to secure conditions so vital, my advisers will present to Parliament a Bill to amend the Constitution in the direction of obtaining more equitable representation, and also a Bill to simplify and widen the Electoral Laws. On the passage of these Bills every effort will be made to secure the preparation of the necessary rolls, and at the earliest opportunity the electors will be asked to terminate a condition of parliamentary uncertainty which is so prejudicial to the State.

11. The question of dealing with the Civil Service has received due consideration, and with the object of securing a reorganisation of the Service, and an adequate classification just alike to the State and the Service, a Commission has been appointed, consisting of Mr. F. H. Bruford, from Victoria; Mr. Peter Whittington, from South Australia; and Dr. Ernest Black, of this State. In the ability of these Commissioners the people and public servants can place every confidence, and my Ministers are grateful to the Governments of Victoria and South Australia for their courtesy in allowing Messrs. Bruford and Whittington to act on the Commission.

12. My Ministers are decidedly of opinion that the educational system of the State should be extended by the establishment of technical schools in populous centres; by arrangements for manual training and the teaching of cookery and other practical subjects in State schools wherever practicable; by providing additional facilities for the education of children in the outlying portions of the State; by the establishment of a School of Mines, and of a system of elementary agricultural and horticultural instruction to State school children in the higher classes.

13. The Fremantle Harbour Works are now advanced to such a stage that the business management of the completed

portions should be placed in the hands of a Harbour Board, and a Bill will be introduced with that object. Similar arrangements are contemplated as early as practicable for Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury.

14. During the past 12 months the railway from Northam to Goomalling has been completed, and was handed over to the Railway Department on the 1st instant.

The line from Menzies to Leonora is now opened for traffic, and is rapidly approaching completion.

The construction of the Cue-Nannine railway has been delayed through want of rails, but sufficient material is now available, and the construction of the first section to Tuckanarra will be completed sufficiently for traffic by September next. The balance of material is in course of delivery, and the extension to Nannine will be carried on uninterruptedly.

The Coolgardie Water Scheme has been successfully tested as far as Cunderdin, and water is being supplied to the residents of Northam, Meckering, and Cunderdin, and to the Railway Department at Clackline, Northam, and Cunderdin. Over 208 miles of pipes have been jointed; the pumping stations are well advanced; and the scheme should be completed as far as Bulla Bulling, and the water at Coolgardie, by the end of December next.

A Bill will be introduced authorising reticulations and making provision for the establishment of Boards of Management.

My Ministers propose to invite the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G., to whom this great scheme is mainly due, to attend and open the work at Coolgardie as soon as operations are completed to that place.

A reference to this work would be incomplete without a tribute to the consummate ability of the late Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, C.M.G., whose devotion to this scheme was so conspicuous a feature of a career to which this State owes so much.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

15. The revenue for the year ending the 30th June amounted to £3,688,049 5s. 8d., whilst the expenditure was £3,490,025 14s. 3d., leaving a surplus on the year's operations of £198,023

11s. 5d. From this balance has to be deducted a debit of £74,839 0s. 3d. with which the last financial year closed, and the resulting sum of £123,184 11s. 2d. represents the State's surplus at the close of the year. Whilst the expenditure has been so large, my Ministers are glad to state that there has been no proportionate increase in the cost of administration.

16. The satisfactory financial position of the State renders the time opportune to inquire into the exact basis on which our accounts are adjusted. The preliminary steps already taken by my Ministers to thoroughly probe the "Stores Account" have led to results which show the imperative need for taking such a course.

17. Subject to the adjustment referred to, you will be asked to consider the best method of utilising the available surplus, and my Ministers will recommend that sums be devoted for the construction of a Lunatic Asylum, the improvement of the Gaol at Fremantle, the construction of Abattoirs, and the erection of Cold Storage accommodation to extend the benefit of the Abattoirs to the populous centres of the Goldfields, and the extension of the railway system from Malcolm towards Laverton.

18. In October last the Commonwealth Government commenced the collection of federal duties, and Section 95 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act came into operation. That section provides us with the means of raising a revenue sufficiently large to meet the ever-increasing needs of a rapidly-growing State, and is also recognised as exercising a fostering influence in the establishment and growth of industries which, by such encouragement, promise to add to our permanent wealth and prosperity. My Ministers are impressed with these considerations, and have no intention of interfering with the beneficial operation of that section.

19. The loan moneys in hand and the balance of the authorisations will, it is estimated, be sufficient to carry on the present works until January next.

In addition to these amounts, Parliament will be asked to grant a farther authorisation for the purposes of—

(a.) Providing a sufficient sum to complete works in hand, but for which the existing authorisations are insufficient;

- (b.) Reticulating the water from Bulla Bulling to Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and the adjoining localities;
- (c.) Providing for the construction of a dock at Fremantle, and the necessary works in connection therewith;
- (d.) Providing for the supply of water to Midland Junction, Fremantle, and the intervening localities.

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

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

20. Bills will be submitted dealing, amongst other things, with—

- (a.) The consolidation and amendment of the law relating to justices;
- (b.) Public Works and Land Resumption;
- (c.) Shops and Factories (including an amendment of the Early Closing Act);
- (d.) Roads Boards;
- (e.) The Superannuation Act; and, should time allow,
- (f.) The consolidation and amendment of the Goldfields Acts.

21. The growing and well-founded complaints against private railways for their indifference to and neglect of the reasonable needs of those who are developing the wealth of the State in the districts through which such lines are constructed, are occupying the attention of my Ministers, and it is hoped that before the Session closes a Bill will be submitted by means of which the State shall secure that these railways shall adequately serve those interests for which alone these lines were authorised.

I declare this Session of Parliament opened, and I confidently trust that, aided by divine guidance, you will materially advance the well-being of the State.

ELECTION RETURNS—SWEARING-IN.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton, Kt.) reported election returns having been received in response to writs for new elections issued by him since Parliament last met, namely:—East

Province, W. T. Loton (in room of Hon. F. T. Crowder, deceased); North Province, Sir E. H. Wittenoom, K.C.M.G. (in room of Mr. D. M. McKay, retired); South Province, G. Bellingham (re-elected); South-West Province, E. M. Clarke (re-elected); Central Province, J. A. Thomson (in room of Mr. R. S. Haynes); Metropolitan-Suburban Province, B. C. Wood (in room of Mr. J. M. Speed); Metropolitan Province, J. W. Wright (in room of Mr. H. J. Saunders); West Province, M. L. Moss (in room of Mr. A. B. Kidson, retired). These members, being duly sworn, took the oath and their seats.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PRESIDENT: Report of Auditor General on the public accounts for the financial year ended 30th June, 1901; also a Special Report by Auditor General on the Premier's and the Treasurer's Secret Purchase Suspense Account, 29th May to 3rd July, 1902.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: Report (annual) of Education Department, 1901; Report on Exploration of North-West Kimberley, 1901; Report (preliminary) of Department of Mines; Report on Fishing Industry; Report of Agricultural Bank; Report on Gaols and Prisoners, for the year 1901; Amendment to Regulations under Goldfields Act; Bankruptcy Rules, 1902; Supreme Court Order LIX., Rules 7 and 8.

Order: To lie on the table.

OBITUARY—THE LATE PREMIER.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): I beg to move, without notice:

That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the public services rendered to this State by the late Premier, Mr. George Leake, and to express its deepest sympathy with Mrs. Leake in the irreparable loss which she and her family have sustained by his premature decease. That Mr. President be requested to forward the foregoing resolution to Mrs. Leake.

I know the sentiments expressed in this motion convey the sympathetic feelings of every member of the House. Our late Premier, Mr. George Leake, lives in the memory of all of us. Every one who knew him must remember the genial, bright, and happy disposition he had.

To those who were intimately acquainted with him, his charm of personality will ever be a sweet memory to them. It is unnecessary for me, at this time, to say anything of the great work Mr. Leake has done for the State; but everyone will agree with me when I say he was conscientious, sincere, and honourable in all the work which he did here. As one of his fellow workers, I feel that his influence during life will be an influence which will last for the general benefit and good of the State, in so far as we shall always remember his example as that of a man who was courageous, fearless, truthful, and consistent in maintaining the opinions which he conscientiously believed in. I believe Mr. Leake lived in the hearts of the people; that he was beloved by every one in this country—the country of his birth—and I think this was evinced at the time when he lay so ill, and everyone hoped for a cure. As the messages came from the bedside from day to day, and it was believed he would recover, a wave of gladness passed throughout the State, touching the hearts of all, both high and low. I feel deeply having lost my friend Mr. Leake, as I am sure all who were closely associated with him as we have been do, and during the last months as I have been, I feel it very deeply indeed. It seems as if the Angel of Death shows his sovereignty when he takes from us one whom we could so ill spare. I will only say that we all mourn the death of Mr. Leake, and we offer our most tender and deep sympathy to Mrs. Leake and family. On behalf of you, Mr. President, and the members of this House, I propose the motion as an expression of our true and heartfelt sorrow, and I will ask the President to forward the resolution to Mrs. Leake.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan); I regret very much to have to discharge the duty of seconding the motion; but I think this House would be lacking in its duty if a motion was not moved, seconded, and passed, showing our appreciation of the services of so eminent a man. Most of us here were fully acquainted with Mr. Leake. I knew him from childhood, and admired his talents as a public man and as a member of the bar. I am sure the citizens of this country felt that in Mr. Leake they had a man who was a credit

to the State and to the education he received within the State. I do not think anything has affected the community at large so much as the untimely—if I may use the word—sudden death of the late Premier, the Hon. George Leake. It will be difficult to fill his place, but that is a little matter. We sympathise most deeply with the widow and children and the many relatives who have suffered loss by his decease; and I can only hope they will find consolation from a higher source than that to be obtained from any earthly consideration. I do not think anything has so affected myself as the death of Mr. Leake, especially when we were led to hope, from day to day, that by the strength of his constitution and vigour, probably he would overcome the disease which had attacked him, and that we should receive him back into our ranks to occupy the position he so well filled. Events such as this one cast a gloom over the whole of the people of the State, and remind us how temporary and fleeting earthly things are. I only hope that the family of the late Mr. Leake will find consolation in the sympathy and the friendly feelings of the citizens in general, also the sympathies of those who were intimately acquainted and in close touch with him and his family. I do not think I need add anything farther: I do not wish to attempt a lengthy speech on this occasion. The leader of the House has referred in feeling terms and with deep emotion to the loss the Ministry, in common with others, have sustained. I can understand when the leader of a Government is taken away, when he who was selected to fill the high position of leader of the Government of a country is called to an early grave, those who had been associated with him must feel the loss deeply. I can only hope that the new Government who have been chosen will carry on the business of the country in such a manner as to receive the support and countenance of the public men of the State, as well as of the citizens generally. Though we shall have to mourn for many a long day the loss of so able a man, and one of the foremost members of the community, yet I hope the progress of the State will not be retarded. It becomes the duty of every public man to put forward his best energies in such circum-

stances as this: even greater diligence and faithfulness is imposed on us than if Mr. Leake had not been taken from us. Everyone joins most heartily, I am certain, with me when I say that all those who were related to Mr. Leake have the greatest sympathy of the people of the country in the irreparable loss they have sustained.

Question put and passed.

PARKS AND RESERVES AMENDMENT BILL.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson): According to the usual custom, and in order to assert the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I beg to move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Parks and Reserves Act, 1895."

Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

HON. B. C. WOOD (Metropolitan-Suburban): Sir, the responsible duty of moving an Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening Speech falls to my lot, and I accept that duty with a great deal of pleasure, although I sincerely wish I had greater ability to deal with the subjects touched upon in the Speech. I most heartily join with His Excellency the Governor in rejoicing at the rapid recovery of His Most Gracious Majesty the King. Our anxieties on behalf of His Majesty may now be considered at an end. Many of us will never forget the terrible news recorded in the newspapers of the morning of Wednesday, June 25, of the dangerous illness of His Majesty the King, and the death of the Premier of this State. In the death of Mr. George Leake many of us have lost a comrade and friend, and the State of Western Australia has lost one of its most illustrious sons. Death has of late been busy in the community, and the State has lost some of its foremost citizens. It is difficult to estimate the magnitude of the national loss caused by the death of Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, whose name will ever stand first on the honourable roll of men famous for their connection with great undertakings in Western Australia. I trust some provision will be made for the widow

and the children of the deceased gentleman, in the shape of either a substantial money grant or an adequate pension. The country has sustained another heavy loss by the death of Mr. Lindley Cowen, who was a man of many parts and a good public officer. I rejoice at the termination of the South African war on equitable and even generous terms, under which our late enemies become our friends, and loyal subjects of His Majesty the King. It is a source of high satisfaction that such a large and valuable territory as the Transvaal has been added to the British Empire, although the cost of the acquisition in blood and treasure is terrible to contemplate. Australia has nobly borne her share of the burden, and I am proud to think that a West Australian, Lieutenant Bell, gained in South Africa the decoration of the Victoria Cross. The nature of the settlement by which the Transvaal has become British territory, and the troubles and complications likely to spring from racial and other difficulties, demand that the administration of the new colony's affairs should be placed in the most competent hands; and I commend the decision of the British Government to confer on Sir Arthur Lawley the first governorship of the Transvaal. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I rejoice at the recognition accorded to Sir Arthur Lawley's talents and at the advancement that recognition carries with it. Farther, it is gratifying to reflect that Western Australia supplies the man whom Great Britain considers indispensable. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] The prosperity of this State is, to my mind, incontestable, and our greatest need—population—is fast being supplied. By the Registrar General's returns I observe that immigration proceeds apace, and I have little doubt that in a short time we shall witness such an increase in the number of inhabitants as will materially conduce to the permanent prosperity of our country. The revenue appears to be abundant for all the purposes of State, and it is pleasing to learn from His Excellency's Speech that the cost of administration is being kept within due limits. Matters of finance appear to occasion the Treasurer no anxiety: the stores account is the only source of uneasiness. I do hope the Government will not erect the stores account into a

great big bogey, because that would be simply nonsensical. All that is necessary is to treat the account in a business-like way, as an ordinary commercial firm would deal with the position. The exercise of a little common sense will speedily place the stores account on a perfectly satisfactory basis. Any tendency to trot out the stores account for the purpose of creating a sensation is, in my opinion, strongly to be deprecated. Undoubtedly, taxation is abnormally heavy in this State; and I should therefore have liked to see in the Governor's Speech, or I should like to hear of the Government making to the Legislative Assembly, suggestions for the diminution of the people's burdens. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] The cost of housekeeping in all its branches is far too high, and residents of the city of Perth in particular are made to pay "through the nose," as is commonly phrased, in every direction. The load of taxation inflicted on the Western Australian people through the Customs is enormous, and amounts to a positive evil. I do not propose just now to offer a suggestion as to the best means of coping with that evil: for the present, I shall content myself with expressing the hope that the Government will give early and serious consideration to the devising of measures for the alleviation of the heavy burdens imposed on the people. Ministers have my sincere wishes for success in their railway policy. I have no fault to find with their appointment of a Commissioner of Railways, but the closing words of paragraph 9 of the Speech afford food for most serious reflection:—

Adequate provision, however, will be made to leave with Parliament the full power of controlling rates, and of dealing with all questions involving the interests of the railway servants of the State.

It has been my constant hope that any alteration in the railway policy of this State would be in the direction of completely freeing the railway system from political control. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I regret to say I see grave trouble ahead for Ministers in the three lines I have quoted. The establishment of a dual control seems to be contemplated; and from that, I fear, trouble will ensue. I sincerely hope my predic-

tion will not be verified: I trust Ministers will contrive to arrange matters in such fashion that any difficulties encountered will be but small. Regarding the matter from an ordinary common-sense standpoint, however, I cannot but believe that the creation of two controlling bodies—one commercial, the other political—will lead to friction, and that the Ministry's railway policy is therefore fraught with trouble. The Speech informs us that the Government will introduce a Redistribution of Seats Bill. Politicians have preached redistribution for months and months past; every candidate for a seat in Parliament has from the platform pledged himself to support a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats. A measure of the kind is undoubtedly needed, and I am glad the Government propose to deal with the subject. The effect of the redistribution contemplated will be, I presume, to create a Parliament elected on practically a population basis. Not entirely a population basis, because that scheme would not answer in a State of such numerous, great, and such extremely varied interests as exist in Western Australia. Nevertheless, people in the agricultural districts, and also residents of the sparsely-populated portions of the State, must realise and recognise that, sooner or later, our parliamentary representation must be based, practically, on population. The cause stated by the Speech to necessitate redistribution of seats is one which we all know and deplore—the difficulties encountered by the Government holding office during the last session of Parliament. Whether or not redistribution will prove an effectual remedy, I do not know: I scarcely think it will. Improvement in the conduct of parliamentary business may be looked for when the country ceases to return to the Legislature so many Ministers and so many Premiers, but not before. There, I think, lies the true remedy. Nowadays, nearly every man one meets is or has been a Minister, and nearly every other man is or has been a Premier. (Laughter.) So long as the electors persist in returning to Parliament numerous highly distinguished men, so long will the difficulties felt during last session continue. Redistribution of seats cannot, of itself, remedy the state of things complained of.

It is gratifying to know that the question of civil service reform is in the hands of a Royal Commission consisting of gentlemen of recognised ability. The two members appointed in the Eastern States are, no doubt, the best men available ; and my knowledge of the locally-selected Commissioner enables me to pronounce his appointment a thoroughly suitable one. The duties of the Commission will, I feel assured, be discharged in a straightforward, fearless, and honest manner. All of us are glad to learn the Fremantle Harbour Works are at last so far advanced towards completion as to bring the appointment of a Harbour Board within the range of practical politics. The intention all along, of course, has been to constitute such a board or trust. The time for giving effect to that intention having arrived, I need only congratulate the Government on their recognition of the right and proper course, and express the hope that they will select for membership of the proposed board gentlemen possessing the practical knowledge requisite for the most advantageous utilisation of the Fremantle Harbour Works. The Speech makes mention of the Coolgardie Water Scheme, the approaching completion of which must be matter for rejoicing throughout the community. After all the ill reports spread by irresponsible persons concerning this great work, the announcement that the scheme is likely to be carried to a successful issue at a cost reasonably approximating to the estimate is indeed gratifying. The water has now reached Cunderdin, and it is only a matter of a short time before it will find its ultimate destination. I congratulate the Government, in the same connection, on their expressed intention to seek a loan authorisation for the purpose of reticulation of Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and other goldfields towns. I am not afraid to raise loans so long as their proceeds are expended properly, and on works which will prove reproductive. From the Speech I note that the Government propose also to ask authority to raise a loan for the construction of a dock at Fremantle. I trust no undue haste will be displayed in the execution of this project, as I should greatly regret it if a dock were built in any position where its existence would hamper future

extensions of the Fremantle Harbour itself. The ultimate views and aims in this connection of the late Engineer-in-Chief do not, I fear, immediately commend themselves to residents in the neighbourhood of Fremantle bridge. Nevertheless, I hope the Government, in considering the question of constructing a dock, will allow to those ultimate views and aims their due weight. Ministers must not lose sight of the fact that the improper location of the proposed dock will block extension of the Harbour Works, which, in due time, should reach not only North Fremantle but also Melville Water, and eventually the city of Perth. I think I have touched at quite sufficient length on the various topics contained in the Governor's Speech. I see, however, a reference to the new Premier, my friend Mr. Walter James, and I will say that I have every confidence that he and his Ministry will carry on the Government to a successful issue. All the Government want is a good heart and an honest desire to push forward the country in the way of progress and development. I hope the Government will consider every interest in the State, and not allow one interest to dominate another. If all are considered, I feel sure that, with the Premier's great ability, there is nothing but prosperity before us. I shall close my remarks by moving the adoption of the following Address-in-reply :—

We thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament. Our most careful attention will be given to the various matters referred to by Your Excellency, as well as all other matters that may be submitted for our consideration ; and it shall be our earnest endeavour to so deal with them that our labours may result in the advancement and welfare of this portion of His Majesty's dominions.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan) : It is with considerable diffidence I rise to second the Address-in-reply, and as a member entirely new to the conduct of business in this House, I trust you, sir, and hon. members will extend to me that consideration which has been extended to members when placed in a similar position. Not being a man of many words, I shall endeavour to review, at as short a length as possible, the important Speech which we have heard delivered this after-

noon by His Excellency the Governor. There is no doubt that one and all, calling themselves British subjects, rejoice heartily at the rapid recovery of His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward VII. from that severe illness which, at one time, threatened to end in disaster, on the eve of his coronation. But having now recovered to such an extent, we all rejoice to think that at no distant date he will be crowned, and one of the great things which will mark that coronation will be the everlasting peace which, we trust, has been concluded. At the same time, we desire to welcome those who so nobly fought as fellow colonists. We regret that, as the result of the war, many who went over to fight for our country met their death in a far distant land, away from relatives and friends. Those men had borne the heat and burden of the day, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the pick of the British Army. The Speech has referred to the loss which the State has sustained by the death of the Hon. George Leake, K.C., C.M.G. There is no doubt, to my mind, that the country has lost one of its foremost and promising sons. Since the House last met, the country has lost one who was thoroughly conversant with public affairs: I refer to the death of the Hon. F. T. Crowder, who was a well-known politician, and who gave a great deal of time to the State. His loss will be felt by many with whom he came in contact, especially by his constituents. It is pleasing to note in the Governor's Speech the progress which is being made in the agricultural and other industries. I think it is due to say that the agricultural interests of this State are progressing in a great measure through the influence exerted by the gentleman in charge of the Lands Department, who has thrown his whole life and soul into the work, and who can, from his scientific and practical knowledge, give information to farmers and others who have gone into this industry. The department also benefits by the administration of the Minister, who has thrown his whole being into his work. He is pushing forward the department under his control and deserves, more than any previous Minister, credit from the House. I am more than pleased that he retains, in the new Ministry, the portfolio which he previously held. The Governor calls

attention to the satisfactory condition of the finances, but it must not be forgotten that the present position of the finances has been brought about by the severe and heavy taxation which to-day is levied on the people. Within the last year or so the taxation, in revenue alone, has gone up by over £2 per head, and although many members and many people in the State will not agree with me, there is only one way of relieving the present taxation, and that is by abolishing the sliding scale.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is abolishing itself.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Gradually. Of course the farming people do not like this, as the duties are kept on for their protection. When we know that from sixteen items there was realised last year £100,000, this is sufficient to show that something should be taken off. A few years ago the whole State was crying out for a free breakfast table, yet to-day we do not find it free, but ten times worse than it was before. The people are struggling under excessive taxation. I should have been pleased to hear His Excellency make some reference to relieving the people from this taxation. It is proposed to utilize some of this year's surplus for the construction of a lunatic asylum. [Laughter.] Hon. members may laugh: perhaps we may see some of them there before we have done. The statement in the Speech must be gratifying to the board who reported on the asylum question so long ago, and who have fought for the establishment of a new institution. The present buildings are not conducive to the recovery of the persons confined in the asylum. If a man is sent to the present institution in a weak state of mind, not exactly a lunatic, he may become permanently insane. A proper lunatic asylum should have been erected years ago, and a new building cannot be commenced too soon. The promised improvements to the Fremantle Gaol, so as to separate the various classes of prisoners, I think is a very necessary work. The construction of abattoirs and cool storage depôts in various centres is another very urgent matter, and I can assure hon. members, as a member of the Central Board of Health, that if they saw some of the reports which are sent in to that body,

they would give up eating butcher's meat and feel quite disgusted with the present state of affairs. The establishment of abattoirs will mean a great benefit to the public health, and unless this work be taken in hand and public abattoirs placed in our midst, no health board and no inspectors can superintend the killing and distribution of meat in our midst. I should like to see abattoirs run on a thorough commercial basis, not as a Government institution is generally run, but provision made for a small sinking fund, which would provide means for repairs and extension. If such were done, abattoirs would pay their own way: there is no reason why they should not. On the Continent, and I believe in the other States, abattoirs are made to pay. I am somewhat disappointed with the paragraph in the Governor's Speech referring to the distribution of the surplus. No reference is made to a sewerage scheme for Perth and Fremantle. Every consideration should be given to this matter, as the necessity for a proper system is growing day by day. The public health is of the utmost importance to the State in general. Members should be given every opportunity of studying the best system to adopt. Although the question has been talked of for years, nothing has been done but to spend a few thousand pounds in putting a drain down in one street. There would not be the slightest difficulty in establishing a sewerage system in Perth. In going through England, I gave three months of my time to studying sewerage systems, and I can assure members there is no need for expensive pumping stations, or the putting down of a deep drainage system, if the simple and natural process of septic tanks be adopted. There would be no trouble in putting the tanks anywhere in the streets of Perth. Paragraph 8 of the Speech deals with the appointment of a Commissioner of Railways, and I cannot say that I altogether approve of the appointment. Taking into consideration the date the agreement was made, it would have been far better for the new Government, or the Premier, to have left the question open so that Parliament could have discussed it. Mr. George may be a thorough business man, but taking into consideration the fact that Parliament was meeting at an early date,

it would have been better and safer for the Government to have left the matter to the consideration of the House. Every man in this State and every business person acknowledges that radical changes in the railway management are necessary: especially is this known to those who have to do business with the Railway Department. I myself can say that goods have been detained for a fortnight between Fremantle and Cottesloe, when the goods have been booked in the goods shed. One has to wait days and days to get goods from York, and I have put articles in the train myself and have had to wait a considerable time before they have reached Cottesloe. I call this mismanagement. Paragraph 9 deals with the appointment of other Commissioners, and it is pleasing to know that members of both Houses will have some say in the appointment of these officers. Paragraph 10 indicates a step in the right direction. An amendment of the Constitution is badly needed in the way of giving more equitable representation and simplifying and widening the electoral law. I observe, also, that the necessary electoral rolls are to be prepared. I trust the preparation of these new rolls will not follow the lines of the old. There recently came to my notice the case of a man who had been dead for 19 years, and whose name still appeared on the rolls. Hundreds of instances are to be found, on the one hand, of persons who have left this State for good, or with but the slightest prospect of returning, but whose names remain on the rolls, and, on the other hand, of residents of many years' standing whom the rolls do not allow a vote at all. I do not know with whom the blame lies, but these anomalies call for immediate rectification. Our existing electoral rolls would be considered a disgrace in any country under the sun. I am glad to learn that the Civil Service Commissioners have begun their work. I have no doubt the gentlemen selected will do their duty thoroughly and effect a satisfactory classification, provided they do not start hampered with unnecessary instructions. Such is too often the case with people brought here by the Government to do certain work. The recent preparation of designs for new Parliament Houses affords an instance. Those making the designs were

so much hampered that the plans recommended for the award of premiums were found impossible of execution. When the local architects as a body complained, they were told by the late Premier, "Oh, you ought to have complained before the men left the State." However, the men had gone, and their designs were not placed on exhibition until after they had gone. So we local architects were euchred. I am much afraid time will prove the Civil Service Commissioners likewise to be hampered in similar fashion. If my fear prove well-grounded, the work of the Commission will be the merest farce, leaving the service eventually just as greatly dissatisfied as it is to-day. I note with pleasure the intention expressed to extend our educational system. My travels in outlying portions of the State enable me to pronounce such extension as urgently required. To support this contention it is not necessary, however, to refer to outlying districts: at Maylands, which is only two or three miles from Perth, there are 88 children without school accommodation. [MEMBER: Let them come in by train.] The parents are not in a position to pay train fares, in many instances. If the educational system is to be extended in one district, it should be extended in all. Along the South-Western Railway I have known children to leave home for the purpose of attending school, at half-past seven or eight in the morning, and not get back until eight or nine o'clock at night. That is education indeed for children, to spend hours every day in travelling backwards and forwards by train! Schools should be provided for these children much nearer home. The reticulation of Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and other places in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme is an essential work, and I am pleased to see a reference to it in the Speech. After the numerous adverse criticisms passed on the scheme, and more particularly on the pipe-track and the joints, an expression by the Government of an intention to appoint a thoroughly competent hydraulic engineer to inspect and report on the work, so far as it has gone, would have been reassuring. This course is particularly desirable in regard to the joints, because if these are to prove a failure—

MEMBERS: There is the Royal Commission.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Yes; and the Commissioners know as much about the pipe track as a good many other people know. Money spent on an inspection and a report such as I suggest will be money well spent. I sincerely trust the joints will not prove a failure. No doubt most of the joints stand all right under test, but the real trial will come only when they are subjected to the continuous pressure of actual work. If anything is to be done it must be done at once: we ought not to wait until the goldfields are drawing supplies of water from the scheme, and then hang the whole thing up again. Speaking as a practical man with personal knowledge of the fact that some of the work in connection with the scheme has not been done as it ought to have been, I wish to record my strong objection to the carrying out of experiments by those in charge at the country's expense. The course I advocate may eventually save much time and money. The proposal of the Government to invite Sir John Forrest to open the works when the water reaches Coolgardie is admirable. Such an invitation—which Sir John Forrest will, no doubt, do his utmost to accept—constitutes a fitting tribute to the man who propounded so great a work. It is to be deplored that Mr. O'Connor, the able engineer who worked out the practical details of the scheme and brought it to a successful issue, will not be present to witness and to share the honours of the final completion of the undertaking. Paragraph 19 of the Speech makes mention of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. This work, I take it, is intended to be stone or concrete; and in this connection I invite the attention of hon. members to the fact that at the end of 1898, or early in 1899, the Government received from a Scotch firm an offer to construct a floating dock at Fremantle. The floating dock, it is to be observed, affords the latest and the most approved system of docking. As of course no portion has to be taken up for the purposes of removal, a floating dock could be easily shifted from time to time as might be rendered necessary by increased demands for harbour accommodation. Another advantage of the

floating dock consists in the facility with which renewals and repairs may be effected. Paragraph 19 also refers to the provision of a water supply for Midland Junction, Fremantle, and the intervening localities—a matter of the most pressing urgency, to my mind. The tonnage of Fremantle shipping at the present time amounts to three millions per annum, whilst the water supply of the Port is an absolute disgrace to Western Australia. [Hon. H. BRIGGS: Hear, hear.] I say emphatically, the work proposed should be taken in hand at the earliest possible moment. Captains of vessels calling at Fremantle are, in a sense, travelling advertisements all over the world for the Port. A continually recurring question addressed to these captains is, "What kind of water supply has Fremantle?" When questioners learn that water purchased at Fremantle for 4s. 6d. per thousand gallons is so bad as to be useless and dangerous, and that good potable water can be obtained only from Osborne, Perth, or the Canning at a cost of 17s. or 18s. per thousand gallons, the advertisement which is given to our chief port is a peculiarly bad one. Existing conditions in this respect are a downright disgrace to the State. Among the Bills mentioned by paragraph 20 of the Speech as about to be submitted is one designed to deal with "Shops and Factories (including an amendment of the Early Closing Act)." For my part, I should like the Early Closing Act to be repealed altogether. The measure, to my mind, is a blot on our statute book, interfering as it does with the Briton's long-boasted "liberty of the subject." The Act inflicts great hardship on those small shopkeepers to whom it applies. Its operation in certain districts is peculiarly bad. At Cottesloe, for example, you may see shops on one side of the street closed at 7 p.m., because they come within the scope of the Act, whilst, on the other side, shops are kept open until 10 or 11, because the proprietors are not reached by the measure. This state of affairs does not conduce to good personal feeling between the two sets of competing tradesmen. Paragraph 20 likewise announces a new Roads Boards Bill. The existing Act certainly stands in great need of amendment, and the same remark applies to the Municipal Institutions Act. The

intention, expressed in paragraph 21 of the Speech, to compel the private railway companies in this State to carry out the terms of the agreements under which they were authorised to construct their lines, has my entire approval. From what one hears, the residents of districts served by private railways have good grounds for complaint, inasmuch as the train services are arranged with an eye solely to the interests and convenience of the companies, and without any regard whatever to the convenience and interests of the settlers. I had hoped to find in the Governor's Speech a reference to the construction of the Transcontinental railway, particularly that portion of it which will traverse our territory. The matter is one directly affecting in all its aspects every member of the community, and I feel sure members of this House will lend every possible assistance to our Federal representatives in the effort to secure the construction of the railway. I am aware the grabbing policy pursued by New South Wales and Queensland will lead those States to seek the construction of a line in a totally different direction—one subserving the interests of their ports alone. In view of the extreme importance of the subject, I say again we ought to use our utmost endeavours to assist the West Australian members of the Federal Parliament in respect of it. I fear I have already trespassed too far on the time of the House, and I shall therefore conclude by expressing the great pleasure I feel in seconding the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. C. SOMMERS, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR LANDS, the House adjourned until the next Tuesday afternoon, at 4:30 o'clock.