

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Council—Session of 1880.

Opened on Monday, 19th July, 1880.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 19th July, 1880.

Meeting of Council—Swearing in of Members—Election of Speaker—Opening of the Session—The Governor's Speech—The Census Bill: first reading—The Address in Reply—Adjournment.

[The previous Council was prorogued by His Excellency the Governor on the 8th October, 1879, and expired by effluxion of time.]

The present Council met at 2 o'clock, p.m., when the Clerk read the Proclamation requiring Members to give their attendance.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

HIS HONOR THE CHIEF JUSTICE (H. T. Wrenfordsley) announced that, in virtue of the Commission issued to him under the hand of His Excellency the Governor, he would be prepared to swear in any Members. Thereupon all the Members present took and subscribed the usual Oath of Allegiance.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) rose, and in gracious terms proposed that Sir Luke Samuel Leake be re-elected Speaker of the House. All hon. members would agree with him that Sir Luke's former experience, and his consequent acquaintance with parliamentary forms and usages,

and his other qualifications, would render him acceptable to every member of the House.

MR. STEERE, in seconding the proposition, alluded in equally gracious terms to Sir Luke's eligibility for the dignified position.

No other nomination being made,

SIR LUKE LEAKE rose in his place and acknowledged the compliment, adding that should the House think fit to do him the great honor of again placing him in the high position which he had occupied for the past ten years, as their Speaker, it should be his endeavor, as it always had been, to use the best of his humble ability to conduct the business of the House in the manner which he was sure they all wished to see it conducted. His hon. friends who had brought his name under the favorable notice of the House had spoken of him in terms far exceeding his deserts. This was the third occasion that he had had the honor to be nominated for the Chair, and the question forced itself upon his mind, how was it that he had been preferred to so much honor? He could only account for it by the reflection that ever since he entered the Council all his actions had been governed by a constant and abiding sense of loyalty to the House, the honor and character of the Council being his first consideration. He owed much to the House, and could not adequately discharge his obligations to it. Certainly, if the House again desired his humble services they were at its command, so long as it pleased God to give him health and strength, and he

humbly submitted himself to the pleasure of the House.

The Speaker Elect was then conducted by the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Steere to the Chair, on reaching which he again tendered his respectful thanks to the House for the high and great honor they had done him.

The House then adjourned, and the members proceeded in a body to Government House to submit the newly-elected Speaker for the approval of His Excellency the Governor.

Upon their return to the Council Chamber,

MR. SPEAKER announced that His Excellency had been pleased to ratify the choice of the House.

OPENING OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council met at three o'clock, p.m.

Shortly afterwards, HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR entered the Chamber, and took the Chair.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

HIS EXCELLENCY was then pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

“MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
“THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

“In meeting you for the despatch of public business, I take the opportunity of conveying to you my gratification at the cordial manner in which I was received on assuming, for the second time, the direction of your public affairs, and my warm appreciation of the expressions of confidence in my administration which were contained in the various Addresses presented to me on my return.

“Desiring, as I do, to devote the best energies which I possess to the advancement of the Colony, I trust it may be my good fortune to retain the confidence of its inhabitants; and I earnestly hope that the period of my second residence here may be marked by the same cordial feeling between the Executive and the Representatives of the people which existed during my former administration.

“My only regret in resuming the charge of the Government is to find that your finances are somewhat embarrassed; and as public policy must

“always be influenced, if not entirely controlled, by fiscal considerations, I will briefly refer to our financial condition before alluding to the various other questions which await your attention.

“During last Session the Legislative Council was informed that there was an actual deficiency on the 31st December, 1878, of £30,868. These figures were correct. The Council was further informed that, unless additional taxes were raised, the deficit would be increased by the end of 1880 to £46,000, but that if the Legislature should think proper to add about £20,000 a year to the Revenue, by means of a re-arrangement of the Tariff (a course which was subsequently adopted) the debt would be reduced at the end of 1880 to £26,000; at the end of 1881 to £6,000; and that it would be extinguished early in 1882.

“In these calculations, so far as I can judge, no allowance was made for certain unestimated expenditure on account of works in progress in 1879, while the liabilities were apparently overlooked; and I am sorry to say that our financial position is considerably worse than was anticipated. At the same time there is nothing in the state of our affairs which prudence and economy will not speedily rectify.

“Returns which I have recently had prepared, in an explicit and comprehensive form, will show you exactly how we stand. You will find that on the 31st December last, in addition to a deficiency in the finance account of £48,033, there were outstanding liabilities amounting in the whole to £32,917; making together a total indebtedness of £80,950. From this there were assets to be deducted to the value of £1,053; leaving an actual indebtedness (exclusive of loans) on the 31st December, 1879, of £79,897. Of these liabilities, however, £12,236 have been paid off since the 1st January last.

“From the Council Papers of last Session, I observe that on the 28th July, 1879, it was estimated by Government that the total indebtedness of the Colony on the 31st December, 1879, would not be less than £35,000; and on the 6th October it was stated that the deficit on that date amounted to £30,000. We now see that the

“actual indebtedness of the Colony on
“the 31st December last was consider-
“ably more than double that amount,
“and this error as to the true state of
“affairs in 1879 would appear to furnish
“an explanation of the discrepancy
“between the calculations which I have
“quoted and the result.

“The Colonial Treasurer and the late
“Acting Treasurer, who have, at my re-
“quest, made a rigid investigation into
“the accounts, agree as to the correctness
“of the statements which I have now
“placed before you, and I feel confident
“that their figures may be relied upon.

“By economy during the present year,
“and if the Revenue responds to our ex-
“pectations, we may show a credit balance
“on the year’s transactions of about
“£10,000 to be applied to the extinction
“of the deficit, which, added to the lia-
“bilities paid off since the 1st January,
“will reduce our indebtedness on the
“31st December, 1880, to £57,660. Next
“year, as you will see from the Estimates
“to be laid before you, I calculate that
“we shall save about £20,000, which will
“further reduce our indebtedness, by the
“end of 1881, to £37,661; but you will
“thus perceive that, viewing it in the most
“favorable light, we cannot expect, at our
“present rate of taxation, to clear off the
“whole deficiency before the middle or
“end of 1883, especially as during the
“next three years and a-half we shall
“have to pay interest to the banks on
“such advances as may from time to
“time be required in aid of current Re-
“venue, and may possibly have to meet
“certain extraneous claims on the Gov-
“ernment, the amount of which cannot,
“at this moment, be defined.

“I much fear that under these circum-
“stances we must abandon the idea
“of continuing the Eastern Railway
“at once, inasmuch as, situated as we
“are at present, we should go into
“the money market at a disadvantage,
“and it is moreover doubtful whether
“Her Majesty’s Government would feel
“justified in sanctioning a further loan
“until our financial condition shall be
“restored. When that time arrives,
“the extra taxation which was recently
“imposed for the extinction of the
“deficit will be set free and be available
“for the payment of interest on a new
“Loan for Public Works; and if, as I

“fully anticipate, we are able to show
“that the additional duties have not been
“injuriously felt, our position as bor-
“rowers will be so greatly improved that
“we ought to have no difficulty in
“raising on favorable terms such sums
“as may then be required.

“You will observe that I have not alluded
“to the possibility of clearing off our lia-
“bilities at an earlier date by means of
“further taxation, for it appears to have
“been affirmed last Session that the debt
“should be gradually liquidated by such
“additional revenue as it was then con-
“sidered could be raised without pressing
“unduly on the community. At the same
“time, it cannot, I think, be alleged that
“the Colony is heavily taxed, and if Your
“Honourable Council should now be of
“opinion that extra taxes could without
“injury be imposed, I should not be in-
“disposed to accede to your views in the
“matter, as of course the sooner we can
“pay off our liabilities the sooner we shall
“be able to proceed with various much-
“needed undertakings.

“I may here be allowed to observe that,
“according to revised Returns presented
“to Council by my predecessor, the year
“1877, the last of my former adminis-
“tration, commenced with a credit balance
“of £3,909; notwithstanding that dur-
“ing the years 1875-6 no less than
“£30,362 had been expended on the
“Eucla Telegraph Line out of surplus
“Revenue. The deficit commenced to be
“created in the latter part of 1877. On
“the 31st December of that year it
“amounted to £12,787. By the end of
“1878 it had risen to £30,868; and on
“the 31st December last it reached, as I
“have already stated, the sum of
“£79,897.

“You are aware that during the last few
“years the Legislature has authorised,
“by Resolutions, the expenditure of con-
“siderable sums on services for which no
“provision was made in the Estimates.
“I cannot but think that this practice—
“imprudent at any time, but doubly so
“when the public resources are strait-
“ened—is to some extent to blame for
“our difficulties; and I would strongly
“urge on you to sanction in the future
“no items of Expenditure but such as
“are included in the Estimates.

“The Government, on the other hand,
“should adhere strictly to the Appro-

“patriation Act.) I do not for one moment
 “say that any items of Expenditure—
 “large as they have sometimes been—
 “which the Government may from time
 “to time have incurred in advance of
 “Legislative authority, were unnecessary.
 “Indeed, I find it stated by the Select
 “Committee on the Over-Expenditure for
 “1878, which considerably exceeded the
 “average, that ‘due regard to economy
 “was, as a whole, observed by the Govern-
 “ment.’ But the practice is equally as
 “faulty as the appropriation of moneys
 “by Resolution, and should certainly not
 “be continued.

“In order to carry out such a reform
 “as this, it will be necessary that the
 “Government should be entrusted with a
 “sufficient margin for contingencies; and
 “to this I feel confident you will not
 “object. In preparing Estimates of Ex-
 “penditure, while not allowing extrava-
 “gant margins to be given to the detailed
 “votes, it is certainly better to provide
 “for each particular service an amount
 “within which, except in extraordinary
 “circumstances, the expenditure may
 “fairly and properly be required to be
 “kept, than to frame the Estimates on
 “an insufficient scale, and leave it to the
 “Governor to issue on his own authority
 “supplementary warrants, which have
 “to be legalised by subsequent legisla-
 “tion.

“In quitting, for the present, the sub-
 “ject of the financial position of the
 “Colony, I have only to remark that,
 “whatever causes may have led to our
 “present temporary embarrassment, the
 “greatest economy should now be exer-
 “cised in all branches of the service, and
 “I am sure you will agree with me that,
 “however loath we may be to postpone
 “important and desirable undertakings,
 “our first duty is to replace our finances
 “on a sound and satisfactory basis.

“With this object in view, you will find
 “that the Estimates about to be submit-
 “ted to you have been prepared with the
 “utmost care. The Revenue for 1881 is
 “estimated at £192,154, against an esti-
 “mated Revenue for the current year of
 “£181,560. The Expenditure is esti-
 “mated at £172,215, against £176,256
 “for 1880, leaving a probable credit
 “balance of £19,939 available for the
 “reduction of the deficit at the end of
 “the year.

“I would willingly have shown you,
 “had it been in my power, a greater differ-
 “ence between the estimated Expenditure
 “of this year and the next, but after the
 “most careful attention I have been un-
 “able to see my way to propose any fur-
 “ther reductions without crippling the
 “Departments, and really doing an injury
 “to the Public Service. This of course
 “is a question which it will be your prov-
 “ince to review when the Estimates come
 “before you, and you will not find me
 “indisposed to acquiesce in any prudent
 “retrenchments which, on deliberate con-
 “sideration, you may deem it right to
 “propose.

“For Immigration I have placed
 “£4,000 on the Estimates. You are
 “aware of the causes which led to Immi-
 “gration being stopped by my predecessor
 “in the early part of 1878, and that since
 “that date only a limited number of
 “Nominated European and Chinese
 “Immigrants have been introduced. I
 “am led to believe that the want of labor
 “is beginning to be again seriously felt,
 “but this is a question on which the
 “representatives from the various dis-
 “tricts must be better informed than
 “the Government, and therefore it will
 “be for you to decide whether or not the
 “amount which I have placed on the
 “Estimates shall be expended.

“For the up-keep of Minor Roads, I
 “have placed £2,750 on the Estimates.
 “For some years past, and until the ex-
 “penditure of the Roads Loan com-
 “menced, the annual grant for the
 “up-keep of roads in general was about
 “£11,000, and in fixing £2,750 as the
 “amount for the Minor Roads for next
 “year I have been guided by the opinion
 “expressed by the Legislative Council
 “in 1874, that not more than 25 per
 “cent. of the amount allotted should be
 “expended on Minor Roads.

“For the Main Roads, I only propose
 “to appropriate £1,000, as large sums
 “are now being expended upon them out
 “of loan, and assistance from current
 “Revenue is only required for repairs of
 “a nature which ought not to be charged
 “to the loan. I am aware that a wish
 “has been expressed that the expenditure
 “of the loan should be transferred from
 “the Government to the Boards. This,
 “even if it were necessary—which I am
 “not prepared to admit—would, as I have

“elsewhere pointed out, be impossible, “inasmuch as my predecessor having “informed the Secretary of State, before “the loan was raised, that the expenditure would be controlled by a Government Committee, it would now be out “of the question to transfer the control “of the money to Boards which are not “responsible to the Government. I am “happy to say that many of the Boards “are co-operating cordially with the Central Committee, and good results may “be anticipated. In those few districts “in which the Boards have declined to “co-operate with Government the works “are being carried out by contract under “the immediate orders of the Superintendent. Reports on this subject will “be communicated to you.

“On the important question of Steam “Service on the coast, I shall probably “have occasion to communicate with you “at an early date. I am now endeavoring to arrange that the ‘Otway,’ instead of spending all her time between “Albany and Melbourne, shall make four “trips a year to the North-West Coast; “and I feel sure you will concur with me “that, if this can be accomplished, much “benefit may be anticipated from the “change.

“Papers relating to the strength of the “staff of the Audit Department will be “communicated to you. I found in April “last that the examination of the accounts was then about seven months in “arrear, and, in view of the great importance of a prompt and efficient audit, I “authorised a temporary increase of the “staff for the purpose of wiping off “arrears and bringing the work up to “date. I think you will agree with me “that all accounts should be audited “within three months at the latest, and “I am sure you will readily assent to the “slight permanent addition to his staff “which the Auditor General says will be “necessary in order to enable this to be “done in the future. It is right I should “add that the Auditor General does not “appear to have been to blame for the “arrears which had accumulated in his “department.

“Finding on my arrival that no steps “had been taken for framing regulations “for the disposal of the Country recently “explored by Mr. Alexander Forrest on “the Fitzroy River, I requested the

“Pearl Shell Fishery Commission to take “this subject also into their consideration, “and the regulations prepared by the “Commission have been adopted by the “Governor in Executive Council, and “submitted for the approval of the “Secretary of State. I have requested “the Secretary of State to communicate “to me his decision by telegraph, and I “hope that the Regulations may be proclaimed before the time fixed for the “Melbourne Exhibition, at which it “would be obviously desirable to circulate them.

“Applications for nearly four million “acres of land on the Fitzroy have already “been received, and a revenue from that “district appears for the first time on “the Estimates for 1881.

“In reference to the Melbourne Exhibition, I am glad to inform you that the “gentlemen to whom I have entrusted “the expenditure of the Vote taken last “Session for this purpose, have made “good progress in their preparations. “The Committee, though not appointed “until the beginning of May, have taken “so much interest in the subject, that I “have every reason to believe that their “exertions will be attended with success, “and that a creditable representation of “our resources will be made. My best “thanks are due to the gentlemen forming the Committee for consenting to act, “notwithstanding the limited time and “money at their disposal, as also to the “Surveyor General for the great trouble “he has cheerfully undertaken in connection with the duties of Chairman.

“I have to inform you that Her “Majesty’s Government have decided “that the Pensioner Force here is to be “disbanded, but that, in the interests of “public safety, £4,000 a year will be “contributed by the Imperial Government up to the year 1887, in addition “to the amounts already promised in aid “of Magistracy and Police. The Secretary of State for the Home Department “has expressed a wish that whatever “arrangements may be required for providing for the objects hitherto fulfilled “by the Pensioner Force, may be carried “out within six months from the receipt “by me of his despatch. I am now considering the question, and probably I “may be able to inform you before the “end of the Session of the steps taken

“by me in pursuance of the foregoing instructions.

“The Departmental Reports for 1879 are, as usual, exceedingly interesting.

“The Surveyor General reports that the Revenue derived from Crown Lands in 1879 exceeded that of the previous year by £1,017; that the amended Regulations which were brought into force in 1878 have worked very well, and have given a stimulus to the settlement of pastoral lands; and that the timber trade in the Southern Districts has flourished during the year, want of labour alone preventing the execution of many orders which were otherwise available. The Surveyor General adds that the most careful economy was exercised during the year, and that the unexpended balance of the vote was appropriated to the payment of special surveys on the North-West Coast made in 1878. The question of the compilation of a large map of the Colony has been receiving the Surveyor General's attention. It is proposed forthwith to construct such a map, on the scale of ten miles to an inch, showing the results of all surveys and explorations made since the foundation of the Colony, and then to photolithograph the map for the convenience of the public.

“The Postmaster General states that the business of his Department has materially increased during the year. As regards the Mail and Passenger Service recently established by my predecessor, he is able to report most favorably. In despatch, regularity, and accommodation, the Postmaster General considers that the new conveyances are undoubtedly a great boon to the Districts, and that they will ultimately become almost self-supporting.

“The remarks of the Superintendent of Police, in deprecation of any further reduction of the Force, are worthy of your serious attention. I am happy to say that, from my experience of other Colonies, I consider the Force here to be exceptionally efficient and trustworthy. At the same time it is certainly not larger than is required, and considering the vast area of country that has to be supervised by a Force numbering in all 115 officers and men, and that, as the Superintendent justly remarks, constables in remote localities

“have frequently to act on their own judgment and responsibility, I think the Government and Legislature have good reason to be satisfied with the manner in which the duties of the Police are discharged.

“Although the Colonial Surgeon is able to report that there was no visitation of a general epidemic to swell the death rate of 1879, there is matter for serious reflection in his remarks, and in those of the Medical Officer at Geraldton, on the insanitary state of some of the towns of the Colony, more particularly in reference to defective water supply and sewage contamination, consequent on the neglect of the Municipal Councils to enforce the sanitary provisions of the law. It is competent to the Legislature to place in the hands of the Government an alternative machinery for carrying out the law, and I find that such a course was at one time contemplated by my predecessor. But I allow myself to hope that the Municipal authorities are now alive to the evil, and that they will take thorough and effectual measures for remedying a state of things which is little creditable to the Colony and a source of danger to the inhabitants. Were it not that our climate is one of the finest in the world, we should long since have suffered seriously from the neglect of sanitary precautions, and it would indeed be unwise to suppose that as our towns become more crowded, we can expect a continued immunity from serious epidemic diseases, if we systematically violate conditions essential to the public health. Further papers on this subject will be laid before you. The remarks of the Medical Officers therein expressed demand the gravest attention.

“The Central Board of Education state that on the whole the public schools throughout the Colony continue in a very satisfactory state, both as regards the number of schools and the average attendance of scholars, especially in those supported entirely by Government, in which the attendance is said to have increased during the year. The Board are zealously endeavoring to bring the benefits of education within reach of all sections of the community, notwithstanding the large

“area of country occupied, the number
“of families scattered throughout the
“settled districts, and the long distances
“which intervene between the places
“where families are located; and it is
“earnestly to be hoped that their efforts
“in this important direction may con-
“tinue to be attended with success.

“As regards the Northern Railway,
“which was opened for traffic on the
“26th July last, the Director of Public
“Works states that the line has been
“successfully worked, only one casualty
“having occurred, which was fortunately
“not attended with any serious results.
“The financial working has not been
“altogether satisfactory, owing to the
“depressed state of the lead market.
“I find, however, that items have been
“charged to Revenue which should
“have been charged to Capital, and
“Mr. Thomas confidently anticipates
“that the receipts during the next twelve
“months will fully cover the Expendi-
“ture.

“The total cost of the Northern Rail-
“way, including purchase of land,
“fencing, a telegraph line to North-
“ampton, and all other charges, with the
“exception of one outstanding claim
“which now forms the subject of arbi-
“tration, was £146,634, or £4,313 per
“mile. The original estimate was, there-
“fore, largely exceeded; at the same
“time the Director of Public Works
“asserts that there has not been a Rail-
“way constructed elsewhere of the same
“gauge, the same amount of earthwork,
“and including a telegraph line, at so
“low a mileage rate.

“The first section of the Eastern Rail-
“way is reported to be progressing most
“satisfactorily. Although it is scarcely
“twelve months since the Contractor
“commenced operations, it is expected
“that the line will be open for traffic
“from Fremantle to Guildford by the
“end of the year.

“Numerous minor works, including a
“new School House at Geraldton, alter-
“ations and additions to the Vasse
“School House, the extension of the
“Public Offices in Perth, additions to
“the Printing Establishment, and the
“conversion of the Commissariat Store
“into a commodious Supreme Court, are
“reported to have been undertaken
“during the year. Various other works

“in progress, or for which tenders have
“been invited, are enumerated in Mr.
“Thomas' report.

“The Ordinances prepared for your
“consideration comprise measures of a
“useful character, deserving of careful
“attention.

“It is proposed to amend the Jury Act
“by extending the radius within which
“Jurors are at present summoned to
“seventy-five miles from Perth, thus
“securing the presence of a large body
“of intelligent and educated men, and at
“the same time lessening the frequency
“of the attendance of individuals. It
“is further proposed that on every trial
“for felony three Special Jurors shall be
“sworn, if not challenged for cause, the
“peremptory right of challenge with
“reference to the remaining nine being
“left untouched. The object of the Bill
“is to elevate the character of the Jury
“in cases of felony, as well by introducing
“fresh blood as a higher class of intelli-
“gence amongst the Jurors.

“By an amendment of ‘The Police
“Ordinance, 1861,’ it is intended to
“create disorderly conduct in public
“places a definite offence, with severer
“penalties than at present.

“Bills will also be presented to you to
“prevent the destruction and export of
“immature Sandalwood; to make per-
“petual the Census Act of 1848; to pro-
“hibit the introduction and spread of
“insects and matters destructive to
“vegetation; to provide for the relief and
“return to Western Australia of Ship-
“wrecked Colonial Seaman; with various
“other measures of minor consequence,
“which need not here be particularized.

“To one measure of a strictly legal
“character, and much general importance,
“I will, before I conclude, refer.

“It appears to have been the intention
“of the framers of the local Act which in
“1861 established the Supreme Court of
“this Colony, that the jurisdiction of the
“Court should be co-extensive with that
“of the Superior Courts at Westminster;
“and that the procedure of the Colonial
“Court should be kept assimilated to,
“and governed by, the rules and regu-
“lations of the English Courts. The
“English procedure of that day has been
“completely changed, and it appears to
“me that the time has arrived when, in
“the best interest of the Colony, the

"English Acts should be adopted, so far, at all events, as they may be deemed applicable. I shall take care that this is done in the way best calculated to suit the convenience of the public, as also that the time to be fixed for the coming into operation of the local Act shall be a period sufficiently distant to enable the practitioners to inform themselves respecting the future rules and regulations of the Court; which rules and regulations will, I have no doubt, be so prepared as to secure to the Colony not only the benefit of the experience recently gained in the Courts at Westminster, but also the further advantage of any local and practical knowledge which may tend to place our Supreme Court more or less in harmony with the practice of the other Australian Colonies.

"I have reason to think that your Bankruptcy Law requires amendment; but, as I believe that the subject of law reform in this respect is still under consideration in England, I do not propose to take any immediate action with reference to this most important branch of the law.

"A good system of judicial administration is of the first importance to all national communities; and taking this view, I trust that you will, in the end, obtain a perfect code for the guidance of all concerned.

"These, Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen, are the only remarks which I have to offer to you on this occasion, beyond expressing my earnest hope that your deliberations may conduce to the best interests of the Colony, and that you may be guided in all things to wise and impartial conclusions."

HIS EXCELLENCY having handed a copy of the Speech to Mr. Speaker, withdrew from the Council Chamber.

THE CENSUS BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) with leave, without notice, moved the first reading of a Bill to make perpetual an Ordinance intituled "An Ordinance for taking an account of the Population and of the amount of Live Stock and Crop and other Particulars of the Colony of Western Australia."

Bill read a first time.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

MR. VENN rose to move that a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech with which he had opened the Session. In doing so, the hon. member said he could but regret that the task had not fallen to the lot of some one who would have been more at home in addressing the House than—this being his first appearance in that Chamber—he was. It was not his intention, nor indeed was it necessary for him, to review the whole of the exhaustive speech which they had just heard from His Excellency. It must be a matter of gratification to the hon. members of that House to find that the Colony had the advantage of again reaping the benefit to be derived from the administration of its affairs, a second time, by the same Governor; and he could only echo His Excellency's sentiment that "the period of his second residence here may be marked by the same cordial feeling between the Executive and the Representatives of the people which existed during his former administration." The fact of an elected member, whose platform on the occasion of the late general election was avowedly opposed to the continuance of the present form of Government, having been chosen to move the Address in Reply appeared to indicate that His Excellency was desirous that his Speech should be subjected to free and full discussion in that House, satisfied as His Excellency no doubt was, and as he (Mr. Venn) himself was, that whatever might be the result of their deliberations, one and all—the Executive members as well as the Representatives of the people—were actuated by an honest desire to promote the prosperity and advancement of the country. The portion of His Excellency's Speech dealing with the financial condition of the Colony indicated, that on the part of the Government there was no desire, so far as could be seen, to conceal the real state of affairs. On a former occasion, they had been informed that a strict examination of the public accounts had revealed the existence of a pretty stiff deficit, the extent of which, they were assured, could be implicitly relied upon. Subsequent events, however, as disclosed

in the Speech which they had just listened to, were calculated to show that the statement formerly made, so far from being strictly accurate, and such as could be implicitly relied upon, went to prove that the tale then told did not disclose anything like the actual state of their finances. This was very disheartening, and calculated to create a feeling of distrust in the public mind; but he was inclined to think that the figures which had just been presented to them afforded a pretty clear, and, he trusted, an accurate, view of our financial position, which was certainly one of considerable gravity, although His Excellency himself did not appear to take a very desponding view of it. Placed in juxtaposition with the statement placed before the House and before the country last Session, it, however, disclosed a very serious discrepancy, and hon. members would no doubt draw their own conclusions from that circumstance. All he would say was, it would be a very happy thing for them all if these ugly figures could be swept away, and the finances of the Colony restored to a more satisfactory state. A further opportunity would be afforded the House to deal with these figures, and therefore he would not at present go into them in detail. "You are aware," His Excellency said, "that during the last few years the Legislature has authorised by resolutions the expenditure of considerable sums on services for which no provision was made in the Estimates; and I cannot but think that this practice—imprudent at any time, but doubly so when the public resources are strained—is to some extent to blame for our difficulties." He (Mr. Venn) thought they would be tolerably unanimous in concurring with that paragraph in His Excellency's Speech, for no doubt that House itself had done much to bring about the present embarrassment. On the next question dealt with in the Speech, that of Immigration, he would not at present offer any remarks, as a further opportunity would be afforded in the course of the Session for dealing with that important subject. The next matter referred to in His Excellency's Speech was that of the Roads—a very sore point, just at present, and one which also would no doubt further occupy the

attention of the House. He would therefore now pass it over in silence, as also the important question of Steam Service on the coast, with reference to which His Excellency informed them he should probably have occasion to communicate with them at an early date. The next paragraph referred to the strength of the staff of the Audit Department. To most men gifted with ordinary intelligence, a mere reference to the "strength" of the staff of that department, in the face of the recent disclosures made with respect to the public accounts was suggestive of a very grim joke: and no doubt the House would readily assent to the proposed steps for increasing the "promptitude and the efficiency" with which the work of the department might be carried out. His Excellency next referred to the framing of regulations for the disposal of the country recently explored by Mr. Alexander Forrest. On a future occasion he would probably have more to say on this subject, and would therefore content himself at present by expressing a hope that the regulations framed, and referred to in His Excellency's Speech, were of so liberal a character as to induce early and extensive settlement of the country mentioned. Undoubtedly, any very stringent or illiberal regulations for the disposal of land in that distant territory would prove a death-blow to its settlement. As one of the pioneer settlers of that part of the country, he could speak with some degree of confidence on that point, and he had no hesitation in saying that what the settled portion of that district now was, was in a great measure attributable to the liberal land laws which were put in force when it was thrown open for settlement. And though the Revenue derived from the district was at first small, they could now point to its industries as forming the backbone of the Colony,—combined with the timber and sandalwood trade. He therefore hoped that the regulations which it was proposed to apply to the new country on the Fitzroy River would prove to be liberal in their character, for he believed that the policy of giving the pioneer settlers every reasonable inducement and encouragement was the best policy for this or any other Colony to adopt. With regard to the announcement that

the Imperial Government had decided that the Pensioner Force was to be disbanded, he thought all would regret that decision; but as he noticed that, in the interests of public safety, a sum of £4,000 was promised by the Home Government towards providing for the objects up to the present time fulfilled by the Pensioners, possibly the disbandment of the force would not be so severely felt; although it was not likely that the announcement must be regarded as an indication of still further changes in the relations between the Imperial Government and the Colony with respect to Imperial grants. Turning to the next paragraph in His Excellency's Speech, he was glad to find that the Surveyor General was in a position to report that the Revenue derived from Crown Lands last year exceeded that of the previous year by £1,017, which—though the amount was small—was so far gratifying. This, however, was an item which he hoped to see very considerably increased when the lands in the Northern territory were thrown open for settlement. Feeling as he (Mr. Venn) did the great importance to the Colony of its timber trade, it was very gratifying to him to learn that, notwithstanding the want of labour, the Surveyor General was able to report that this important industry, so far as the Southern districts were concerned, had flourished during the past year. He was also gratified to think that there was every indication of this trade being still further developed. A local company had recently been established in the district, and the prospects of the industry generally were such, he believed, as were calculated to afford cause for congratulation in the future. The Maps of the Colony promised by the Surveyor General, and referred to in the Speech, showing the results of all surveys and explorations made since the foundation of the Colony, would no doubt prove very useful. He would pass over the paragraph dealing with the Police Force, merely observing that the remarks with reference to the exceptional efficiency of the force might be regarded by some people as a somewhat flattering picture. With respect to the paragraph dealing with the new Mail Conveyances, with regard to which the Postmaster General was able to report so favorably, he

thought there could be no doubt whatever as to the efficiency of the new service; but what its absolute cost was they did not as yet know. The Postmaster General seemed to think that these conveyances would, before long, become self-supporting; he (Mr Venn) thought every hon. member would be very glad to see the official returns upon which these anticipations were based. On the question of Education he might say that, whilst the Central Board might be a most efficient body of persons, his faith in the intelligence of district men was so great that he regretted the position in which the local boards were often placed in their relations with the Central Board. He felt sure that if a little more consideration were given to the representations of the District Boards and there was less of that tedious correspondence which characterised the relations between the Central Board and the local bodies, it would tend to the advantage of our educational system, and its more satisfactory working. To think that the members who sat on the Central Board possessed that knowledge of local requirements gained by local men long resident in the district was simply absurd; and he thought this was a consideration which should not be lost sight of. With regard to the Northern Railway, he would say nothing at present for reasons that were obvious. It was very consolatory to find that, although its financial working had not been altogether satisfactory, still there was some traffic on the line. Anything was better than to allow the rails to get rusty for want of friction, and he thought that the House and the country would be very glad indeed to find that what Mr. Thomas "confidently anticipates,"—namely, that the receipts, next year, will cover the expenditure—will be realised. Any statement of this character emanating from the Department of Works must be of interest to that House, and would, no doubt, be received with the most implicit reliance. The proceedings of the last few months in connection with this department were, he thought, calculated to inspire every confidence in it. Turning to another railway, the first section of the line to the Eastern Districts, it must be a source of satisfaction to the House to learn that this line, at all events, was

progressing satisfactorily; and he could only hope that the anticipations of His Excellency as to its early completion would be realised. The other portions of the Speech dealt with matters which he thought might be passed over without comment at present; he had purposely avoided reference to them, in the belief that they were better left untouched. The Speech, on the whole, he regarded as generally satisfactory. It pointed to the fact, as appeared to him, that His Excellency and the Government were ready to afford that House every information and every assistance, and he had much pleasure in moving that a respectful address be presented to His Excellency in reply to it.

MR. RANDELL seconded the motion. In doing so, he said he could not but feel unequal to the task, seeing that the Speech, in its financial features, dealt with a period in the history of the Colony during which he was absent. He therefore regarded himself, in one sense, in the light of a "new chum" unacquainted with the affairs of the Colony during the period reviewed by His Excellency in his opening address. For that reason, he could not speak with that confidence which a more intimate acquaintance with the political history of the Colony during that period would have warranted. At the same time, he felt pleasure in seconding the motion that a respectful address be presented to His Excellency in reply to his speech. In that speech, which was a very voluminous one, His Excellency had fully reviewed the financial affairs of the Colony, and the address would no doubt receive the critical attention of hon. members on the other side of the House. It was he believed the prescriptive right, as it was the duty, of "Her Majesty's Opposition"—or, to speak more correctly, here, His Excellency's "Opposition"—to very carefully scrutinise the policy of the Government, and he had no doubt that this would be done on the present occasion, and that in due time the House would be carefully "steered" through all the intricacies of finance and the dangerous shoals of debate. Objections no doubt would be raised to portions of the speech, but he was sure that those objections would not be put forward in a

party spirit, or with a view to harass the Government in the administration of the affairs of the Colony. He felt certain, from past experience, that hon. members on either side of that House would do all in their power not to offer a factious opposition to the policy of the Administration of the day, but rather to co-operate with, and to stimulate, the Government in the discharge of their duty—and, at the present juncture of affairs, to stimulate them in the exercise of economy and prudence in the administration of the affairs of the country. He could not help joining his congratulations with those of the hon. member for Wellington, who had just spoken, upon the re-appointment of His Excellency to assume the charge of the Government; for no doubt His Excellency brought with him to the discharge of his high office a lengthened and varied experience, and acknowledged ability in the work of administration. That he possessed the equally necessary quality of prudence, they all knew. He believed His Excellency had always exhibited another desirable trait in the character of an Administrator—a due respect for the opinions of others, and a desire, so far as possible, to give effect to the wishes of the people as expressed through their representatives in that House. He also believed the present Governor was imbued with a sincere and hearty regard for the Colony itself, and was animated by an earnest wish to promote its moral and material welfare. The Speech dealt at considerable length with the financial position of the Colony, which at all times was an object of interest and importance. That interest and that importance were enhanced on the present occasion by reason of the fact that, financially, the Colony found itself placed in circumstances such as it had never been placed in before, with an accumulated deficiency of something like £80,000—a state of affairs altogether unparalleled in our history. He might, however, remark, in passing, that this Colony was not singular in this respect. Many other countries, and most (if not all) of the sister colonies, found themselves in the same condition of financial embarrassment. Even in England, the Government was confronted with a deficit of from £18,000,000 to £20,000,000. The Government of

India, also, had to meet a deficiency of something like £9,000,000; and the financial difficulties of our sister colonies were, at the present moment, more or less serious and embarrassing. Of course it would be the duty of that House to look into this matter with all seriousness, and in a spirit of calm deliberation, which he felt sure would be done. There existed in the minds of most hon. members, and also of the public generally, a feeling that we did not even yet fully understand what our real position, financially, was, and how the Colony stood as regards its public liabilities. They had had statements and counter-statements on the subject—all stamped with the authority of official inspiration—and these statements and counter-statements had tended to create a feeling of doubt and uncertainty in the public mind. Glancing cursorily at the returns which had just been laid on the Table, and which were referred to in His Excellency's Speech as affording an explicit and comprehensive statement of our financial affairs, he felt bound to say that he had not been able to find out when and how the deficiency now existing had actually occurred, so as to satisfy himself on the point. A further opportunity would, however, be afforded them to carefully consider these returns, and make themselves thoroughly acquainted with them. At present, he could only express the hope that we had now, at any rate, arrived at a knowledge of the full extent of our liabilities. No doubt those liabilities had been increased very much, in the first place on account of the Eucla telegraph line, and subsequently by reason of our railway undertakings and other public works, together with the payment of interest on loans and the provisions which had to be made for recouping those loans. Notwithstanding the heavy deficit which stared us in the face, he concurred with His Excellency that it was but a temporary embarrassment, and that there was no cause for despondency, much less for despair. Indeed, he hardly thought there was any such feeling abroad in the community; if there was, he certainly had not heard expression given to it. On the contrary, there seemed to be a general desire to face our difficulties boldly, to meet the deficit bravely, and to wipe it out.

Diverting their attention from the question of finance, there were undoubtedly other circumstances in the condition of the Colony which afforded subject for congratulation. They had been blessed with a very abundant harvest last season, and the prospects of the coming season were equally encouraging. At the same time he must express his regret that, notwithstanding these gratifying circumstances, our farmers were not reaping the full benefit of a plentiful harvest, or what they had just reason to expect, inasmuch as the Colony was flooded with imported produce, shutting out from the market and from consumption the produce of our own soil. But this was a matter which he hoped would in time work out its own cure. At the same time he was bound to say he should like to see a little more feeling of patriotism manifested by colonial merchants in dealing with colonial producers, rather than with outsiders, especially with regard to such products as the Colony was capable of producing in such qualities and quantities as would meet our requirements. No doubt there would be a difference of opinion as to the best mode of meeting our financial difficulties—whether by retrenchment or increased taxation, or both. As for himself, he might say that, although he would be quite prepared to acquiesce in any prudent retrenchments, he thought at the same time that there was room for further taxation in some directions. At present he considered that the incidence of taxation pressed very heavily—and unduly so in some instances—upon the working classes, while on the other hand those who were better able to bear the burden of taxation were exempted from bearing their share. He thought, for instance, that a tax upon the issue of bank notes and other mercantile documents would be a legitimate source of revenue, and one which he thought the Council would be justified in imposing. A land tax also—more especially as regards unimproved lands—would also, in his opinion, be a fair and just tax, providing the revenue derived from it were wholly expended in the maintenance and improvement of our main and minor roads. Nothing could be of greater importance in a Colony like this than providing the settlers with good roads for

the conveyance of their produce, and he thought that a tax of the nature he had indicated would be a most legitimate source of revenue towards providing that desideratum. It was not necessary that he should now refer to those portions of His Excellency's Speech which dwelt with the question of public works. The subject had already been referred to by the hon. member for Wellington, in glowing terms, which, no doubt, would be duly appreciated in the right quarter. The other subjects referred to in the speech were matters that must necessarily occupy the consideration of the House in the course of the Session, and he would therefore refrain from commenting upon them on the present occasion, contenting himself by expressing his general approval of the policy sketched out in the vice-regal address. In conclusion, he might be allowed to express the gratification he felt at seeing their hon. friend the Speaker again presiding over their deliberations; and, if he might be permitted, in such connection, to use an expression which was somewhat commonplace if not irreverent, he would be disposed to apostrophise him in the phraseology of a somewhat hackneyed Oriental compliment—"May your shadow never grow less!"

On the motion of **MR. STEERE**, the debate was then adjourned until Wednesday.

The House adjourned at half-past four o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 21st July, 1880.

Shipwrecked Colonial Seaman Bill: first reading—Destructive Insects and Substances Bill: first reading—Police Ordinance, 1861, Amendment Bill: first reading—Public Officers Act, 1879, Amendment Bill: first reading—Jury Act, 1871, Amendment Bill: first reading—District Roads Act, 1871, Amendment Bill: first reading—Closure of Street in Pinjarrah Bill: first reading—Sandalwood Bill: first reading—Appointment of Chairman of Committees—Census Bill: second reading; in committee—Address in Reply to Governor's Speech—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills, introduced by members of the Government, were read a first time: A Bill to provide for the relief and return to Western Australia of Shipwrecked Colonial Seamen; a Bill for preventing the introduction and spreading of Insects, or of Matter destructive to Vegetation; a Bill to amend "The Police Ordinance, 1861"; a Bill to amend certain portions of "The Public Officers Act, 1879" (43 Vic., No. 1); a Bill to amend "The Jury Act, 1871;" a Bill to amend "The District Roads Act, 1871;" a Bill to provide for the Closure of portion of a certain Street in the townsite of Pinjarrah; a Bill to prevent the Destruction and Export of immature Sandalwood.

CENSUS BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) moved the second reading of a Bill to perpetuate an Ordinance intituled "An Ordinance for taking "an account of the Population, and of "the amount of live Stock and Crop, and "other Particulars of the Colony of "Western Australia." The reason why the Bill was brought forward was because it was the opinion of the legal advisers of the Government that the Ordinance in question (12th Vic. No. 4) was inoperative, and as the Census would be taken next year, it was necessary to enact that the powers and authorities given by the said Ordinance should then be exercised and discharged. The motion for the second reading was agreed to without discussion.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy): Before the Bill which has just been read a second time can be advanced another stage, it will be necessary for the House to elect a Chairman of Committees. I beg to propose the name of Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell for that office. The hon. gentleman has acted in a similar capacity during a previous Council, and is in every respect well qualified to discharge the duties appertaining to the position.

MR. STEERE, in seconding the proposition, said that he believed the former