

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRD SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Third Session of the Fourth Parliament under Responsible Government was convened, or the despatch of business on the 16th July, 1903.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 16th July, 1903.

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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 Admiral Sir Frederick G. D. Bedford, G.C.B., 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,—

It is with pleasure that I meet you at the close of a year marked by gratifying development in our main industries, and on the threshold of another year which gives promise of still greater advancement.

Since the termination of the preceding session, His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to appoint me Governor of this State. I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging the generous reception accorded me since my arrival.

The recent movement in the Mother Country towards securing closer trade relations between the various parts of the Empire has been welcomed in this State with feelings of warm sympathy and sincere hopes for its ultimate success.

I am pleased to be able to record the steady progress of our efforts to secure the construction of a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta.

The question has been pressed upon the notice of the people of the Commonwealth; it has obtained the indorsement of the Federal Government, and has received encouraging consideration from members of the Federal Parliament. My advisers fear, however, that the Government of South Australia will not be able, during the present session of the Parliament of that State, to pass a Bill giving to the Commonwealth an unconditional power to construct the line. The attitude of many in that State is based upon a misconception which time will rapidly dispel, and we may with confidence rely for a solution of this temporary difficulty upon those ties of friendship and com-

merce which have always been so close between the two States.

There can be no room to doubt that we shall, at no distant date, witness the construction of a work which is of vital importance as being the only means by which this portion of the Commonwealth can enjoy that assurance of defence, and that freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse upon which rests the foundation of the Federal structure.

The attitude of the Federal Parliament and Government affords such gratifying evidence of their recognition of our claims to the construction of this work that my advisers are of opinion that the time has arrived for the Legislature of this State to pass a Bill enabling the Commonwealth to carry out that great work.

Such a Bill will be introduced at an early stage, and you will be invited to undertake the responsibility of constructing a broad-gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie not later than the time when the Commonwealth Government commences the construction of its portion of the main work.

The opening of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme in January last was witnessed by representatives of the Governments of the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, and also by several members of the Commonwealth Parliament. That visit cannot fail in results beneficial to this State, and my Ministers will, on all occasions, gladly welcome members of the Federal Parliament who desire to gain, by personal experience, a better knowledge of the resources and possibilities of Western Australia.

The resignation of Senator Ewing created a vacancy in the Senate, which was temporarily filled by the appointment of Mr. Henry John Saunders. That appointment expires at the end of fourteen days from this date, and one of your earliest duties will be to choose a successor to hold office during the remainder of the term for which Mr. Ewing was elected.

The Royal Commission on the Public Service has presented several interim reports during the year. My advisers will, as far as practicable, give effect to such of the Commission's recommenda-

tions as are applicable to the real circumstances and needs of the State.

In view of the increasing appreciation of the value of our timber industry, and of the need for forest conservation, the Government has appointed a Commission to inquire into the whole subject, so that some effectual action may be taken to prevent the needless destruction of this valuable asset.

The progress made during the year has been steady and continuous. The mining industry is yielding an increased output, and agricultural development is proceeding at a rate unprecedented in our history. The population returns show a constant advance, and our financial position accurately reflects the general prosperity.

The near approach of a general election makes it essential that no further delay should occur in dealing with the question of constitutional and electoral reform, and Bills dealing with those subjects will be presented to you.

To meet the increasing needs of the State, further public works are necessary to open up additional areas to population and development.

The developments at Laverton justify the extension to that town of the railway now being built to Morgans, and the work will be put in hand forthwith.

The large demand for agricultural land renders it desirable to make further provision for opening up additional Crown lands suitable for settlement. With that object you will be asked to authorise the construction of a railway from Collie to a point on the Great Southern Railway line.

The construction of a line to bring Fremantle into more direct communication with the South-Western railway will soon become a necessity. In the meantime, the building of a portion of that work will afford some assistance to a number of settlers along its route, and open up to closer settlement a valuable area of agricultural land. My advisers will ask Parliament to sanction an extension of the existing railway from its present terminus at Woodman's Point.

During the session it is proposed to introduce consolidating Bills dealing with the lands and mines of the State, and the opportunity thus afforded will be used to simplify and still further liberalise the existing legislation.

My advisers regret that they are not in a position to place before you final reports upon the subject of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. That work is essential, but the question of site is one of so great importance that, until further reports are obtained, no final decision should be arrived at. Such reports may be available before the session closes, but in any case the matter will receive the earliest possible consideration, and due provision will be made in the proposed loan authorisations.

The growing export trade in timber, and the consequent demands upon the accommodation of the Port of Bunbury, make it desirable to give increased facilities for shipping at that port, and you will be asked to make provision accordingly.

The result of the administration of our railways, under the system approved by Parliament last session, will render it possible to make further reductions in the rates of carriage of food stuffs to our goldfields.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,—

The proposed new works, and the completion of the loan works in hand, will render it necessary to ask for further loan authorisations.

Estimates of expenditure will be submitted to you in due course, framed with a careful regard to economy, but at the same time with a due appreciation of the requirements of the State.

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

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

The establishment of a water supply and sewerage system for the metropolitan area will be dealt with, and a scheme submitted for your approval.

My advisers look upon the subject of water supply generally, for towns, mining districts, and agricultural and pastoral areas, as of great and growing importance, and vigorous efforts will be made to meet the increasing demands in these directions.

The educational system of the State must be kept abreast of requirements,

and with that object the construction of additional primary schools will be continued. My Ministers, however, are of opinion that the final duty of the State towards its children is not discharged until adequate provision is made for higher education. The time is now ripe for the establishment of a secondary school, and for the extension and development of technical education, and steps will be taken accordingly.

My advisers are convinced that the time is not distant when Parliament will be called upon to consider the advisability of crowning our educational system by the establishment and maintenance of a University. Though the actual construction of such a work is not of immediate urgency, the present is an opportune time to provide an endowment by means of which the work of the University, when established, can be carried on without undue burden to the State. My Ministers propose to set apart a substantial area of land as the first contribution; and to enable this endowment to be utilised, a Bill will be submitted for the appointment of a board of trustees with adequate powers, in whom all endowments shall be vested, and to whom may be intrusted those legacies and bequests which, it is hoped, will be forthcoming in Western Australia as in every other English-speaking community where a University has been founded.

During the session you will be asked to pass Bills relating to hospitals, factories, public health, early closing, railways, and other important subjects.

Further efforts will also be made to consolidate and amend our existing legislation, and with that object several measures will be submitted for your consideration. The simplification of our laws is so desirable that, in this connection, my advisers anticipate the hearty co-operation of Parliament.

In now leaving you to the performance of your duties, I do so in the full confidence that you will devote your efforts to the careful guidance of the State, and the conservation of its most permanent interests. In that work I trust that the blessing of Divine Providence may at all times be with you.

I now declare this session of Parliament open.

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:—Metropolitan-Suburban Province, Walter Kingsmill, Colonial Secretary (in room of Hon. A. Jameson, resigned); East Province, Andrew Dempster (in room of Hon. R. G. Burges, resigned). These members, being duly sworn, took the oath and their seats.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PRESIDENT: Public accounts for financial year, 1902, with the Auditor General's Report.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: By-laws of the municipalities of Victoria Park, Boulder, Perth, Leonora, Collie, Busselton, Coolgardie, Bunbury, and Mount Magnet; Regulations for Purchase of Auriferous Copper Ores at the State sampling works, Phillips River; Amended Regulations for Mining on Private Property; Rules and Regulations, Perth Public Hospital; report (annual) Department of Mines; By-laws (width of tires) of Victoria Plains and Darling Range Roads Boards, Width of Tires Act; By-laws for water supplies, Phillips River Roads Board; Alterations of Railways Classification and Rate Book; Progress Reports (five) of Royal Commission on Public Service; Reports (annual) of Education Department, Government Labour Bureau, Woods and Forests Department, Land Titles Department, Inspector of Industrial Schools and Charitable Institutions; also Probate Rules, 1903.

Ordered to lie on the table.

EARLY CLOSING BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): In order to claim the undoubted rights and privileges of this House, I beg to move, without notice, the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Early Closing Act, 1902."

Bill introduced, and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

HON. H. BRIGGS (West): Sir, I beg to propose the following Address

in reply to His Excellency's opening Speech:—

To His Excellency Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford, etc.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

It is customary, in moving an Address in reply to His Excellency's Speech, in some manner to dwell lightly on the matters and subjects which the Speech contains; but I shall only attempt on this occasion to deal with a few of the subjects. The first I would like to mention is the generous reception which was acknowledged by His Excellency. This does not surprise us, for the loyalty and devotion to the throne and person of our most gracious King would alone secure a welcome to a representative of the Crown; but when that representative was a British Admiral, we all felt honoured. The noble traditions of the Navy—courage, truth, and honour—with a handy-man's good sense and tact, made us confident that we might sleep quietly in our beds and know all was right. The Imperial reciprocity proposals of the Secretary of State for the Colonies seem to be a revival of the right hon. gentleman's ideas set forth in a speech made at the third Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire, held in London in June, 1896—about seven years ago. Preferential trade would create a British Zollverein or customs union, and establish practically free-trade throughout the Empire, but would leave the colonies to make their separate arrangements with regard to duties on foreign goods, except for this essential condition of the proposal, that Great Britain should consent to place moderate duties upon certain articles which are largely consumed at home and largely produced in the colonies, such as corn, meat, wool, and sugar. On the other hand, the colonies, while maintaining their duties upon foreign importations, would agree to an interchange of commodities with the rest of the Empire, and would cease to place protective duties on any product of British labour. Mr. Chamberlain recently, in a letter to the *British Australasian*, seems to rely a great deal on

colonial opinion. He says, "If colonial opinion were hostile, or even apathetic, there would not be the slightest possibility of carrying through so great a reform." He also added at the end of the letter, "I should feel justified in abandoning the struggle if I were not warmly supported by the colonies." Perhaps this expression of opinion accounts for the warm sympathy in a paragraph of the Speech. Canada has been practically unanimous in support of the preferential plan. Mr. Deakin, a Commonwealth Minister, is generally favourable; Mr. Copeland, the Agent General for New South Wales, and Mr. Grainger, the Agent General for South Australia, have also approved of the proposal. Sir Richard Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, spoke out with a very loud voice in approval. But the fight will be very severe in the United Kingdom, and at the present stage I do not think we are in a position to form any opinion as to the merits of the proposal. The present is a time for deep and earnest inquiry merely, a time for an inquiry in existing circumstances and under existing conditions; not going back for 50 or 60 years to furbish up the old weapons, but taking facts simply as they are; and in such a manner the inquiry will no doubt be pursued. In this Australian continent there have been expressed some opinions not altogether favourable to the proposal. Here is one from South Australia: "Preferential trade would work out badly for the producer, whose outlets would be restricted, while British manufacturers would enjoy a monopoly in the colonies." Here is another growl from Queensland, where the scheme is said to be "an attempt to forge iron chains of commercial restriction." Here is one from our own State: "The policy of Australia for the development of the people places restriction on imports from the mother country. Why exclude America and Germany, if England is to swamp our markets and destroy our nascent manufactures?" A very great authority at home thinks that the whole thing has sprung up from a feeling that the Empire is weakening in trade. We remember that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, speaking after he returned from his tour of the Empire,

expressed the opinion that British merchants should waken up. But the English Board of Trade, in a report, warns the people not to be too timorous; and the report does it in a simple manner, by pointing out that it is much easier to increase from one to two than from 100 to 200, though in both cases the percentage is the same; and hence returns often give a very wrong complexion to the facts. Another great authority at home says that if the Empire needs strength, this union must take place; but it believes also that the Empire is too strong for the motherland to desire the colonies, or for the colonies to desire the motherland, to unite in making each other what in licensing sessions are called "tied houses." As to the Trans-Australian Railway, I am entirely in accord with the sentiments expressed in the Speech, and think that the fact of the Federal Parliament voting money for the fortification of Fremantle will in itself prove a step towards that object, because the railway will form a line of defence between this and the Eastern States. I am pleased also to see that the Government have made an offer to construct a broad-gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, as that will be an indication to the Eastern States of how strongly we in this State feel the necessity for railway union. "The progress of the State," we read in the Speech, "is steady and continuous." The mining and the agricultural industries are specially mentioned; and I trust that Mr. A. E. Morgans' opinion of the value of that continuous belt of rich mineral country extending from Roebourne to Hall's Creek—a tract of country 150 miles in width, and abounding in copper, tin, gold, and lead—will be read by prospectors, and will tend to develop that area. I think a railway from Port Hedland inward towards Marble Bar would be a great factor in the development of that district. The second industry of the State finds no place in this Speech. I refer to the pastoral, which is our second largest producing industry. I have examined the returns, and find that up to December, 1902, there have been substantial increases in flocks and herds right throughout the country, but more especially in the Northern Province, comprising the two Kimberleys, Gas-

coyne, Roebourne, and Pilbarra. In the Eastern Province also, I think there has been a striking increase of cattle. The prosperity of the Northern Province seems to me but a fitting and a deserved reward for the strenuous labours of those settlers who in the past worked so long and fought such an uphill fight against great difficulties. I wish to put it on record, as it has been omitted from the Speech, that the live stock in the State consists of horses 79,822, an increase of 6,112 in the year; cattle, 436,504, an increase of 37,957; and sheep 2,694,376, an increase of 68,521. The returns show a decrease in the number of pigs in the country; but perhaps that deficiency will be supplied when the farmers devote their attention to producing foodstuffs in larger quantities and at lower prices. And while considering the prospects of the State, it is not satisfactory to learn from the report of Mr. C. F. Gale, our Chief Inspector of Fisheries, that during 1902 the imports of preserved fish amounted to £43,672, being an increase on the previous year of £6,675. Another fact in that return deserves notice. Licenses were issued to 453 fishermen of these nationalities: British 213, Italians 124, Scandinavians 66, Austrians 16, Germans 14, Japanese 10, and Greeks 10. Less than half of those licensed fishermen are of our own race. May we hope they are more profitably employed? When we consider the waters teeming with edible fish, the ready markets, and the prices almost prohibitive to the mass of the people, we can hardly feel that the hope is well founded. I am glad to see that a trawl has been introduced to this State, and I trust it will have the effect of greatly increasing our fish supply. In another paragraph the Government promise to bring in an Electoral Bill and a Constitutional Reform Bill; and these proposals at once raise the question of time: whether it be opportune, at the fag end and in the last year of a Parliament's life to meddle with so grave a matter. There seems to be a prevalent idea that it is a normal function of Government always to legislate for change, and that a Government which passes through a session without introducing some measure of innovation has practically betrayed its unworthiness to rule. In altering the Constitution

Act, the very foundation of our liberties is disturbed. Taking the definition of Constitutional Government as "Government with authority limited by law, controlled by opinion, and respecting the rights and freedom of everyone," I believe that public opinion will always indicate with tolerable clearness the right time and the proper manner in which constitutional readjustments should be made. This is the last year of a Parliamentary session, and the whole of the members of one House and one-third of the members of another are soon to face their constituents. I was about to use an expression from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; but I will not say that many of those members will correspond to the description of "Mr. Facing-Both-Ways," though I know that when candidates go before their constituents they try to catch every favourable wind that blows. But I ask, "Is this a proper time to make such a grave alteration?" I hope, also, that when the proposed Bill is brought in we shall find it different from the Bill of last year, and that it will include the franchise on which the members of these Houses are to be elected, as well as machinery for redistributing the seats in both. And if any electoral law be brought in, I hope the measure will be absolutely clear and certain; that while professing to give the electors certain rights with one hand, it will not, by any artifice, purloin those rights with the other. Our present electoral roll, and the manner of its working, are altogether unsatisfactory. Before concluding these remarks on constitutional reform, I should like to give my opinion as to the attitude which should be adopted by an ideal Legislative Council. It should take a view of things political, undisturbed and undistorted by the promptings of interest or prejudice, in complete independence of all classes, and fully relying on the better intelligence of the people. And though I am not one of those who are always seeking to pull to pieces or to readjust the machinery of Government, yet I am even farther removed from those who fear evil consequences from change when it comes at its proper time, as it necessarily must come; for there is no finality whatever in politics. I am glad to notice in the Speech that the Government have seen the necessity for

bringing Fremantle into direct communication with the South-Western Railway. A new line would ease the traffic between Perth and Fremantle, and would open out a very desirable tract of country. The proposed route is not mentioned in the Speech; though I hope afterwards to have an assurance that this is but the commencement of a Fremantle-Armadale line by way of Jandakot. Former Ministers of the Crown--the Hon. F. H. Piesse, Director of Public Works, and the Hon. George Throssell--publicly declared that they thought the line ought to go through the Jandakot Area. On the strength of those declarations many settlers have with great difficulty stuck to their holdings and expended much money in improving them; and if only for the sake of upholding confidence in the Administration, I think there ought to be some sort of continuity in Ministerial announcements and engagements. I am aware that in this matter the interests of the State rather than private and local interests, which are sometimes selfish, should be consulted; but the great need in the Jandakot district is roads, and fortunately there is good road-making material to be had at Armadale, where blue-metal, ironstone, and gravel are abundant. This railway proposal has often been before the public; the 37 reasons given for it have often been discussed; and that it would be useful in bringing heavy material, such as timber, stone, and coal, direct to Fremantle, saving extra haulage to Perth, is freely acknowledged. And now I will mention another plea--it is such a little railway. Only about eight or nine miles of line need be constructed, and through very level country; and surely such an undertaking is not beyond the resources of this great State. The next subject on which I shall say a few words is education; and in these remarks I wish to be very guarded. That care and solicitude are exercised in the education of the young must give pleasure to every good citizen; for all admit that increased prosperity and material progress largely depend on whether the intelligence of the community is quickened. The means proposed may be open to criticism, but education itself is of prime importance

to every community. In the words of a poet,

When ignorance enters folly is at hand :

Learning is better far than house and land.

The primary system of education in this country has been pretty well settled, but I am glad to see that it is to be enlarged. There is one remark I should like to make. When a school is erected in a district, do not make the building like a shoe, just to fit the foot at the time, but make the school a little larger, be a little hopeful, so as to hold 50 or 100 more pupils: then we shall not have the patching and alterations which go on throughout the State. Perhaps it is not generally known that in England the interest of the State in elementary education dates back only to 1832, three years after this Colony was founded. Before that time all elementary education had been left to voluntary, local, or private effort. Even now in England there is no help whatever given to secondary or intermediate education. Secondary education in the old time resulted from testaments and deeds of gift by munificent founders, and I am glad to see in the Governor's Speech that the Government look for bequests and deeds of gift from wealthy citizens in this State. The ground of secondary education has in a great measure in this State been covered by religious bodies: for instance the Christian Brothers and Scots Colleges, or conducted as a matter of private enterprise, for instance the Guildford Grammar School. Personally, I believe in this diversity of systems for two reasons: it prevents a stereotyped style of education, and also induces the schools to benefit by the aid of emulation and competition. There are certain great considerations about this question which I shall leave for another occasion. We do not read in the Speech whether the present High School is to be rebuilt and its educational scheme enlarged, or whether another secondary school is to be established. But the Government plainly desire a clear course from the infant school to the University. As to a University, this provision should receive general support; for in 1901 a motion was passed in this House in these words: "This House is of opinion that the advisability of at once establishing a university or university institute demands, in the best

interests of the State the immediate consideration of the Government." This setting apart of a large area of ground as a special endowment is a practical advance in our wishes. In 1785 the United States passed an Ordinance that all States thereafter to be added to the Union should give one-sixteenth part of the public lands of the State as a reservation for the purpose of supplying a school fund. Other schools, as our State advances, will have to be provided. Special schools for mines and agriculture, and I venture to say a school of commerce, will be needed. The new University of Birmingham has already established a faculty of commerce. According to the Speech, the technical schools are going to receive support. There is one matter I fancy I have omitted. I was sorry to see that the position of the Fremantle Dock had not been located. Every person in Fremantle is supposed to have an opinion as to the proper position of the dock, and my opinion, given for what it is worth, is that the dock ought to be near the old bathing place near Arthur Head. I congratulate the Government on the appointment of a Harbour Trust, and I congratulate that body on their half-year's labour. The Harbour Trust have handled a net revenue of £22,517, which has been handed to the Treasurer. The Railway Department formerly dealt with this business and kept no separate account; therefore we do not know the exact amount received previously. I am pleased to know from my observations that the Harbour Trust have conducted their duties and business in a fair and equitable manner. There have been some rumours that the subsidised steamer "Julia Percy," running from Fremantle to Geraldton, is receiving undue favours, but I am sure all will be treated alike, and in a just and equitable manner. I beg to move the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East): Sir, I have much pleasure in seconding the Address which has been so ably and so eloquently proposed by Mr. Briggs. Before touching on the subject-matter of the Speech itself, may I be permitted to offer my hearty congratulations to Mr. Kingsmill on his election to this House, and also on his appointment to the leadership of this House. We deeply

regret having lost our late leader, Dr. Jameson; but I take it as a distinctive compliment to this House that when our late Governor, Sir A. Lawley, required a gentleman to fulfil the very important position of Commissioner of Crown Lands in the Transvaal, he thought fit to take the Minister for Lands from this Chamber. In looking at the Speech, we are reminded that since last we met a new Governor has been appointed to the State, and I think we are to be congratulated on the choice by His Majesty of the gentleman he has sent out here. Speaking from first impressions, I think Sir Frederick and Lady Bedford bid fair to find a warm corner in our hearts; and I think I am only expressing the thoughts and wishes of members when I say I hope they may find a home amongst us in the truest and highest sense of the word. I do not intend to talk at any length on the Speech, but there are one or two subjects I ought to touch upon shortly. One is reminded by the Speech that the Coolgardie Water Scheme was opened in January last. I do not think the boon to the goldfields and to the entire State can be over-estimated. The thanks of the people are due to the present Government for the way in which they pushed on the work after they came into office. I also think the thanks of the country are due to Sir John Forrest, the initiator of the scheme, although I, with many others who have lived on the goldfields for a number of years, think the same result could have been arrived at with the expenditure of half the money which the scheme has cost. I maintain that if reservoirs had been constructed in different parts of the goldfields sufficient water could have been conserved, and I am quite safe in saying at half the cost of the present scheme, in which case we would have had a much less capital to pay interest on, the wear and tear would have been much less, and altogether the State would have been burdened with a much smaller debt. I cannot agree with many matters connected with this water scheme. If ever there was a national work, this water scheme was one, and I think it is unfair and unjust that the goldfields people should be burdened with the whole of the cost of the work. Why is not the Cool-

gardie Water Scheme treated like other national works are treated? The whole State benefits, either directly or indirectly, from the work. Take the Great Southern Railway, the Fremantle Harbour Works, or any other national work, the particular part of the country directly served is not made to bear the whole burden of sinking fund and interest. It is unfair in the extreme that the goldfields people should have to find the money for sinking fund and interest for the water scheme. I agree that the Government were quite right in having a big function at the opening of the scheme, and although I do not know what the cost of the celebrations was, it was worth the money. We know we have a great State with immense possibilities in agriculture and mining; still we cannot close our eyes to the fact that a great amount of prejudice or ignorance prevails outside the State, even in the sister States, about this country, and any money spent in breaking down that prejudice or in removing the ignorance that exists is well spent. Referring to the paragraph which deals with the Public Service Commission, I very much regret to learn that the commission will not finish its labours before the end of the present year. This is all the more to be regretted seeing the commission has been in existence for 12 months, and it is also to be regretted that the final report will not be placed before this Parliament, as a general election is to follow the close of this session. It was at the instigation of Parliament that the commission was appointed, and I take it that Parliament, and Parliament only, can deal with the report. I think an effort should be made to have the report on the table of the House before Parliament prorogues. The next item I wish to mention is the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the timber industry. The Government are certainly to be commended for this action. We have in our timber a valuable asset, the source of a big industry, which I think I am right in saying is second only to the gold-mining industry as an employer of labour.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What about the agricultural industry?

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: I stand corrected. I am glad the Government have taken action to preserve our valuable forests. I have had some experience of

timber, and I believe we have here a hardwood second to none in the world. I trust the commission will recommend a system of planting, which I regret to say has hitherto been neglected both here and in the Eastern States. The Speech reads: "The progress made during the year has been steady and continuous." Certainly, we may reflect with pleasure that some six years ago our total gold output was less than half-a-million ounces, while this year, I venture to say, it will exceed two million ounces, a four-fold increase in six years, while we have now a dividend list showing a total of 1½ millions sterling from gold-mining companies only. Six years ago we had in our agricultural districts about 100,000 acres under crop, while to-day we have 220,000 to 230,000, a fourfold increase again, in the same period. The same gratifying result is shown in our population, which is regularly increasing; and we must agree with the Government that our progress is steady and continuous. But touching the concluding part of the paragraph containing this statement, I cannot for one moment admit that I am in accord with the Ministry. It reads: "And our financial position practically reflects the general prosperity." I maintain that it does not. We in this small State, with a population of a little over 200,000 people, are taxed to the extent of £4,000,000 a year. That is an enormous revenue to derive from a mere handful of people; and, after all, we are only a handful. Look at the returns showing the sums of money sent away every month to the Eastern States. Why should that money be lost? Why do we see working men living here year after year, yet keeping their wives and families in the Eastern States? There can be but one answer to that: the high cost of living. [HON. C. A. PRESSE: It is higher there.] It does not look like it. It seems to me a short-sighted policy for the Government to retain all these customs duties and bolster up the revenue to that extent—for what? Simply to drive people out of the State or to keep out their wives and families, while we raise no less than £1,000,000 of that revenue from food duties only, duties on articles which cannot be grown, or are not grown, in this State. Another class

of impost which greatly swells the revenue is the preferential rates obtaining on the goldfields lines. This is a most unjust and unfair tax, which presses solely on the goldfields people; and Parliament should at once take it into consideration and have it abolished. I notice we are again to have Bills for the redistribution of seats and the alteration of the Constitution. I certainly believe we ought to have a redistribution of seats. The present differences in the electorates and the provinces are too great. Take the province for which I sit, it has an electoral roll of some 4,000, while the North Province, with 300 electors, returns the same number of members. I do not wish to deny to those small centres their proper share of representation; but I think the present differences are too great, and should not be allowed longer to continue. Regarding the extension of the railway system from Morgans to Laverton, I think this a good work, which is thoroughly justified. Having an intimate knowledge of the country, I have no hesitation in saying that the line will repay the money spent on it. I notice it is the intention of the Government to build a line from Collie to a point on the Great Southern Railway; and for this they are certainly to be commended. It would be nothing short of a public calamity if we did not take advantage of the large influx of people in search of land, and did not induce them to bring others. I understand the line will open up some 500,000 acres of good agricultural land; and if that be true it ought to be constructed. While on the subject of railways, I must express my deep regret that no mention is made of that very important work, the Esperance Railway. This line would not only give railway communication to a very important goldfield, Norseman, which now produces some 40,000 ounces of gold per month, but would open up good agricultural land also; and why not open up that land as well as the Collie? The failure to move in that direction is another injustice to this House, which on the 11th December last passed, by a big majority, a resolution that, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a railway connecting Esperance Bay to the Eastern Goldfields should be constructed at an early date. I much regret

that the Government have not thought fit to take any notice of that resolution, or to declare in this Speech their intention of constructing the line. I trust the project will be farther considered, and that we shall subsequently have a Bill. Coming to the latter part of the Speech, I notice that we are, as usual, to have a large variety of measures introduced, including Bills relating to hospitals, factories, public health, early closing, and railways. As to hospitals, it is a matter of opinion whether the present system should be altered. I am quite aware that they cost the State a large sum to maintain—I think £60,000 or £70,000 a year. At the same time, if they are to be maintained solely by voluntary subscription, the whole burden will fall on a few charitable people, and in every community the charitable are in a minority; whereas the present system spreads the burden over the whole population, and every one contributes according to his means. I see it is intended to introduce a Factories Bill. Last session this Chamber dealt with that measure, and I have not changed my opinions on the subject. It is very doubtful whether a Factories Act is needed in this State. First of all, have we any factories? It may be as well to have factories before we legislate for them. And secondly, seeing that we have a Conciliation and Arbitration Act and numerous Health Acts, I seriously doubt whether there is any need for a Factories Act. I am certainly much more favourable to the next paragraph in the Speech, which states that we are to consolidate and amend existing legislation. I think we may well devote all our time to that matter, and leave new legislation alone. The consolidation of our Acts would prove a great convenience, not to lawyers only but to the whole community, as all our statutes have been so frequently amended that it takes a day to find out what is in an Act and what is not. I had intended to touch on a few other subjects, but as the hour is late I shall conclude.

On motion by HON. W. MALEY, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned until the next Tuesday afternoon, at 4-30 o'clock.