

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd July, 1908.

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### OPENING OF FIFTH SESSION.

The Legislative Assembly met at three o'clock p.m., pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Acting Clerk.

In obedience to summons, Mr. Speaker (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) and hon. members proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber; and having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council report, *ante*), they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Fremantle Graving Dock, Special Report by Sir Whately Eliot, M.I.C.E. 2, Bylaws of the Municipalities of Boulder (2), Bunbury, Coolgardie, Day Dawn, Esperance, Fremantle (2), Guildford, Leonora, Menzies, Midland Junction, Nannine (2), North Perth, Perth (3), Queen's Park, Subiaco, Victoria Park, and Roebourne. 3, Regulations under the Game Act 1892, and the Game Act Amendment Act 1907. 4, Regulation under the Shark Bay Pearl-shell Fishery. 5, Regulations under the State Children Act, 1907. 6, Report by the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year ended 31st December, 1906. 7, Report by the Superintendent of the Labour Bureau for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

By the Treasurer: 1, Report of the Education Department for the year 1907. 2, Regulations under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. 3, Land and Income Tax Handbook.

By the Minister for Mines and Railways: 1, Report of the Department of Mines for the year 1907. 2, Mining Act 1904—Amendment of Regulation 163. 3, Mines Regulation Act, 1906—Addition to Regulation 4. 4, Railway Refreshment Rooms By-laws; also Reports in accordance with Sections 54 and 83 for

quarters ending 31st December 1907, and 31st March 1908.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Roads Boards By-laws of Perth, Upper Chapman, Northam, Geraldton District, Beverley, Marble Bar (2), Brunswick, Yalgoo, Nelson, Victoria Plains, Nullagine, Northampton, Minilya, Kelmescott, and Kojonup Boards.

### QUESTION—FREMANTLE DOCK, EXPERT'S FEE.

Mr. DRAPER asked the Premier (without notice): What fee was paid to Sir Whately Eliot for advising on the Fremantle Graving Dock?

The PREMIER replied: Six hundred and sixty pounds, exclusive of £50 for personal expenses while in the State, and £123 for return passage to the State.

### BILL—RESERVE REDEDICATION.

Introduced by the Premier (to assert privilege), and read a first time.

### DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Motion to Adopt.*

Mr. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) said: I rise to move the adoption of the following Address in reply to his Excellency's Speech:—

*May it please your Excellency,—We the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament."*

I do so with mixed feelings—feelings of pleasure and feelings of regret—pleasure at having had the honour bestowed on me this afternoon of moving the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, for a Government that I believe is and has been honestly endeavouring to promote the best interests of this State and to develop its enormous industries with the small amount of resources at its disposal. More especially am I pleased on this occasion because I realise that this Government,

the first I have had the pleasure of supporting, is the first Government which, since I have occupied a place in this House, has paid any attention to the development of the North-Western portion of this State. Indeed it would be ungenerous of me as a Northern member if I did not support the Ministry in this matter; it would be unbecoming on my part and inconsistent, seeing that in the past I have always opposed Ministries, as far as I was able to do so, for not paying more attention to the development of that portion of the State, realising as I do that it is certainly the richest portion of Western Australia, though the one that has been most neglected. I say "feelings of regret" because, recognising the amount of good work the Government have been endeavouring to do, I regret that this task has not been placed in better hands; because I fear that I may not be able to adequately express my true feelings and the appreciation of the many citizens of the North at the attempt the Government are making in developing that portion of the State. Mr. Speaker, first let me congratulate you on your apparent health, and let us hope that you are one of those who still retain the confidence of their electors, and that you will be once more returned to this House to hold the same position you now hold and to perform those duties which fall on you in the same impartial manner as has characterised your actions in the past. (General applause.) Some hon. members may complain that the Address-in-Reply contains very little, perhaps nothing; but it does not necessarily mean that there is nothing to do. Much as I may flatter the Government, I would not suggest that they have done all that is necessary, and that therefore there is nothing to do; but it would be incorrect for a dying or expiring Parliament to attempt legislation or works of great magnitude at this stage. That being recognised, it is incumbent upon every member of this House to lose as little time as possible during this session, and to do everything he possibly can to assist the Government in getting to the country. There are many members on the Opposition side of the House who are as anxious to get to the country as

members on this side are. [Mr. Collier: Anxious to get back.] That naturally follows; we are all anxious to get back, for none like to be beaten. Members who want to get away quickly may say there is nothing in it after all; but I have noticed that we are all ready and eager to fight opponents who put up against us. We must give the electors an opportunity of returning members to the House charged with a fresh mandate from the people of the country. Let us now look at the problems which are before the country. The most important of them is the question of finance. Since the introduction of that new game, the Federal revenue grab, which has been played with very great success in another part of the world, this State has suffered most severely. We all recognise that this country is as yet in an undeveloped condition, that the development of this great State must be continued, and we also recognise that the interest on our loans must be paid, that the sinking fund must be kept up; we cannot for one instant think about repudiating our debts or of leaving the interest unpaid. We have to consider how our many necessary works are to be carried on, seeing that the revenue is what it is at the present time and that, small as it is, a large portion is being taken from us at very short notice. The people in Western Australia are all too heavily taxed now, and I do not think there is any community in the world so heavily taxed as that of this State. It must not be forgotten that the burden of taxation falls upon a comparatively small portion of our population and it is easy to understand the enormous amount of revenue now being contributed by those few taxpayers. [Mr. Johnson: Would you sooner revert back to Customs taxation?] To obtain revenue through the Customs is not by any means the most unfair form of taxation, since everyone pays a proportion. I have a very great objection to anything approaching class taxation, and it must be recognised that a land and income tax comes distinctly under that head. In speaking of the income tax as a class tax I do not wish it to be understood that, as far as I person-

ally am concerned, I object to that form of taxation, but it must be remembered that at the present time that tax is falling on a very small portion of the population. Since we have adopted the principle of old age pensions—which I have never quarrelled with yet, and I hope I never shall do so—I think it would have been most generous on the part of those members sitting on the Opposition side had they consented to the limit being fixed at a lower rate. Then there would have been more justification for the contribution we now pay towards the old age pensions fund. [Mr. Bolton: You have always dodged it and called it a Commonwealth matter.] I am well aware it is a Commonwealth matter, but will not this State have to contribute towards the fund? It makes no difference if a proportion of the revenue is taken from us for that purpose. I say it would have been more justifiable or gracious on the part of members on that side of the House had they consented to fixing a limit at a lower rate instead of the high rate at which it was fixed. However, in the circumstances it is necessary that the most rigid economy should be effected. To my mind it is one of the few things left to us. I say effect economies in every direction, but of course commensurate with prudence and efficiency. I do not wish either to be sacrificed for the sake of economies; but I can say that I think the Fremantle Dock might stand over for a little while. [Mr. Bolton: But not those freezing works in the North, I suppose.] The freezing works I shall deal with later on. I also say unhesitatingly that we are not at the present time in a position to spend approximately a million of money in conserving water for Perth while we have such an enormous surplus of water at Mundaring. The Mundaring water is good enough for Perth people—any amount. That surplus at Mundaring should be utilised for the requirements of the Perth people until it is found to be required for the purpose for which it was originally intended. When that time approaches—these things do not come down as sud-

denly as winter or summer; we will see when that time is approaching—we can then meet the requirements by the construction of a weir for water supply at Canning; but until we see indications of the necessity in that direction, I say we are not justified in spending that large sum of money. Far better would it be to spend that amount of money in additional railways, or in developing the pastoral or agricultural industries; more good would be derived, and it would be better for the people of the State. I also recommend that the stamp duties be increased. There is room for that. The licensing fees should certainly be increased. The land tax might be increased, but in a form which would only affect unused lands. I would relieve entirely all lands that are being effectively worked and occupied; but lands that are left in a state of nature and within close proximity to our railway systems, if they are not being properly developed, should contribute considerably towards the revenue of the State. [Mr. Scaddan: That would be a tax on agricultural land.] That it would be a tax on agricultural land I am prepared to admit; but it would also be a tax on the man who owns that piece of agricultural land and who has not the inclination to use it. I would put him in such a position that he would be forced to use the land, or sell it or give it to somebody else to put it to its proper use. [Mr. Angwin: Or take it away from him.] I do not believe in confiscation, but I would go as near it as my conscience will allow, and I can assure the hon. member who interjected that it would get very near to it in several matters. I maintain that all other lands and all honest toilers of the soil should be left without taxation, at any rate while they are developing their holdings. When the time arrives that their holdings are developed and they are deriving an income, they will not grudge the amount of tax payable on that income. I also advocate that the present income tax could honestly be increased. That might astonish the hon. member who interjected just now. Also the limit could be re-

duced somewhat. [*Mr. Walker*: That is what you want, to make the poor man pay.] The hon. member quite misunderstands me and quite misrepresents me. I do not say that the man receiving £200 a year is a poor man, unless he has a large family, and then there are allowances made for that. However, the small amount he would pay on an income of £200 a year I am perfectly certain would only deprive him probably of a few glasses of beer. In common with many of my fellow citizens I have been extremely pleased to hear that Mr. Short has been appointed Commissioner of Railways; and I congratulate the Government on the step they have taken. [*Mr. Johnson*: He is not appointed yet.] That gentleman has proved his worth, and has earned his spurs. He rightly deserves the appointment which I am given to understand by the Premier's speech at Bunbury is to be or has been made. I am also pleased to hear that the Government have made some contract or have entered into some agreement with either the pastoralists or the wholesale butchers for the construction of freezing works in the North-West of this State. It will be remembered that I advocated this, or I supported the Government on this question last session; and I also mentioned that I did so on the distinct understanding that the interests of the consumers were to be protected. I shall be extremely disappointed, when the details of this contract become public, if I find that the Government have not done so. I mean to say that the first duty of a Government is to see that wholesome foods are given to the people and at a reasonable price. We have abundance of stock depasturing on leasehold land, on Government land in the Kimberley district; and I say that the Government will have been wanting in their duty to the people if they have made any contract with the squatters in that country, contributing so large a sum of money, £30,000 or £40,000, and have not safeguarded the interests of the consumers in the principal centres of this State. [*Mr. Walker*: In what way?] By seeing that the prices at

which the meat is retailed or disposed of are reasonable. In the circumstances I think the Government would be justified in doing so. The price at which a man retails his meat to the consumer must necessarily depend on the price charged to him by the middleman. [*Mr. Scaddan*: By the ring.] By the "ring," if the hon. member so desires to call it. I am also pleased to congratulate the Government on their attempts and endeavours to open up the huge pastoral areas in the North by artesian boring; and I am pleased to state that on every occasion the efforts have met with the utmost success. It is impossible to overrate the advantage and value to the pastoral industry of this kind of work which must eventually lead to the cheapening of the price of meat to the poorer people. [*Member*: Not necessarily.] It must necessarily lead to it. A conspicuous feature of the Speech is the absence of any reference to a Rabbit Bill or a Vermin Bill, which we were promised some time ago would be introduced at an early date. I ask the Government, what is the use of doing all they can to encourage and foster our agricultural and pastoral industries if they are going to stand by and see the whole country overrun by rabbits? It is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that the rabbits are steadily and surely encroaching, and if we stand calmly by and allow them to continue to encroach at the rate they are now doing it is only a question of time when the whole country will be overrun and devastated by them. [*Member*: Make the squatters pay.] I was waiting for that interjection. Let me remind the member who interjected that the squatters have been doing their utmost for the past two years to get the Government to allow them to pay. My quarrel with the Government is that they will not give us the legislation necessary to allow us to pay. [*Member*: We will help you in that.] I wish the member would. All we ask the Government to do is to legislate to enable us to protect ourselves. I want to go farther than that, for I desire the Government to protect the enormous areas of available pastoral land which lie

in the northern portion of this State. While it is only reasonable and fair to ask the squatter to protect his area, is it so to ask him to protect the unprotected land for hundreds of miles around him? That would not be a fair thing, and no member would ask him to do it. All the squatter asks is that he should be allowed to protect his own holding—the land from which he gets his revenue and on which he pays interest. That is only fair and just, and I will be with the House in making him provide that protection. Some time ago it was stated that the Government intended to institute a State steamer service along the coast in order that the people in that part of the country should be able to get their produce to market at something approaching a reasonable rate. There was a great flourish of trumpets at the time, but, so far as I can learn, the scheme has fallen through: the trumpet burst. I am not inclined to say I would support the Government in putting on a State steamer to ply up and down the coast, but I think they should take some steps towards seeing that the rates and freights along that coast are kept somewhere within reasonable bounds. [Mr. Bolton: That can be done by competition.] Yes, if there were sufficient trade along the coast to warrant the competition, but in the circumstances competition is impossible. If the member would only look closely into the state of affairs along the coast he would find that to be so. Since we have to contribute towards the Federal mail service up and down the coast it was the duty of the Government, when the contract was being made, to see that a reasonable schedule of rates and freights was inserted. I hope the Government will remember this suggestion when the next contract comes before them for signature. The present contract will expire in a short time and a new one will then have to be prepared. I congratulate the Government upon attempting to throw a little more light upon the North-West coast. It is only by throwing light upon the country they can induce immigrants to go there. I hope the result will be that more immigrants will be attracted to that part of the country in a short time. The risks which

steamers plying, and people travelling, along that coast take they are little aware of; but none having the slightest idea of those risks would hesitate in congratulating the Government upon the steps they have taken. Not only will this work do away with the risks, but it will also save an enormous amount of time and, indirectly, lead to a reduction of rates. We are also pleased to see that the Government still intend to carry on the policy of building agricultural railways. I hope, however, they will hasten slowly, and will use their very best endeavours to settle all the land within a reasonable distance of the railways already built before constructing other lines which will be unsettled for many years. We have already a large railway system in the State and we have agricultural lands adjacent to the lines capable of carrying one million people, and yet we are going to spend more money in building extra railways to accommodate settlers, whereas we have not paid the necessary attention to the proper settlement of areas within reach of railways. Let us first settle those lands before building new railways.

Mr. J. BREBBER (North Perth): I am pleased to have the privilege of seconding the Address-in-Reply. Before dealing with the Speech itself I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on again presiding over this Assembly. I wish to congratulate the Government upon the important legislation they have foreshadowed in the short Speech presented to us. The question of amending the Constitution Act is referred to first of all, and the object of the amendment is to place the franchise of the Upper House upon a more fair and equitable basis. I am pleased to see that the Government have taken that course, but I regret they have not gone farther and proposed to make a considerable reduction in the number of members of both Houses. Considering the population of the State we are over-represented with 30 members in the Legislative Council and 50 members in the Legislative Assembly. When the Government are considering the alteration of the Constitution Act they might also consider the question of

putting the electorates on a fairer basis. Take the electorate I represent. The new roll will contain 9,000 names. I consider that an electorate with a roll of that size should have at least a second representative. On the other hand there are electorates whose size could be advisedly increased. The numbers in the electorate of the hon. member who moved the adoption of the Address-in-Reply (Gascoyne) might very well be raised with advantage to the State and with no disadvantage to the hon. member. I think these are matters the Government might very well take into consideration if they are amending the Constitution at all. Again I would like to congratulate the Government on the proposal to bring forward a Bill for the better regulation of the liquor traffic in this State; and I am pleased to see they are moving in the direction of gathering information from unbiased sources in New Zealand and the other States; because then we will be in a better position to judge what is the best measure to bring in to regulate that traffic. I also congratulate the Government on carrying on the policy of extending agricultural railways. I think it has been, if not the most successful, at least one of the most successful policies any Government has brought into force since the establishment of Responsible Government in this State. I should like to point out where the success of this policy is so pronounced. The area under crop has increased by 124,400 acres since 1906; and since this Government took office the export value of wheat increased by £96,675, that of flour by £34,372, and that of lambs and mutton by £5,586. The value of the export of these commodities last year was £136,633; and seeing that we have 124,400 acres more under cultivation than when these exports were made, we can reasonably expect a great advance next season. We are justified in believing that our export trade will advance in proportion to the greater area of land brought under cultivation. There can be no greater justification than these figures for the policy the Government have adopted in sending out spur railways into the agricultural areas. An-

other thing I would point out is that this increase in our agricultural industries has taken place in the face of the financial difficulties arising between the Commonwealth and this State. It is unnecessary for me to say that this State as a whole recognises that we are not getting a fair deal from the Commonwealth with regard to our finances. Our finances have been crippled by the Commonwealth. The Federal authorities have taken from us the very sinews on which we built up the prosperity of the State and are appropriating them for use outside this State. Yet some of our Federal representatives have the audacity to say to us that it is far better for the State to so appropriate these sums of money than to frivolously spend it for the purposes of the State in extending railways to our agricultural districts to bring returns to the State such as I have pointed out to the House to-day. I say our representatives in the Federal Parliament are not doing justice to this State. They are not looking after the interests of this State. They have not done what they should have done or what was expected of them by those who sent them there. I wish to draw attention to a few other difficulties the State has had to contend with and overcome. The Government has been face to face with two huge labour strikes, one in connection with the timber industry, and the other in connection with the supplying of firewood to the mines. Both strikes were brought to a very successful termination by the judicious mediation of the Government. The Ministry deserve every credit for settling these huge labour disturbances and for saving the State an expenditure which was pressing upon the industries and the people more than would be expected considering the number of people engaged in the troubles. I would like, before sitting down, to draw attention to the depression supposed to exist here at the present time. We must recognise that the city and large towns of the State are going through a period of serious depression, but I am glad to say that period cannot last. Our agricultural, mining, timber and coal in-

dustries are increasing every day, and it is impossible to conceive that these primary industries should prosper as they are doing without at the same time benefiting the city, the large towns, and the community generally. I look forward with certainty to the time when the tide of prosperity in the agricultural, mining, and timber industries will flow into the towns and benefit the country as a whole. I do not think it is advisable to continue a speech of this sort to any great length. The session is intended to be a short one, and it is advisable for us to get it over at the earliest possible date so as to give us an opportunity, as is suggested in the Speech, to go to the people, and that before important legislation is introduced the views of the people upon it should be heard and their mandate expressed on election day. I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

On motion by *Mr. Taylor*, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Premier moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until the next Tuesday, at 4.30 p.m.

Question passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4.15 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 28th July, 1908.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

*Swearing-in.*

*Hon. C. J. Piessé* (South-East), who was absent at the previous sitting, took the oath, and subscribed the Roll.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By *the Colonial Secretary*: Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1902—Return of Registered Industrial Unions, 31st December, 1907; The Land Act, 1898 (Section 109)—Resumption from Pastoral Leases; Cemeteries Acts, 1897 and 1899—Notices and By-laws published under the provisions of the Cemeteries Acts; Land Act, 1898, and Amendment Act, 1902—Timber Tramway Permits; Fishing and Pearl Shell Industries for year ending 31st December, 1907—Report on; Regulation relating to the management and control of Gaols and Prisoners; Fremantle Harbour Trust Regulations; Superintendent of Labour Bureau—Report of for year ending 31st December, 1907; Roads Act, 1902, Public Works Department—By-laws of the following Road Boards:—Nullagine, Marble Bar, Victoria Plains, Yalgoo, Nelson, Brunswick, Marble Bar, Beverley, Minilya, Northampton, Geraldton, Kelmescott, Northam, Kojonup, Perth, Upper Chapman; Government Railways Refreshment Rooms, By-laws under; Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907—Regulations.

#### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by *the Colonial Secretary*, Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

*Printing Committee*—The President, Hon. G. Randell, and the mover.