

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 2nd July, 1912.

Obituary: Hon. F. H. Piesse, C.M.G. PAGE 35

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

OBITUARY—HON. F. H. PIESSE, C.M.G.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): Since we last met, one whom we all revered, one to whom Western Australia owes much, has gone to his rest. I allude to the late Hon. F. H. Piesse, who on Saturday last was stricken down by death after a prolonged period of suffering. The late Mr. Piesse was not a member of this House. He had never been a member of this House, but his name occupied an honoured place in the pages of Western Australia's political history. A native of Western Australia, he served for eighteen years in the Legislative Assembly, and he was returned by his electors unopposed election after election, returned by those who were in the best position to form an accurate estimate as to his worth. For four and a half years he filled the position of Minister for Works and Railways, and during that time controlled great undertakings with conspicuous success, and I think the best proof of his capacity is afforded by the fact that shortly after his retirement from office it was found necessary to place the management of the railways in the hands of a Commissioner relieved from all the anxieties and worries of political life. The State owes the late Mr. Piesse much; but I do not think it is in any way derogatory to add that the district in which he lived owes him more. He built it up, and to a large degree he assisted to make it what it is to-day, not only by his effective representation in Parliament, but also by his continuous encouragement and wide-spread financial assistance to those who were struggling on the land. The day, it seems to me, must be far distant,

many generations off, before the name of Mr. Piesse will be forgotten in the Katanning district. And now of his private character: the Latin proverb which counsels us to speak only what is good of the dead has no application here. It is in no sense apropos. There is no one who can speak badly of the late Mr. Piesse, and in the strife of parties very often harsh things are said, but no one ever questioned the integrity, the honour, the patriotism, and the well-ordered life of our departed friend. Courteous, amiable, kind-hearted and lofty-minded he was incapable of a bitter word or of an unfair action. I move—

That out of respect to the memory of the late Hon. Frederick Henry Piesse, C.M.G., the House do now adjourn, and a message of condolence be sent by the Hon. the President to his widow and family.

Hon. Sir J. W. HACKETT (South-West): I rise with a melancholy pleasure which I am sorry to say has been my lot to experience more than once or twice or thrice in this Chamber, to say how heartily I agree with the encomiums passed by the Colonial Secretary on the late Mr. F. H. Piesse. The Colonial Secretary undoubtedly voiced the feelings, not only of all in this Chamber but of all outside. Mr. Piesse from the first took a foremost place, as the Colonial Secretary has pointed out, in the public working of this country. He was one who brought to his task a sound judgment, an impartial mind, and a patriotic ambition to serve his country as well as he could; but I am not sure that it is in the path of politics we look to the chief distinguishing merits of our late member of the Assembly. Mr. Piesse had a rare charm for those who were admitted to his friendship, and those who were not knew him equally well by good name and good repute. It is a fitting tribute to our late member of Parliament that the motion read by the Colonial Secretary should be carried, and carried unanimously. I am certain the name of Piesse will go down for many years as a type of all that was excellent

in public life and all that was desirable in a private citizen. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): I am sure no words of mine can thoroughly express the appreciation in which I know that the late Mr. Piesse was held not only in his public but in his private life. He was one of those men of whom I can say I never heard anything but that he was a thorough gentleman, a man who was a tower of strength in the district, and such men are vastly necessary in this State. I knew Mr. Piesse somewhat; I came into contact with him in his official capacity and privately, and I can only characterise him as one of Nature's true white men.

Question passed; members standing.

House adjourned at 4.40 p.m.

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OBITUARY—HON. F. H. PIE SSE, C.M.G.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker): Since the last gathering of the Assembly, death, the great leveller, and great reconciler, has taken from our midst a distinguished former member of the Assembly, and an able, conscientious and worthy citizen of our great State. I am sure, although not at present a member of the Assembly, his loss is a loss to

the whole community, but it is particularly a bereavement to his family which is represented by members in the Assembly. The Hon. F. H. Piesse, in the course of his long and active public life, was one of the builders of the great edifice we are proud, collectively now, to call our State. His varied attainments, his great knowledge of the State, his zeal in seeing to the advancement of more than one portion of it, as well as his keen interest in every industry promotive of the welfare of this great portion of the Commonwealth, entitle him to the respect of all citizens irrespective of party or interest. Though we occupied different platforms and our views did not always coincide, I felt for him a warm personal attachment because of his genial character, his love of amity, and his desire, as far as possible, to look to the point of agreement rather than to emphasise the distinctions of differences. He never had a bitter heart to his keenest political opponent; and it is at times like this, when we lose the services of one who has figured so largely in the public eye, that we forget all our bickerings, all our conflicts, all our battles, and remember only those qualities that endear man to man. I shall not dwell at length upon the career of this honourable gentleman who has caused, by his passing away, such sad bereavement, not only to his family, but to an exceedingly large circle of friends and, I may say, to a still wider circle of acquaintances; because his public career is so well known to us, he has been active so freshly in our midst that it would be supererogatory to dwell upon his services; but I will say this much, that his name is associated with the great strides that lifted this State from, almost, a pastoral and fishing colony to the great State now dotted with thriving towns and with this magnificent metropolis. It was in his career as a Minister of the Crown that those gigantic public undertakings at least took a number of their steps towards completion—the building of railway lines to connect the metropolis and the port with our now thriving goldfields, the great en-