

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Assembly was dissolved by Proclamation on the 31st January, 1927.

The 13th Parliament was convened for the despatch of business on the 28th July, 1927, and the First Session was commenced on that day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 28th July, 1927.

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causes of the calling together of this Parliament; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly should be first chosen, it is His Excellency's pleasure that you, Members of the Legislative Assembly, repair to the place where you are to sit, and, having been duly sworn by me, in accordance with the terms of a Commission granted to me by His Excellency, you do elect your Speaker, and notify His Excellency of your having done so.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having retired, His Excellency's Commissioner left the Chamber.

Sitting suspended from 12.13 to 2.55 p.m.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at noon pursuant to proclamation.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. B. Parker) read the proclamation.

COMMISSIONER.

His Excellency's Commissioner (His Honour the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Furze McMillan) having entered the Chamber, a message was sent to the Legislative Assembly requesting the presence of members in the Council Chamber.

Members of the Legislative Assembly having arrived accordingly, His Honour the Chief Justice requested the Clerk to read His Excellency's Commission to do all things necessary in his name for the opening of the First Session of the Thirteenth Parliament. The Commission was read.

The Commissioner then read the following statement:—

Mr. President, Hon. Gentlemen of the Legislative Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor to inform you that at three o'clock this afternoon His Excellency will declare to you the

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m., and the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

In opening the First Session of the Thirteenth Parliament of Western Australia for the transaction of public business, I desire to convey my thanks to the people of Western Australia for the expressions of loyalty and attachment to the Throne and Person of His Majesty the King, which were made manifest in the very warm welcome extended to Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York during their recent visit.

Early in the year the Hon. W. C. Angwin left for London to succeed Sir Hal Colebatch as Agent-General for Western Australia. The retiring Agent-General's term

of office was marked by the most faithful and efficient service to the State.

During the year a Delegation from the British Parliamentary Association, headed by the Marquis of Salisbury and Hon. Arthur Henderson, came to Western Australia. My Ministers have noted with pleasure the appreciative manner in which members of the Delegation have spoken of Western Australia's efforts to promote Empire migration and development, and they are looking forward to the forthcoming visit of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Colonel L. C. Amery).

The 1926-27 season was one of the most favourable ever experienced in Western Australia, and records of production were established. The present season has opened favourably, and it is highly probable that further important advances in primary production will be recorded during the current year.

Finance.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1927, was £9,750,833, and the expenditure £9,722,588, leaving a surplus of receipts over expenditure of £28,245.

An important conference to consider a readjustment of the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States was held in Melbourne last month. As an alternative to the payment to the States of the per capita grants—for the abolition of which statutory authority had been given by the Federal Parliament—a scheme was submitted by the Commonwealth Government to the State Premiers to provide for a permanent settlement of the financial question as between the Commonwealth and the States. It will be necessary for the Commonwealth and State Parliaments to statutorily approve the draft scheme as amended by the conference, and the necessary legislation will be introduced for your consideration at an early date.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly—

The condition of land settlement and development in Western Australia to-day is highly satisfactory, and the tremendous in-

creases in primary production are having a beneficent effect upon trade and industry generally. Large sums of money are being invested throughout the agricultural and pastoral areas, adding enormously to the value of the State's permanent assets.

Production Records.

A harvest of 30,041,783 bushels for the 1926-27 season established a new record in wheat production, and exceeded the best yield previously recorded by 6,154,000 bushels.

The area stripped for grain also constituted a record, and totalled 2,574,014 acres, compared with 2,112,032 acres for the previous season.

A further record was established during the year by an advance in the number of sheep within the State from 6,861,795 to 7,436,312 head. Bountiful rains have fallen throughout the pastoral areas, and a large increase in flocks is expected this year.

Wool production for the year amounted to 50,182,045 lbs., being a State record.

Fruit export reached its zenith. Uniformly firm prices were obtained for Western Australian apples in overseas markets.

Land Settlement.

A keen demand for land continues.

The Survey Staff has been strengthened to undertake additional surveys in order to provide new areas for settlement. Several land classifications have been completed and others are in progress. During the current year it is expected that a large number of good blocks will be thrown open for selection.

In the Kimberley district 140 blocks suitable for tropical agriculture were surveyed during the year.

Pastoral.

Great activity is being displayed in the pastoral industry, particularly in the East Murchison area.

Surveys have been carried out in the Ashburton district with a view to locating starting points for pastoral leases, and practically the whole of the leases in the North-West division have been repriced under the provisions of the amending Act passed last session.

Soldier Settlement.

Further consideration has been given to the devaluation of soldier settlement securities. Relief has been granted to 1,113 settlers, involving the cancellation of an aggregate indebtedness of £359,076, recoverable from the Commonwealth Government.

Group Settlement.

A reclassification of all group settlement areas is proceeding.

A board is to be established for the purpose of more effectively dealing with group settlement and adjudicating on the complaints of settlers.

The area now being developed under this head totals 367,105 acres; the population of the groups is 9,337; the expenditure to 30th June, 1927, amounts to £4,680,534.

Agricultural Bank.

Loans to settlers approved by the Agricultural Bank during the year amounted to £599,055.

Experimental Farms.

Experimental farms have been established at Ghooli, east of Southern Cross; at Dampawah, east of Perenjori; and at Salmon Gums.

Muresk Agricultural College.

The Muresk Agricultural College was opened in September last. Additional buildings are to be erected to cope with the increasing demand for enrolment.

Migration.

Owing to the necessity for making a thorough investigation of the position of group settlement, my Ministers deem it advisable to proceed cautiously with the placing of additional migrants in the South-West. They re-affirm their belief, however, that a sound policy of immigration is essential to the development of Western Australia and the welfare of its people.

As a result of the visit of members of the Development and Migration Commission early in the present year, an expenditure of £1,903,134 on public works has been approved under the provisions of the Migration Agreement.

Agricultural Water Supplies.

The importance of providing adequate water supplies for agricultural districts is fully realised. Three major schemes to serve large areas in the wheat belts, estimated to cost £384,000, were commenced during the year. Fifteen water supply stations were constructed in country served by the Norseman-Esperance railway, and 15 reservoirs were completed, or are nearing completion, in other portions of the wheat belt.

Mining.

The value of the gold and mineral production during 1926 amounted to £2,371,864. Gold production alone was valued at £1,857,716.

Despite a set-back to the gold mining industry occasioned by the closing, or partial closing, of some important mines, operations at Wiluna and Glenelg Hills are stimulating interest and are of considerable promise and importance.

The Government has continued its policy of granting liberal assistance for mining development, and of assisting prospectors in their search for new ore bodies and mineral fields.

Following the definite announcement of the Prime Minister that immediate financial aid would not be granted by the Federal Government for the purpose of assisting gold mining in this State, my Ministers will, at an early date, determine how the money allocated from the Federal Disabilities Grant for that purpose shall be employed. Action had been deferred in the hope that the State would be able to co-operate in a co-ordinated plan of assistance.

Forestry.

The value of timber exported during the year again exceeded one and a-half million pounds. Reforestation activities have been steadily expanded, and the extent of pine planting is assuming proportions sufficient to meet the total local demand for soft-woods in future years.

Railways.

Railway collections for the year ended 30th June established a record, due mainly to the exceptional harvest and the general prosperity prevailing throughout the State. A profit of £34,556 was recorded. There are now 3,918 miles of railway open for traffic.

In order to permit the haulage of heavier loads a considerable amount of regrading, relaying, and reballasting was undertaken during the year.

The building of new locomotives and wagon stock at the Midland Junction workshops has proceeded apace, and a heavy programme of construction is now in progress.

Surveys are proceeding for the following railways:—Ejanding Northwards, Boyup Brook-Cranbrook, Kalkalling-Bullfinch, and Brookton-Dale River (re-survey for better grading). The survey for the Manjimup-Mount Barker line will be commenced at an early date, and a Bill will be introduced for a line to serve the country in the Kalgarin district, and east and south thereof.

Tramways.

The tramway system was extended during the year in various directions. A heavy relaying programme is contemplated. The net profit for last year was £0,552.

Electricity Supply.

Good progress has been made with the installation of an additional generating plant at the East Perth Power House. This will add greatly to power capacity, reduce the load on existing plant, and permit of economy in working.

Harbour Improvements.

Improvements to Fremantle Harbour were carried out during the year.

At Geraldton dredging and reclamation work have been continued.

An early report by the Engineer-in-Chief regarding investigations at Bunbury is expected.

Surveys have been undertaken at Esperance with a view to providing up-to-date harbour facilities, and temporary provision has been made to accommodate shipping at the jetty.

Roads and Bridges.

Approximately £500,000 was spent during the year under the Federal Aid Roads Scheme, whilst an amount of £100,000 was expended from funds appropriated under the Migration Agreement to provide group settlement roads. The sum of £38,000 also was disbursed from State funds to provide additional roads on the Peel Estate and to serve the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway.

Trading Concerns.

A busy year was experienced at the State Implement Works, sales totalling £196,000.

State Shipping.

All Western Australian ports from Eucla to Wyndham were regularly served during the year by State shipping, and the service was extended to Java and Singapore.

The M.V. "Koolinda" commenced her running on the North-West coast on the 11th February.

Wyndham Meat Works.

The Wyndham Meat Works have been operated to the full extent of the cattle resources of the East Kimberley area and of the Northern Territory within reach of the works.

Prison Reform.

The Government have acquired 7,500 acres in the Mount Barker district for the purpose of establishing a Penal Outstation and Reformatory Prison. The land will be developed by means of prison labour.

Weights and Measures.

The Weights and Measures Act has been in operation in the metropolitan area since July 1, 1927. Some considerable time must elapse before the provisions of the Act can be enforced throughout the State.

Legislation.

You will be asked to give consideration to measures dealing with—State Insurance, Closer Settlement, Public Hospitals, Local Government; and amendments to the following enactments:—The Constitution Act, The Public Service Act, The Workers' Compensation Act, The Mines Regulation Act, The Electoral Act.

I now declare this session of Parliament open, and trust that Divine Providence may bless your labours in the interests of this State.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

THE PRESIDENT: For the sake of greater accuracy, I have obtained from His Excellency the Governor copies of the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to Parliament. Those copies will be distributed among hon. members.

BILL—TRUSTEE ACT AMENDMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.22]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled "An Act to amend the Trustee Act."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [3.25]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—May it please Your Excellency, We, the members of 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 deliver to Parliament.

Before dealing with the subject of the Speech, I wish to say that I feel sure we are all very pleased at having been honoured recently with a visit from Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York. I also feel certain that the expressions of loyalty which the Duke and Duchess received while in Western Australia would have convinced them that although Australia is far distant from the Mother Land, the spirit of loyalty to the Empire here is at least equal to that which exists in other parts of the British Dominions. During the past year, we have also been favoured with visits from many people of standing in other parts of the Empire. I would particularly refer to the visit of the delegation from the Empire Parliamentary Association. I am convinced that the visit from that delegation will prove to be in the future interests of Western Australia. The more visits we have of this kind, and the more publicity we obtain in the Home Land and other parts of the Empire, the greater must be the advantage to the State. Turning now to the Speech, it is pleasing to realise that notwithstanding the fears which were expressed both before and after the advent of the Labour Government, the position of Western Australia, after three years of Labour admin-

istration, is far better than it has ever been in the history of the State. Taking into consideration the wonderful progress that has been made during the last few years, especially in the primary industries, and also taking into consideration the fact that for many years our financial position was not of the best, those who have the interests of Western Australia at heart must be highly gratified to learn that, principally as the effect of progress in our primary industries, the finances of the State show such great improvement, with the result that for the first time in the course of many years, the Treasurer is able to announce a surplus instead of a deficit. Granted that the surplus is not large, still it is an indication that the present Government are able to handle the State finances in a manner that is advantageous to Western Australia. The gratifying position that has been obtained I regard as attributable chiefly to the sound policy and administrative ability of the Government, who, moreover, are to be congratulated on the fact that at the recent election the people of Western Australia showed their confidence in them by returning them for a further period of office. The policy of the Government has, therefore, been endorsed by the people, and I feel sure that during the coming three years the Government will show that that confidence is not being misplaced. I am convinced that Ministers will carry out the policy which they have placed before the country, and that at the expiration of the next three years the position of the country will be even better than it is to-day. Circumstanced as we are, being a very large State, with, comparatively speaking, a very small population, our problems seem more varied and perhaps greater than those of other States of the Commonwealth. It is on that account that we sometimes feel the difficulties with which we are faced to be almost insuperable. At the same time, taking a survey of our position, we realise that the great advance in land settlement during the last few years brings with it demands for additional facilities, such as agricultural railways, country water supplies, and all those other factors which are essential to the success of our policy of land settlement. Bearing these facts in mind, it speaks well for the Government that during the last three years they have been able to show such wonderful progress in this direction. The basis of prosperity in

this or any other State is the success of the primary industries. Consequently any Government that will institute a sound policy of development along lines that will help to improve the settlement of the State and ensure the success of our agriculturists, must necessarily be of benefit to the State as a whole. Viewed from this standpoint, the records established during last season must be a source of satisfaction, and even delight. When we realise, for instance, that the area stripped for grain last season was something like half a million acres more than in the previous record, that our wheat harvest exceeded 30 million bushels, being 6,000,000 above the previous record, that the number of sheep in the State increased by something like a million head, and that the wool production exceeded all previous records, it must give keen satisfaction to all interested in our State. Rapid expansion has taken place in the agricultural and pastoral areas. As I have said, this will add for the time being to the difficulties the Government will have to face. The policy of the Government in rendering assistance to those engaged in the agricultural and the pastoral industries, particularly in regard to the experimental farms, the appointment of expert advisers and the establishment of our agricultural college and so on, will commend itself to all. I feel sure, notwithstanding the records that were established last season, and even though additional areas may not be put under cultivation to any great extent, that by the policy of the Government in that direction alone we can expect there will be a very great increase in our prosperity. We must realise that many of our settlers are struggling at the present time. They are clearing and cropping land by means that cannot by any stretch of the imagination be deemed to be perfect. They are in that stage when, owing to lack of finance, it is not possible to do that which they know would produce the best results. Also there have been put under cultivation recently large areas that only a few years ago were considered not fit for wheat growing. This has been done on the advice of the experts and as the result of research carried out on the experimental farms. I feel sure that not only will further large areas be brought under cultivation for wheat, but production will be increased as the result of our efforts in that direction. In these circumstances it is no wonder the demand for land is so

keen, and that increased interest is being taken in Western Australia. I read recently of land values in the Eastern States. Knowing some of the districts in the Eastern States, and the prices that certain land has brought, I realise that in this State, by reason of the cheaper cost, there is an opportunity for those prepared to pioneer the country to make a better success of their farming operations than it would be possible to do elsewhere. It is gratifying that we should have had good weather and been blessed with bounteous rainfalls in districts where they are necessary. I hope and trust this season, which already promises well, will continue in that way in order that the pioneers of our land may reap their reward. I have already mentioned that increased settlement means increased demands for agricultural railways and so on. This year, the first time for several years, our railway system has at least made ends meet, and this notwithstanding the fact that those administering that system have had to contend with difficulties previously unknown to them. When we consider the huge mileage of our railways in relation to our relatively small population, and the long lengths of line laid down to serve small scattered communities, it speaks well for the administration that our railways have been brought to that stage where they are at least making ends meet. But there will have to be further developments in this direction. There are many districts not served by railways, districts in which settlers are 30 and even 40 miles away from existing railways, and that too without their having the advantage of decent roads. It will be necessary for the Government to carry out their policy of providing those districts with railways at the earliest possible moment, and to see to it that their road policy also serves as many of those districts as possible. The Speech mentions group settlement. As one who for many years has advocated group settlement as perhaps the only method by which our South-West lands can be satisfactorily settled, I feel that the present Minister for Lands is tackling the question in a business-like way. I hope that as the result of his efforts in the direction indicated in the Speech, the great majority of those people who have come here from the Home land and taken their chance in our group settlement areas will be given an opportunity, not only to make a decent livelihood, but also to establish themselves satisfactorily in the South-West. The group

settlement scheme is a big one, the like of which, I believe, has not been attempted elsewhere. As in all big schemes, a few mistakes have been made. Some of the settlers we have received under the scheme have not been suited to the life, while some of the land selected has not been suited to the purpose. However, I believe that in the long run it will be proved that group settlement is the only way by which those South-West areas can be satisfactorily settled. While I do not wish to go into details in regard to what may happen to some of those areas, I think it is a source of satisfaction that the present Minister for Lands has so quickly realised the necessity for doing something, particularly in certain areas, because the settlers placed there are not in a position to make a decent livelihood on their land. Connected with group settlement is the question of migration. I have had the subject brought under my notice chiefly as the result of my activities in relation to the unemployed of this State. It is remarkable that although we have had the best season Western Australia has ever known, and although the Government have spent a lot of money in public works and so on, the number of unemployed we have had to deal with during the past few weeks has been considerably larger than we have been accustomed to of late years. This has given rise to a feeling amongst those handling the unemployed that there should be no further migration to this State until such time as work has been found for the whole of our unemployed. Personally I do not subscribe to that idea. In my view it is necessary that we should populate the State as quickly as possible, since population is essential if we are to do the best we can for the State. On the other hand, I agree it is necessary that there should be more control over migration than we have at present. Let me refer to one phase of it. Quite a number of people are brought into the State with the assistance of the Government. Generally speaking they are people from the Old Country, people of British stock. There can be no objection to that. Unfortunately on the other hand during the last year or two we have been receiving large numbers from other countries, principally Southern Europeans. I have no objections to any man, Britisher or Southern European, coming into the State, but I say that when it is a question of maintaining our standard of

living, a question of finding employment for the people already in the State, we should at least give preference to our own kith and kin. My experience is that there has been such a large number of Southern Europeans brought into Western Australia—granted that they are more or less looked after by their own people—that they have obtained employment in the State to the detriment of our own local people.

Hon. J. Cornell: Mainly because Australians will not do the work.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That may be so in some instances, but it does not account for the lot. At present many Southern Europeans are working in this State for wages that no Australian would accept, and under conditions in which I would not ask any man to work.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the basic wage?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The basic wage does not apply to the agricultural industry, as the hon. member ought to know. Included in the unemployed of this State is a large number of men born in the State who have followed certain occupations for half a life time and now, owing to slackness in those trades, particularly the timber trade, find that their places are being taken by men from other countries, chiefly Southern Europeans, while our native born have to tramp the country looking for work.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What about the unions?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The unions have nothing to do with that. Of course a man working in an industry ought to be a member of the union connected with that industry. If any man comes here and engages in an occupation, not only ought he to belong to the union concerned, but the union ought to see to it that he joins up. I wish to make it quite clear that whilst I am not opposed to migration to Western Australia, I contend it should be controlled in a better manner than it is at present. I realise that this is not the function of the Western Australian Government, but that it is in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. It is time representations were made to the Commonwealth to the end that some alteration might take place in that position. When moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply some few years ago, I said it was necessary, in order that Western Australia might make the progress we would like to see it

make, that we should have secondary industries established in our midst. I congratulate the Government upon their efforts during the last three years to foster local secondary industries. I mentioned, too, that one necessity that was vital to the establishment of secondary industries was the provision of cheap power. I reiterate my remarks that cheap power is available in all those countries which are said to be prosperous, and in which the workers are paid high wages and are living under good conditions. Cheap power is the basic reason for that state of affairs. I, therefore, welcome the additions that have been made to the East Perth power house. I very much regret that progress has not been made with the Collie power scheme.

Hon. J. Ewing: What is the reason for that?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I do not know.

Hon. J. Ewing: You ought to know.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Very little progress has been made with the scheme. The establishment of a power scheme at Collie would do a great deal towards effecting progress in the South-West.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is so.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I do not know that I can suggest any way in which further progress can be made with the scheme. It remains for the powers that be in those quarters to do their utmost to bring the scheme to fruition at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about the Act we passed last year?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The Act has been passed, but we have not made the progress that was anticipated. I hope that efforts will be made to establish this scheme, for undoubtedly it is the one way in which the South-West would be speedily developed.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is to be hoped it does not serve the users of power as the East Perth power station serves its customers.

Hon. W. H. KITSON. Reference is made in the Speech to the mining industry. It is to be regretted that the industry has to be described as one that is declining. For many years it was the back bone of the State. I regret that the Prime Minister, when he was here, made it quite clear, so clear that nobody could mistake the intentions of the Commonwealth Government, that there was no thought on the part of the authorities to

render any further assistance to the industry for the time being.

Hon. J. Cornell: He said he was waiting to see what was done with the £160,000.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There is no necessity for him to wait for that. He has been advised as to what it is intended to do with the money. As outlined in the Speech, it was hoped by the State Government that they would be able to co-operate with the Federal Government in respect of anything the latter might be prepared to do. Mr. Cornell need not be afraid that the £160,000 will fail to be used in the interests of the mining industry. The money has already been allocated, and I have no doubt he will be just as pleased as I am to think that the State Government are prepared to go that far, particularly when we recognise that an obligation is cast upon the Commonwealth authorities to do considerably more than they have done. With regard to the North-West, I am pleased that the new vessel, the "Koolinda," which has been provided for the State Shipping Service, is proving satisfactory. A day or so ago I had the pleasure of discussing that vessel with one or two men prominent in the North. Everyone seems to be well satisfied with her. The hope is strong that the time is not far distant when another vessel of the same calibre will be provided for that coastal service. I hope the Government will carry out their policy of developing the North-West by means of the State Steamship Service and other means. I have already referred to our railways. It is pleasing to find, notwithstanding the activities in the way of regrading, relaying, etc., that their financial position at the end of the last financial year was better than it has been for a long time. I wish now to refer to the medical and health departments. The work which has been done there speaks well for the Minister in charge and also for the policy of the Government. Some three years ago I had an opportunity of going through the State and inspecting a large number of hospitals that were established in various centres. I was astounded to find the condition in which many of the buildings were at that time. It should be a source of keen satisfaction to the people of Western Australia that the Government have seen fit to spend as much money as they have done in the establishment of hospitals, the extension of hospitals and in other directions connected with them. I wish to congratulate

the Minister upon his efforts in this regard. I trust he will long be spared to carry out the policy of his department. I feel sure that if he is so spared, many of our country districts will be served with an efficient hospital service, such as they are entitled to, and also such as the people of the metropolitan area consider they are entitled to. In the matter of industrial legislation, not long ago we found ourselves slipping behind other States and countries. We can now say that during the last three years, as a result of new legislation, we are at least keeping pace with other people for the time being.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We have gone a long way ahead of them.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: In very few directions.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You have told the people that our industrial legislation is the best in the world.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: We have done some wonderfully fine things, but there is much more that remains to be accomplished.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do you think we have improved the prospects of our industries thereby?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I hope that during the next three years we shall see still further improvements in this regard. We shall do so if the Government carry out their present policy, and I trust the Chamber will assist them in their efforts to do so. The Council has not done too much in this respect in the past. I hope in view of the fact that the people have endorsed the policy of the Government, which has been shown during the last three years to be a sound one, this Chamber will endeavour to deal more kindly than hitherto it has done with this type of legislation.

Hon. J. Ewing: This Chamber has done very well.

Hon. J. Cornell: It could not deal more kindly with it.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The first item I wish to refer to in the prospective legislation for this session is that of closer settlement. There are millions of acres of land fairly close to existing railway facilities that are not being put to their full and proper use. I hope that the Chamber, when it comes to receive the measure dealing with this question, will handle it in a kindlier fashion than it has handled other bills relating to it. The State Insurance Bill will also be dealt

with. That was opposed in many quarters. I know that many members of this Chamber are averse to the State having anything to do with insurance.

Hon. J. Cornell: That measure will yet be killed with kindness.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The time is ripe for the Government to deal with not only workers' compensation insurance, and accident cases, but also with insurance from a general point of view—insurance of all kinds. I am satisfied from a perusal of the returns of the various insurance companies operating in Western Australia that there is room for Government competition in this business.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: There are sixty companies here already.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Competition by the Government will mean that business people will get a fairer deal than they have had in the past. With regard to workers' compensation and compensation for accident cases, the public would be better served by a Government office than, as has been the case in the past, by private companies. I regret that the Speech makes no reference to the extension of the Fremantle harbour, and to the construction of the bridge that has been spoken of so often. On several occasions last year every berth in the harbour was occupied. With the continual improvement that is going on in Western Australia, the rapid development of land settlement, etc., the position at Fremantle is rapidly becoming worse from the point of view of harbour facilities.

Hon. A. Burvill: Why not develop the other harbours?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: These are being developed, perhaps at a greater rate than is the case at Fremantle. Something must be done for the principal port of the State. We have been promised that a bridge will be erected in the near future, but nothing definite has yet been said. The Speech refers to improvements that are to be effected at other harbours, but it is still silent as to the intentions of the Government with respect to a new bridge at Fremantle. Coincident with that, the time is coming when it will be necessary to have a railway on the south side of the river. The railway facilities on the north side are hardly sufficient to cope with the traffic.

Hon. J. Nicholson: If you had returned another Government you could have obtained all these things.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I cannot accept that seriously. I regret the Government have not seen fit to go on with that proposal, and I repeat my objection to the fact that no mention of it appears in the Speech. I hope it does not mean that the Government have overlooked so important a question.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It looks like it.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I trust that the Engineer in Chief will soon be able to submit his scheme to the Government, and that it will be adopted. If the present policy of the Government is carried into effect, I believe that during the next three years, as was the case in the previous three years, it will lead to a more rapid expansion of our country areas and to the increasing prosperity of our people generally. It is my earnest hope that their efforts will be received by this Chamber in a proper spirit, and that members will endeavour to assist the Collier Government in their efforts to further the interests of this State.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [3.59]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 28th July, 1927.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at noon, pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant).

MESSAGE—OPENING BY COMMISSIONER.

A message from the Commissioner appointed by the Governor to do all things necessary for the opening of Parliament requested the attendance of members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber. Hon. members having accordingly proceeded to that Chamber and heard the Commission read, they returned to the Assembly Chamber.

SWEARING-IN OF MEMBERS.

His Honour the Chief Justice (Sir Robert Furse McMillan) having been commissioned by the Governor appeared in the Assembly Chamber to administer to members the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King.

The Clerk produced election writs showing the return of 50 members; also a writ for the by-election for Hannans.

With the following exceptions all the members elected were present and took and subscribed the oath as required by statute and signed the roll:—Mr. C. F. J. North (Claremont), Hon. J. C. Willcock (Geraldton), Hon. G. Taylor (Mt. Margaret), Hon. A. McCallum (South Fremantle).

ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [12.47] addressing the Clerk said: Mr. Grant, as it now becomes necessary to proceed to the election of a Speaker, I move—

That the Hon. Thomas Walker do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr. PANTON (Menzies): I second the Premier's motion.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna): I thank members for the honour it is proposed to confer upon me, and submit myself to the will of the House.

There being no other nomination.

The SPEAKER-ELECT, having been conducted to the Chair by the mover and seconder of the motion, said: I do not propose to do more than express my sincere gratitude for the honour members have done me. I hope in this position I shall retain their goodwill, and that the sessions that are to come will be as pleasant to me as Speaker as those over which I have