

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SECOND SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT.

The Parliament was prorogued on the 26th March, 1915, until the 29th April, 1915. It was further prorogued to 29th June, and finally to 29th July, 1915, when it met for the despatch of business; and the Second Session commenced on that day.

Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 29th July, 1915.

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OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 3 o'clock p.m., pursuant to proclamation.

The President took the Chair.

The Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. F. Hillman) read the proclamation.

ELECTION RETURN—METROPOLITAN-SUBURBAN PROVINCE.

The President announced the receipt of the return to a writ issued for the election of a member for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province showing that Athelstan John Henton Saw had been elected.

The Hon. Athelstan John Henton Saw took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency Major-General Sir Harry Barron, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., en-

tered 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 Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

In opening the second session of the Ninth Parliament I and my advisers, and indeed the whole of the people of this State, keenly feel the sadness of the times. So many of our brave citizens have heroically fallen upon distant battlefields, and so many others are waging manly war in the trenches. Others are in transit or preparation to continue the struggle for the security of our Empire and the maintenance of British justice in the cause, not only of Britain, her dominions and dependencies, but in the cause of humanity itself. Never has the world seen such hosts in arms, and we trust that after the triumph of our cause, the like will never be witnessed again. Our Empire and her allies are fighting a foe stirred by the unceasing ambition of selfish conquest and territorial aggrandisement, and whose national vanity finds its unworthy expression in cruel and barbarous war. The British

people are peace-loving, and have seized the sword only to defend their cherished liberties, and to protect the weaker nations of Europe from unscrupulous aggression and the violation of sacred treaties and national honour.

Through our cause runs the eternal law of right and justice, and though the ordeal at present is severe, we are convinced that the armies of Britain and her allies in the end must conquer. Yet it would be unwise to under-estimate our difficulties, or the ferocious determination of our enemies. The situation is undoubtedly grave, and we need all our resources, both in men and money, to accomplish the task in hand. We know that the citizens of the Empire are equal to the sacrifices required, and that in courage, endurance, and the abnegation of self, they will prove themselves worthy of their sires and of the citizenship of that great Empire that has circled the world with civilisation, with freedom, and with blessings to mankind.

Whilst the stress of war has been upon us, dislocating normal finances and industry of every kind, the whole of Australia has been further oppressed with the failure of harvests due to an unprecedented drought. Happily, the outlook for the future is brighter. The copious rains which have fallen in this State give promise of a bountiful and record harvest, and greater activity in prospecting and mining. My advisers anticipate that the wheat yield will approach 20,000,000 bushels, over one million and a half acres having been placed under crop.

The combined misfortunes of the war and the drought, however, have put a severe strain upon the resources of the country. The great areas of land settled by our farmers were likely to revert to their original waste from lack of nature's productivity and the settlers' financial resources. The Government, realising the difficulties of the settlers, have made extra efforts to assist them: Not only have they supplied the great majority of them with seed wheat and fertilisers, but with the actual necessities of life, both for themselves and their stock. In addition to conserving and distributing the local

products of our soil, they have imported flour, wheat, and other commodities at a cost of approximately £250,000 from outside the State to meet the requirements of the people. Beyond this, financial assistance has been rendered on an increased scale through the Agricultural Bank and in other directions. Through the agency of the Industries Assistance Board approximately £500,000 has been advanced to the settlers to tide them over their difficulties.

The farmers are not the only section of the community on whom disaster has fallen. Certain branches of the mining industry, the timber industry, and other industries were brought to a standstill until the Government came to their assistance by direct advances, or with guarantees for over-draft accommodation. In this way the industries were kept going, and the people concerned in them kept employed.

My advisers were naturally concerned in warding off the heavy burdens that have fallen upon the State, and in decreasing the consequent suffering and consciousness of misfortune among the people. With this end in view, the Government has made every effort to keep the wheels of industry in normal motion. As far as has been possible it has proceeded with its public works, and so far as will be possible it will continue to do so in the future.

In the metropolitan area there has been carried out an improved sewerage and drainage system: 10,500 houses are now connected with this work. On the goldfields the water supply has been extended, and the supply from Mundaring Weir has been satisfactorily maintained. In the dry farming areas there has been a large volume of work done to supply the necessary water. In the North-West improvements in this respect have been effected, and new works have been provided where necessary. Irrigation works at Harvey are in course of active construction. At Geraldton, at Albany, and at Collie, works are in progress to grant adequate supplies to these important centres.

With the end in view of furthering the development of the country, even under most trying circumstances, railway works have been carried out on a fairly extensive scale. The number of miles of railways opened last financial year was 364, thus bringing the total length of railways opened for traffic to 3,331 miles, whilst a further 413 miles are in course of construction or have been authorised.

In other directions, also, the Government has been attentive to the requirements of the State's trade and commerce. Additional harbour facilities are being provided at Fremantle and other ports.

All this has entailed large expenditure, but it has kept our citizens employed, and the country progressing, and it has made the disasters of the war and the drought less noticeable in our State than in any other State of the Commonwealth.

Amid the depression brought about by the causes just referred to, it is pleasing to note the stability and growth of our mining industry. The great progress shown in this industry in 1914 has been maintained. For the first six months of the present year the gold output was £2,567,234. Coal to the value of £66,281 was raised during the same period. Other minerals were raised during the first five months to a value of £63,475. The testimony as to the value of this industry is shown by the dividends of the mining companies during 1914. In that year the dividends amounted to £799,392, and for the first six months of this year the dividends totalled £388,468. On the 30th June last this industry had paid in dividends a total sum of £25,090,537.

It is still more pleasing to note that not only the well-established fields continue to flourish, but goldfields such as Yilgarn, Pilbara, Phillips River, and Yalgoo are reviving, and in some cases are providing new centres, such as Warriendar, for energy and the production of wealth. Taken altogether the industry may be said to be in an exceedingly prosperous condition.

My advisers have not been inattentive to other needs of a great and growing State. More particularly is this evident in the domain of charity.

It is recognised that for the production of wealth from the mining industry human lives are endangered and sacrificed. The Government are putting into operation a scheme which will provide relief for those miners who have contracted diseases incidental to their employment. A Board has been created to manage the funds subscribed in common by the Government, the miners, and the mine-owners, for carrying out the scheme.

The Government has opened a sanatorium at Wooroloo for the treatment of pulmonary diseases.

My advisers have also dealt with cases of distress existing in the community (from the causes mentioned) by large expenditure upon charities of a collective and individual nature.

There has been established a male inebriates' home at Whitby, and it is anticipated that a similar institution for females will be opened at no distant date.

Provision is now being made for the opening of a central maternity hospital.

The Government has not neglected the education of the coming citizens. Though somewhat retarded by the strained conditions arising from the war and the drought, the educational policy of the Government has made sound progress during the past financial year. In that period forty-six new schools were opened, chiefly in the new agricultural areas, while additional accommodation was provided at many schools in the larger centres. The new curriculum, which came into force at the beginning of 1914, has now been sufficiently tested to warrant the statement that it has been found eminently suitable to the needs of the State.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

You will be required to give your attention to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure at an early date.

In the meantime you will be asked to grant temporary supplies.

During the past year there has been an increase in expenditure in respect to interest on the cost of new agricultural railways and other works.

Owing to the amount of money required by Great Britain and her allies to successfully prosecute the war, we cannot expect the same assistance from the English money market as in previous years.

For the future we must rely chiefly upon our local resources and the liberality of the people of the State to supply the requirements of further loan expenditure.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly—

My advisers, fully conscious of the great struggle proceeding between the Empire as a whole and its enemies, and feeling that now is a time above all others when all citizens should act in concord and good fellowship, are not desirous of introducing controversial legislation for your consideration. It is anticipated that the session will be brief, yet it is necessary to introduce non-party and needful measures, among which are the following:—

Bills to amend—

The Mines Regulation Act.

The Health Act.

The Land Act.

A Licensing Act to provide for a referendum upon the hours of closing Licensed Houses.

The Bread Act.

A Bill to give Statutory Authority for the Management of the Miners' Relief Fund.

A Bill to establish Statutory Weights and Measures,

and Bills for the re-enactment of several necessary emergency measures.

Preliminary to the introduction of a Bill for the Regulation of Horse Racing, you will be asked to appoint a Joint Select Committee to inquire into the matter.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they will prove of material advantage to the people of Western Australia.

The Governor then retired and the President (Hon. H. Briggs) took the Chair.

OBITUARY—HON. D. G. GAWLER, HON. G. RANDELL, AND HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.20]: Since the last sitting of this House death has removed one of our members. On the 4th March of this year when Parliament prorogued, the Hon. D. G. Gawler was in good health and, to all appearances, had many years of useful life before him. In the brief interval which has elapsed he has passed away. I am voicing my sincere conviction and the feeling, I think, of every member when I say that the death of the hon. gentleman leaves this House the poorer. As one who was not in accord with the attitude taken up by the hon. gentleman in connection with many political questions, I can conscientiously state that I never encountered a more manly or more honourable opponent. He held decided views and he fearlessly expressed them, but always in the language of a true gentleman. Never once to my knowledge during the five years he was a member did he offend against good taste, indulge in personalities, or impute unworthy motives to those whose actions he felt called upon to criticise. He did not because he could not without changing his nature. While speaking on this mournful subject, I cannot avoid a reference to two ex-members of the Legislative Council whose deaths have also occurred since our last sitting—the Hon. George Randell and the Hon. Thomas F. O. Brimage. The late Mr. Randell had been a resident of this State for 65 years, during 40 of which he had devoted much of his time to laborious and conscientious service to the people, either in the highest civic posts or in the Parliament of the country—as mayor of Perth, as a member of the old Legislative Council before Responsible Government, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, as a member of this Chamber, as a Minister of the Crown, and as a respected and