

dingoes and other pests coming south. That portion of our State is far too important to be ignored at the present time. We must see that the sheep and cattle growers there receive all the consideration that we can possibly give them, if we want to save the rich North-West, which is of such importance to every taxpayer and every person in Western Australia. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £2,700,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 31st July, 1945.

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

PREMIERSHIP OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Resignation of Hon. J. C. Willcock.

HON. J. C. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.32]: I would like to inform the House that since its last meeting I have waited upon His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and tendered my resignation as Premier and Treasurer. I remember that on taking over the office of Premier in this State, nearly

nine years ago, I expressed the desire that when I left this position the decorum, dignity and general conduct of the Assembly would not have deteriorated or, on the other hand, that it would have been upheld in the traditional way of this Parliament. While, of course, there is not a close political friendship between opposing parties in this House, there has been mutual respect and esteem, even though there are differences of opinion. That was the position while Hon. P. Collier was Premier, and also when Sir James Mitchell was Premier. While they had strong political differences, whenever it was necessary in the interests of Western Australia and to conduct the business of the House in a way which would reflect credit on the Parliament of Western Australia, those leaders got together and arranged the business so that it was carried out to the mutual satisfaction of themselves and with the dignity and decorum that have always characterised the carrying on of the Parliament of Western Australia.

I am not particularly happy in surrendering the seals of office. After having been in the position for a considerable number of years one does not like to feel that the strain is becoming too great, and undoubtedly I have felt the strain of a continued period in office of 20 years, on and off, and one cannot do that with the energy and enthusiasm that one likes without its taking some toll. My general health has suffered a little, and my many friends told me, when I announced that I was going to resign from my position, that they thought it was a very wise move on my part. It is a satisfactory move to me. I decided on this step about a month ago, and after a month's cogitation and experience in having decided to make this move I feel much more satisfied than when I first made the decision. In these circumstances there are no regrets of that kind.

Before taking leave of the House, as Leader, I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the courtesy and consideration that you have extended to me at all times. I also want to thank my colleagues, on the front bench particularly, and all the others on this side of the House for, what I term, the wonderful support and consideration they have given to me as Leader. I have never asked any one of my colleagues, or member of the Party to do anything which he has not readily consented to do even

though perhaps it might have meant some serious personal inconvenience to him.

To the Leader of the Opposition, not only the occupant of the office at the moment, but to his predecessor, I say this: There has always been mutual confidence and consideration between us with regard to each other's viewpoint, and also, as I have said, in regard to coming together for the purpose of getting the business done properly. If there was anything of any consequence that might be doing I never failed to take the Leader of the Opposition into my confidence so that he would know how to arrange his business, and the business of his Party in such a way that it would be satisfactory to him.

To the Leader of the Liberal Party I extend the same thanks. I think the member for West Perth once said to me that John Willcock was a very hard man to quarrel with. I think I can reciprocate those remarks in regard to the hon. member because it is not very easy to quarrel with him. He has strong and decided views which he puts forward with the utmost clarity. But he never lets political differences interfere with personal associations and that is, I think, as it should be because we are all here to give expression to our political views and our principles; but we are here for another purpose which is, perhaps, bigger, and that is the advancement of Western Australia. While we take the viewpoint, whether we are in opposition or on the Government side of the House, that it is the welfare of the State which stands pre-eminent in our thoughts and actions we will at least continue to hold the respect and esteem of the people of Western Australia.

Before I conclude I would like to congratulate my successor on his assumption of office. We have all had experience of him. We know that he is capable and has the energy, enthusiasm and all other attributes which go to make a successful leader. I think he has made such a reputation for himself in this House that if there is to be a change the new Premier will be acceptable to the people of the State because of the experience he has had and the energy with which he has carried out his duties. To my friend on my left who is undertaking the duties of Deputy-Leader of the party, I extend my congratulations on his advancement. The

job of deputy is not a very easy one. I had it myself for some years and it seemed that sometimes the hard work came to the deputy and the glory to the holder of the office. However, I know, so far as I am concerned, that my friend has been fair and loyal in his outlook and that whatever he can do to make easier and better the task of the Leader of the House he will do with that vigour which characterises all his actions.

To the new Minister who will assume office in a day or two I also extend my congratulations. He has been in the House for many years—about 24—and is well known to us all. He has all the attributes that we admire and he has that great energy that will enable him successfully to carry on the administration of whichever department he is entrusted with. To the officers of the House, to the "Hansard" staff and all those who go to make up the institution of Parliament itself, I convey my appreciation. I have no complaint of any type on leaving office as I leave it to-day. All have been exceptionally considerate and for my part I have endeavoured to reciprocate the warm feelings that have been displayed towards me. It makes the task of leaving a position such as the one I have held ever so much easier when one has experienced the manifestations of such goodwill since the original announcement was made a few days ago of my intended resignation. I have nothing more to add, Mr. Speaker, except again to thank you and the officers of Parliament for their great courtesy and consideration during my tenure of office.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.42]: Naturally it is with some pride that I accept the position and the honour that my colleagues have conferred upon me. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, and the House, that at the moment I feel a very humble person, more particularly when following, as I do, a man of such wisdom as our ex-Leader. I realise the responsibilities of office and the greatness of the task that has been entrusted to me by my colleagues, but I feel assured that, no matter what is the term for which it may be my privilege to hold this office, it will be a remarkable recompense if, when I vacate it, I do so with manifestations of the same respect and with the same reaction from my colleagues and opponents