

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

alike, as our friend the ex-Premier does today. He has made for himself a name in the national sphere and I have been privileged to attend with him more than one Premiers' Conference and Loan Council gathering. I know that his solidity and his wisdom have marked him as someone to be reckoned with at the round-table conferences of representatives of the several States.

I understand that a record has been created by our colleague for period of service in the State as a Minister of the Crown, and he has in that time certainly established a record for statesmanship. I am sure that all members will agree with me that Mr. Willecock has not only earned the goodwill of all, irrespective of which side of the House they may sit on, and that when he leaves the Treasury Bench there will be left a very noticeable gap that will be apparent to all. For my part I hope that I will be able worthily to follow in the footsteps of the two previous Premiers of this State, with respect to their work and their control of the business of the House. In that task they have gained very many friends and, having regard to that aspect, they have left us with a record that I hope can be continued and that the goodwill and friendly feelings existing between the several political parties, which characterised the proceedings of this House in the attitude of members generally and their behaviour compared with other State Parliaments, will remain with us.

It will be possible, I hope, for me to continue to enjoy the relations, between members, that our predecessors have given us the inspiration to achieve. I appreciate the action of my colleagues. They have entrusted me with a very great position of responsibility and trust, and I appreciate the fact that I enjoy their confidence. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that as time goes by, they will have no doubt whatever that their trust has in no way been betrayed.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.45]: It is with genuine regret that I and my colleagues view the hon. member for Geraldton vacating the Premier's seat on the Treasury Bench. We all agree, both personally and politically that he has been a very good Leader of this House. He has been fair and impartial, preserving the dignity and decorum of the House. He has always helped

to maintain the high standard which has been set and which I hope will always be maintained in this, the Parliament of Western Australia. We would be false to our beliefs if we did not admit that it is with regret that we see the member for Geraldton leave his seat as Premier of this State. Circumstances have compelled him to retire from his high office and I can only express the hope that the result of his retirement will be that he will be long spared to give us his company and occasionally advice and assistance in the future, with his health fully restored. While we have not always been in agreement with him, he has rendered great service to the State and we trust that he will soon be fully restored to health.

To the new Premier I have already conveyed my warmest congratulations. I now make them publicly. I cannot with sincerity wish him a very long term of office, so I shall not do so; but I will express the wish that so long as it is his fortune to hold office, he will find satisfaction in the work he does in his achievements on behalf of the State of Western Australia. I think that that will be a reward much finer than a long term of office. I trust that he will direct his efforts to that end and that he will attain the end that was sought so much by his predecessor in office. I and those associated with me will do our best to maintain the cordial relationships that have existed in the past, and I think we shall not have much difficulty in maintaining them on that reasonable basis.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.49]: My colleagues and I share the general regret that has been expressed with regard to the retirement of the ex-Premier from office, and that that step has been occasioned because of the state of his health. He has indeed led this House with dignity and has largely contributed to the standing which I think this deliberative Assembly holds in the minds of all thoughtful people in our State. The retiring Premier has always extended courtesy to all members of the House and has also given consideration to the representations that have come from members sitting in Opposition, with the result that I think it can be said that the Assembly of Western Australia has functioned as a truly representative gathering on behalf of the people in fashioning the legislation and the measures