

distance trains, but not on suburban passenger trains running between Fremantle and Midland Junction, as it has not been considered necessary in view of the opportunities for obtaining prompt medical aid. They are only provided at the larger and depot stations. 3, It is proposed to provide an ambulance chest at Claremont for the reason that a number of trains terminate and start from there, and that a large number of people journey there in connection with the Royal Agricultural Show and other events held on the show ground. 4, I am not in a position to reply to this question as it is a matter controlled by the Fire Brigades Board.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. A. A. Wilson on the ground of urgent public business.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Perth Municipal Gas and Electric Lighting Act Amendment [introduced by the Minister for Works].

2, Special Lease Enabling.

3, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment.

4, Kingia Grass Tree concession confirmation.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—WAR BETWEEN BRITAIN AND GERMANY.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Seaddun—Ivanhoe) [4.44]: Before any further business is transacted I desire to announce to the House that this morning I received from the Prime Minister the following telegram:—

Official information has been received that war has broken out with Germany. (signed) Joseph Cook.

I immediately called into my office Ministers representing Executive Council, and also the leader of the Opposition, recognising the fact that under the

special circumstances the present was not the time to consider matters from a party point of view. We had a Cabinet meeting this afternoon at which the leader of the Opposition was present, and we discussed various matters which may require attention in the immediate future. I recognise that this crisis is probably the most critical in the history of the Empire, but the time is passed when we might talk, and I suppose it is not even necessary for me to say so much that, so far as Western Australia and Australia generally are concerned, as one of the British dominions we are intensely loyal and will do our part in maintaining the Empire. I recognise that so far as this particular State is concerned, and I can speak only from that point of view as the head of the Government, we can do but little to assist the Motherland at this critical time, but there are many things which can be done, and which should at the same time be of assistance, and this is by thoroughly protecting our own interests in the direction of preventing if possible—which I urge—anything of the nature of a panic; also that the people should place absolute reliance in those who are entrusted with the government of the State for the time being, just as we, as an Executive, are prepared to put implicit faith in those who are at the metropolis of the Empire, and will be responsible for the proper conduct of the war. There is no member present who abhors war as much as I do. We regret that we are faced with such a critical position, but now that we are faced with it I am sure everyone will join in saying we hope the Empire of which we form a part will be eminently successful, that the war will be of short duration, and that as little suffering and loss of life as possible will be the result. I do not know that I need say much more than that under such circumstances, it will be recognised that there are many problems which the executive will be called upon to solve during the next few weeks or months. We will probably have to act on some occasions almost spontaneously, and it may be possible that at some times our actions may not

be thoroughly understood at the moment and we may be severely criticised. All I ask is that at the present juncture this House, and through the House the country, may accept the assurance from me, and I think I am entitled to say also from the leader of the Opposition, who consulted with us to-day, that our one desire is to protect the interests of our people as a whole, and we can do that by acting calmly and with due deliberation and consideration of the various matters which come before us, and also by showing the public that with proper confidence reposed in those at the head of affairs for the time being, we are likely to avoid what might otherwise be a calamity. The question of defending Australia as part of the Empire is under the control of the Commonwealth Government, but there are other matters which require some consideration. It is not merely a matter of military defence but it is also a matter of the defence of those who through this misfortune will find themselves out of employment. I hope it may be as light as possible, but the Executive propose to take every possible means to prevent any undue hardship being imposed on any of our citizens. Already I know there are moves in some directions which are regrettable; perhaps they are what might be expected under the circumstances, but unless things remain normal we will be able by merely adjourning the House until to-morrow to take action which we trust will receive the endorsement of all hon. members, and which will prevent anything being done which will be to our detriment as a State and to our detriment as a portion of the Empire. I do not know that I can say more excepting that on Monday last I wired to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Executive Council informing him that we were at his call at any moment, that we were prepared to set aside every other consideration to do what his Executive considered was essential for the proper protection of this part of the British dominions. In conclusion, I hope that the outcome of this terrible war—probably it will be the worst known in our history—will be to adjust the dif-

ferences which unfortunately have existed, and that it will have the effect of less demand being made on the people in the way of armaments, and that a better feeling will exist between the people of Europe, and that the British Empire, of which we form a part, will, as I previously said, come out with honour and glory to all concerned.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [4.50]: I think it goes without saying that we have entered upon the most thrilling phase of our national existence. When the civilised nations of Europe are at war, and Great Britain as well, then of course Australia, as a part of the British Empire, is at war also. We have heard from the Premier the announcement he has received that unfortunately Great Britain at last has been drawn into the fight, and it is not for us now to consider the right or wrong of the position. We believe that when the advisers of the Motherland have decided on this course, they have taken the only course open to them in honour, and therefore we stand with them shoulder to shoulder to protect this portion of the Empire. The crisis is such that it is necessary for all party differences, and personal animosities, to cease, and I have readily given the Premier and his colleagues my word that such will be the case as far as the Opposition in this House are concerned. We stand with the Government to assist them, if they require our assistance, to join in their deliberations, if they deem it necessary that we should take part, and to endeavour, by all the power and experience we may possess, with them, to find a solution for all our difficulties as they come to be faced one by one. That these difficulties will be great goes without saying. The Premier has touched briefly on what the result may be. No man knows what the result will be, but that it will be disastrous is beyond all doubt. That we shall have to bear in a modified form some portion of the distress which must ensue during a war of this immense magnitude is also beyond doubt. Talking is of no avail; we must stand together in order to act as the necessity

arises. Undoubtedly Australians, and Western Australians, are loyal, loyal to their last shilling, loyal to their last man in the defence of the Empire. I am satisfied that the people will respond to the Premier's appeal and will support the Parliament and the Government of this State in any step that may be necessary, not only in our own small way to safeguard the interests of the Empire but also to safeguard the interests of our people. I have readily promised the Premier to join with him in discussing the position, and I have readily promised him the support of hon. members on this side of the House. Defence, it is true, is a Federal matter, but there are many matters in connection with which the State Government will be called upon to take action, perhaps at the request of the Federal Authorities, and probably on their own initiative, in order that necessary legislation may be promptly put through and our people's position safeguarded to the greatest and fullest extent. With the Premier I hope that this terrible catastrophe, which has fallen on the civilised world, will be of the shortest possible duration. That it can be very short I think we need not hope, but at the same time it may be short in comparison with other wars, and the magnitude of the operations make one hope that it will be comparatively short to what has been the experience of Great Britain in the past ages. I with my friends on this side of the House are delighted to co-operate with the Government to assist in every possible way, in order that they shall carry out their most onerous duties and grave responsibilities—they are undoubtedly grave—in the best interests of the whole of the people without recognition of party or sect in this State of Western Australia.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Ivanhoe) [4-55]: It will be appreciated that under the circumstances we cannot do business where naturally party differences would arise, but as it may be necessary to introduce further legislation to deal with the position which has arisen, I propose to move merely that the House adjourn, with the intimation

to hon. members that we meet again tomorrow as usual, but unless it is necessary to introduce special legislation no business will be transacted. I merely ask hon. members to be present to deal with any business if it should arise. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.
Question passed.

House adjourned at 4-56 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 6th August, 1914.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 5 p.m., and read prayers.

MOTION—LOYALTY TO KING AND EMPIRE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central (without notice) moved—

That the resolution passed by this House at its sitting yesterday be transmitted to His Excellency the Governor by the President, and that the President request His Excellency to cause the same to be forwarded for presentation to His Majesty the King.

Question passed.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central): Two urgent and important Bills are coming down for consideration, one to regulate the sale of the necessaries of life during the time of war, and the other to extend the