

congratulations. I feel I am not worthy of all that has been said of me. During my occupancy of the position of Chairman of Committees for the past six years I endeavoured to be just, and I am egotistical enough to believe that during that time I gave general satisfaction. Of course I made mistakes as Chairman of Committees, and will probably make mistakes as Speaker, but it will not be for want of trying if I fail to carry out the duties of this high office in the way in which they should be carried out. I trust that no member on either side of the House will have any cause to regret my election to this high and honourable position. I thank members generally for the confidence they have reposed in me.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton [12.42]: I desire to announce that His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor will now be pleased to receive the Speaker and such hon. members as desire to accompany him.

Sitting suspended from 12.43 to 1.10 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have waited upon His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and have received from his hand the following:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,—

It is with much pleasure that I learn that you have been elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner. (Signed) James Mitchell, Lieut.-Governor.

I have also received a Commission from His Excellency authorising me to administer to members of the Legislative Assembly the prescribed oath or affirmation.

Sitting suspended from 1.12 p.m. to 2.55 p.m.

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.

Mr. Speaker and hon. members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (*vide* Council re-

port *ante*), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

BILL—GERALDTON HARBOUR WORKS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [3.30]: 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 for an Act to authorise the construction of a railway to extend the Geraldton harbour works railway to the industrial area of Geraldton.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

Mr. SPEAKER: In company with hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament. For greater accuracy, I have had printed copies of the Speech distributed amongst members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

MR. TRIAT (Mount Magnet) [3.34]: I move—

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

There are a few comments that I wish to make respecting the Lieut.-Governor's Speech. I am fully aware that my time on this occasion is limited, but my intention is to deal briefly with some matters touched upon by His Excellency. The first to which I shall make reference concerns the proposed legislation for the new method of taxation collection. I am strongly in favour

of the suggested alteration in the law. In the first place the proposed legislation will seek to effect the collection of taxation at the source. Most people who receive the lower grades of income find at the end of the year it is most difficult to provide sufficient money to pay in a lump sum the tax that is due. On the other hand, when the taxation is deducted at the source, obviously in the great majority of instances people find they can afford the deduction from their income. The scheme is well worthy of consideration, and I hope there will be no difficulty in passing the necessary legislation. In my opinion, the proposed method of collection will result in more revenue being diverted to the State coffers than previously. Cases dealt with by the courts, where people have been prosecuted for neglect to pay taxation, have indicated that some are quite prepared not to pay that taxation if they can evade the necessity to do so. Where the tax is collected at the source, there can be no possibility of evasion. In those circumstances, I believe the Government, by means of the new method of collection, will receive more revenue than was obtained under the old system. I notice that it is proposed to do away with the financial emergency tax, and I believe the great majority of the people are in favour of that course being adopted. The imposition of this tax has been a burning question in the outback parts of the State, where the opinion has been held that the financial emergency tax was unfair because it was imposed upon earnings without regard to domestic and other obligations. Such a form of taxation could be neither reasonable nor right, and I am pleased that the Government intends to do what is necessary to eliminate that imposition.

Then there is the question of unemployment. I regret to learn that the volume of unemployment is increasing, instead of decreasing. The Government has under consideration a scheme whereby there shall be a survey of relief workers with a view to furnishing information regarding social conditions and determining to what extent the men are capable of being transferred to industry. If that objective could be achieved, it would have a wonderful effect. It can and should be done, because the employment of those men in our secondary industries should be possible. Naturally it

will be impossible to absorb the unemployed in secondary industries unless the people of the State are prepared to support those industries. The fact has long been recognised that there are industries that can, and should be established in our midst. I believe that objective could be reached if people were to take action within their own homes. In many instances when a woman goes to a shop and asks for certain goods, she does not care whether those goods are of local manufacture or have been manufactured in the Eastern States or even in Timbuctoo. All she cares about is that she gets the goods she wants. Many of the lines she requires are produced in Western Australia, and the quality of the local products is at least equal to that of the goods imported from the Eastern States or other countries. If women were prepared to organise their own home requirements so that goods manufactured in Western Australia could be consumed locally, a far greater percentage of the unemployed would be absorbed in various forms of production. I understand that the imports from the Eastern States last year represented a total value of £10,000,000, an amount practically equivalent to the value of the gold produced during that period by our great mining industry. That such a state of affairs can obtain is wrong, and I hope that the people generally will endeavour to see that the goods purchased for their home requirements are of local production. In Kalgoorlie we have the spectacle of vegetables being imported from the Eastern States, despite the fact that Western Australia can produce more vegetables than the people can consume. If people could be induced to consume vegetables produced within the States, that in itself would help to absorb many of the men who are at present unemployed, and would assist the Government in its endeavour to place more men at work in our secondary industries.

The position of the mining industry is vital to goldfields members, and I was pleased to note the reference in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech to the fact that during 1938 a record tonnage was dealt with, which yielded gold to the value of £10,363,023. Comparing that result with the value of gold production in 1929, members will be interested to know that in that year the value of the gold yield was £1,671,093,

which shows that the value of our gold production has increased in that ten-year period by, roughly, £8,750,000. Those figures emphasise the fact that the goldmining industry has expanded during that decade, and, unfortunately, can be cited as the only industry in Western Australia to-day that may be regarded as prosperous. Even so, the industry could enjoy still greater prosperity. Much as Labour Governments have done to assist the industry, particularly with reference to the State battery system, I believe that still more could be done by way of reducing the cost to prospectors of the treatment of sands at the State batteries. From time to time those interested in the mining industry in the outer districts have discussed the position with the Minister, and have advocated reduced rates for the treatment of sands. I believe much could be done in that direction, and if the necessary action were taken, it would be of great advantage to the prospectors. At present they have to pay 23s. per ton for the treatment of sands, and that is wrong. Prospectors find that when their stone is treated at many of the State batteries, too much gold is left in the residues, with the result that others come along and purchase the sands and treat them at a later stage. By a better system of treatment at the State batteries, I think a great deal more ore would be available than is being obtained to-day. I hope the department will liven itself up and put in a better system of treatment in the major centres of Western Australia.

Another matter to which I would refer concerns many rotten mining flotations that have taken place in the past. A measure should be enacted to enable speculators to be thoroughly protected against flotations that are not legitimate. By a venture that is not legitimate, I mean one into which a man puts his money without having an opportunity to get any return. The Government should ensure that steps are taken to provide that proper flotations take place. There could be some man in authority who would be able to notify an intending speculator that he had some sort of chance of getting a return for his investment. In that way we would be doing a good turn to those people that are prepared to invest in the mining industry in Western Australia. It is not right that a man should put his money

into a venture from which he has not an opportunity of obtaining a return and I hope the Government will introduce a measure to amend the Companies Act in that direction.

Dealing with the wheat industry, I have passed through quite a large area of wheat country though at the present time I have no wheatgrowers in my electorate. It is regrettable to see men doing hard work on their holdings growing wheat, wonderfully good seasons following, and yet prices being so low. What can be done I do not know but I hope the Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, will be able to evolve some scheme that will give the men on the land a better outlook and will enable those in the back country who are growing wheat to secure the return from their labour that they are entitled to. I know that many of our members are anxious to assist the men on the land. We are aware that the world wheat markets are flooded but there is a case to be made out for the growing of wheat. If the wheatgrowers left the land, where would we be? It is pitiful to see these men putting up a struggle—and they do struggle harder than townspeople have any idea—to make a living. The Government would be wise to endeavour to evolve, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, some scheme by which they might be protected and enabled to hold their own.

The next question with which I wish to deal is the pastoral industry. Many of our pastoralists have been men of influential means, people with large holdings and big sheep herds. They have expended a lot of money on the industry but, unfortunately, the Murchison has experienced drought during the last 12 years, with the result that flocks have been depleted and the financial position of the pastoralists has been seriously affected. These men established large flocks in that country. They went into the wilderness, took up land and built up their stations to a reasonable standard. In spite of that they are to-day mostly bankrupt. I trust that the Government will consider granting these men a total remission of rents. They are entitled to secure remission for this particular year because otherwise for them to build their flocks up to the required standard, and to be able to carry on with some measure of security will be an impossibility. I know that the

former Minister for Lands, the Hon. M. F. Troy, was sympathetic, and I feel sure that the present Minister for Lands will be equally sympathetic.

Another matter in which I am interested is the activities of the Workers' Homes Board. This is an all-important matter for the goldfields. It not only affects Kalgoorlie but the district I represent. Applications for workers' homes have been made in vain from the goldfields. I am given to understand that the terms for workers' homes on the goldfields are much more stringent than those in the metropolitan area. I believe that ten years only are allowed for the payment of everything on the goldfields, whereas in the metropolitan area a period of 30 years obtains. People who are prepared to go out into the back country should be the first to be given consideration when the building of homes is contemplated. A man may come to the city and secure reasonable accommodation, but in town areas it is difficult for a man to secure a home for himself, his wife and family. It is a function of the Government, through the board, to provide such accommodation where possible. If a man has a wife and family, he has a right to possess a home. The Workers' Homes Board, I am given to understand, has sufficient power to provide accommodation of this kind for such people in the back areas. We do not ask for the erection of homes valued at £700 or £800, but for the provision of homes of a value of £250. Nevertheless, we find that when an application is made, it is not considered. I am of the opinion that the people comprising the Workers' Homes Board have no knowledge of the conditions on the goldfields. Millions of pounds have been spent on mining in Western Australia and mining companies are prepared to continue spending money to open up the industry. Mining companies of standing assert that there is in the ground sufficient ore to last for many years. Yet we find the Workers' Homes Board, apparently with no knowledge of that fact, saying that it will not build homes on the goldfields because conditions do not warrant their erection. That is wrong, and at a later stage of the session I shall move for an alteration in the personnel of the board so that its membership may include somebody with a knowledge of the goldfields. In that way we shall obtain some satisfaction when applications are

made for the erection of homes in those areas. The people on the goldfields should be able to secure homes provided they are prepared to pay for them. If the locality does not warrant the building of an expensive home for a man, the board should erect one of a lower value. If the applicant is not satisfied with that, he can refuse to have such a home. On the other hand, if he is prepared to live in a home of a lower value, why not give him the opportunity to do so? We do not want the population to be congested in the metropolitan area because that is no good to the country; but the board will not encourage people to live on the goldfields. I trust the time is not far distant when we will be able to influence the board and convince it that there are propositions on the goldfields worthy of consideration.

I am aware that it is not usual to delay this gathering too long. People come here more for the social function that takes place after the business is concluded, but before I resume my seat I should like to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your elevation to the position of Speaker. It is very gratifying to find that you, Sir, after having served so long in Parliament, have been raised to the honourable position of Speaker. I feel sure that you will prove worthy of the confidence that the House has reposed in you. From my personal knowledge I have no doubt that you will conduct the business of the House in accordance with its best traditions. I congratulate the member for Kanowna (Hon. E. Nulsen), and the member for Kimberley (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley), on their attainment of Cabinet rank. I know them both personally and have no doubt that the interests of the State that will require their attention will be safe in their hands. They certainly have yet to win their spurs, but I am convinced that before the session draws to a close the people of the State generally will be quite satisfied that both are perfectly capable of discharging the duties entrusted to them. I feel sure that Parliament represents the elect of Western Australia and the best ability available in the State.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. TRIAT: In saying that I am certainly speaking for some members of the

community, and I am quite sincere in making that statement. I trust that any benefits that may be derived from the deliberations of the House will be achieved in conjunction with the other two parties. In my opinion, Western Australia is a State second to none in the Commonwealth, and it is only a matter of putting our heads together in order to make it a place worth living in. May it be prosperous for all time. I welcome the opportunity to take a seat in the House, and I trust that the deliberations of members will prove of benefit to everyone in the State.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [3.49]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [3.50]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.51 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 8th August, 1939.

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The **PRESIDENT** took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

The **PRESIDENT**: I desire to announce that in accordance with the Standing Orders I have appointed the following members to

act as temporary Chairmen of Committees during the current session, namely, the Hon. J. Nicholson, the Hon. V. Hamersley, and the Hon. G. Fraser.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, DIESEL CARS.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. H. Seddon) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the total mileage run by the railway Diesel cars in each district during the year ended the 30th June, 1939? 2, What was the total number of passengers carried by them in each district during the same period? 3, What was the running cost per mile?

The **HONORARY MINISTER** (for the Chief Secretary) replied: District costs are not segregated, but particulars of the main routes operated are as follows:—

	Mileage.	Passengers.	Running costs per mile.
Perth to Merredin—			d.
(Main line) ..	52,215	13,510	11.02
(via Wyalkatchem) ..	64,598	12,300	11.05
(via Quairading) ..	62,997	10,308	10.93
Perth to Katanning ..	65,599	14,906	11.01
Perth to Bunbury ..	11,853	5,002	11.08
Bunbury to Busselton, Donnybrook and Northcliffe ..	39,685	17,905	10.76
Geraldton to Mullewa and Yuna ..	53,473	10,209	9.31
Total ..	350,420	84,140	10.72

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 3rd August.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.47]: It is pleasing to note that, apart from the customary seasonal maladies from which members may have suffered, nothing of consequence has happened regarding the health of either the members or the staff of this House since we last met. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of those associated with the Legislative Assembly. Two deaths have occurred since Parliament last met, one of which was in exceedingly