

clearly before the electors, and there are many items in that policy to which the attention of Parliament should be devoted at as early a date as practicable.

The Franchise of the electors to the Legislative Council should be broadened, and the Council brought more closely into touch with the householders throughout the State.

The Consolidation and Amendment of the Liquor Laws, incorporating the principle of Local Option and State Control in relation to new licenses, should receive consideration.

To farther encourage the settlement of the soil and the development of its resources a new Land Bill is necessary, not only consolidating the existing statutes, but containing many valuable and liberalising amendments in regard both to legislation and administration.

To meet the increasing demand for land by encouraging the subdivision of large estates capable of closer settlement, a measure of Taxation upon the Unimproved Value of such holdings, but containing liberal exemption in favour of the genuine settler, should be passed.

The final Report of the Royal Commission on our Forests renders it advisable to legislate for more effectually conserving the forest areas of the State, at the same time establishing greater facilities for providing local supplies.

While convinced that, with rare exceptions, our settlers have treated the Aborigines with humanity, farther powers are required to secure an adequate control of and protection to natives who congregate about townships and pearling camps.

In view of contemplated Legislation this Session, three Royal Commissions are now sitting in connection with various matters affecting the Mining Industry. The reports of these Commissions will better enable you to deal with the important questions which these bodies are considering.

There is also need for legislation placing the Civil Service on a more satisfactory basis than at present, whilst the work of Consolidating our Statutes should also be steadily proceeded with.

My advisers are prepared to submit for your consideration Bills dealing with these matters, if assured that, under the existing conditions, they enjoy your confidence.

The result of the Elections has been the return to the Legislative Assembly of three groups of Members, not one of which has a majority of the House. Under such circumstances it is clear that the paramount duty of Parliament is to ascertain whether there exists a majority of Members prepared to support any one of these Parties, and thereby secure that stability and firmness in Administration which is so essential to good Government.

You will, therefore, be invited to give immediate attention to this main question, and, should the result prove that my present Ministers enjoy the confidence of the Legislative Assembly, they will be prepared to carry out the policy indicated.

Believing that stable and settled administration is the main desire of every Member, I

express the earnest hope that, by the exercise of that common sense which has always characterised Representative Government in the British Dominions, you will arrive at a decision which will ensure to the State the steady guidance which was never more necessary than at the present time.

I declare this Session of Parliament opened and I confidently trust that, aided by divine direction, you will materially advance the well-being of the State.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PRESIDENT: Copy of the Financial Accounts for year ended June 1904.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners' half-yearly report; Report on the Fishing Industry, 1903; Third Annual Return of Proceedings under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act; Second Annual Report of Registrar of Trade Unions. By-laws of Goldfields Water Supply Administration. Western Union Railway, report on route proposed by Mr. John Gwynneth, A.M.I.C.E., Melbourne. Meteorological Report, 1903. Railways Working Account, quarter ended December, 1903; also March and June, 1904. By-laws for municipalities of Beverley, Bulong, Coolgardie, East Fremantle, Leonora, Mount Magnet, Perth, South Perth, Victoria Park. Alterations to railway classification and rate book.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

BILL INTRODUCED, ABORIGINES.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): In order to assert the undoubted right and privilege of the House to initiate legislation, I move (without notice) for leave to introduce Bill entitled "An Act for the better protection of the aboriginal inhabitants of Western Australia."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FIRST DAY OF DEBATE.

HON. R. D. MCKENZIE (North-East): I beg to move the adoption of the following Address, in reply to His Excellency's Speech:—

To His Excellency Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor, &c., &c., &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Legislative Council of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign King Edward VII., and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

It is customary, I understand, in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, to touch lightly on the subjects mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. This afternoon, as the time is very limited, I do not intend to deal at any great length with those subjects, but merely to treat them briefly in passing. The Speech is largely retrospective; and in view of existing political conditions it does not predict much new legislation. His Excellency observes that the general advancement of the industries of Western Australia mentioned in his preceding Speech has been maintained and continued in the period now under review; and I think we may congratulate ourselves on the fact that our main industries are in such a flourishing condition, and that our population shows a satisfactory increase. True, the population has not been increasing by leaps and bounds; but an increase at the rate of about 20,000 per annum is surely satisfactory. This State undoubtedly needs immigration. The natural increase of population is not sufficient to develop our great resources; therefore it behoves either the present or any future Government to make every possible effort to secure a proper class of immigrants for Western Australia. With this end in view, I think we may very well follow the example of the sister State, Victoria; for instead of having an Agent General in London, Victoria has a business agent there who is in touch with the producers of the State and has a thorough knowledge of what is required; this official takes very little interest in social affairs; and I think the time has arrived when probably Western Australia can do without an Agent General. No doubt the Commonwealth, at an early date, will appoint a High Commissioner, and then there will be no necessity for us to have a figure-head to attend social functions. We want a representative in London who thoroughly understands the requirements of Western Australia, one who can do a great deal of good in dis-

tributing information as to our resources, more particularly in connection with the agricultural, pastoral, and mining industries. Referring again to the question of immigration, I would like to say we shall have to be particular as to the class of people we introduce into this country. We certainly do not want the pauper immigrant; we want a class of people who will become producers. We want people who will either settle on the land or become prospectors and help the country along. I fear the time is very far distant when this State will be numbered amongst the great manufacturing countries of the world; but there is nothing to prevent Western Australia becoming the largest exporting State of the Commonwealth of Australia in products raised from the soil. It seems to me that there is very little we cannot produce in Western Australia. The agricultural industry has been going ahead by leaps and bounds, the production of cereals being enormous, while the fruit-growing industry has prospered during the last few years. Western Australia is considered an ideal country for wine-growing, and taking everything into consideration I believe Western Australia, at no far distant date, will become one of the greatest exporting countries of our great Commonwealth. The Speech gives a retrospect of the work done by the preceding Parliament, also some interesting figures worthy of attention. I do not propose to go into the figures now, owing to the time this afternoon being limited, but I would like to mention that the last Parliament saw the completion of the great Coolgardie Water Scheme. I cannot mention this question for the first time in this House without paying a tribute to Sir John Forrest, who instigated the scheme and was instrumental in carrying it out. We on the goldfields are beginning to feel the benefit of the work, and I would like to impress on whoever may be in power in this country, the necessity for making the water scheme a commercial concern. In the first instance we were told by Sir John Forrest that water would be supplied at 8s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons; but the price we have been paying up to date has been something like 7s. per 1,000 gallons. I am one of those who believe that when we have a commodity like water to sell,

it is not a good thing to fix a high price for it. Even if we make a small loss at the beginning, the price should be fixed so as to induce the people to use the commodity extensively. So far this has not been the case on the goldfields, and in my opinion the Government should decide upon making a substantial reduction in the price of the water at once. By this means the Government will turn what is now a slight loss into what would be a considerable profit in the future. The administration of the water scheme at the present time is entirely in the hands of the Minister. This was probably necessary while the work was in the construction stage, but I do not think it is necessary now that the work is completed. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1902 which gives power to appoint a board for the control of the water supply, and I think the time has arrived when a board should be appointed. One of the representatives on the board is to be an engineer, and another a commercial or business man; and I think if a gentleman who is well known on the goldfields, one who knows the requirements of the people and who is also a keen, shrewd, business man, was appointed to the board there would be no doubt about the success of the scheme. The Speech mentions that the Fremantle Harbour Works were completed during the term of the last Parliament, and that under the efficient management which has taken place, the works have paid 3 per cent. on the total capital expended. This is a matter for very great congratulation. I, for one, did not expect to see the scheme a paying proposition so soon. I think great care was taken in the appointment of the gentlemen to manage the concern: the results for the first year have proved this. I believe the board is entirely composed of coastal representatives. A large proportion of the goods brought into the harbour is sent to the goldfields; therefore I think the mining and commercial interests on the goldfields should have a representative on the board. I trust that at no distant date the goldfields will secure that representation. The Speech refers to our railways, and states that under the new system of management the railways have not only paid 4 per cent. on the capital cost, but have

also provided £70,000 to be applied to depreciation. I am not altogether accord with what is stated in the Speech in connection with the railways. I am not one of those who believes that the railways are worked on a commercial basis. I think rather that they are worked as monopolies and are very often worked. The railways are used as a second custom-house, to tax a certain section of the community so as to give concessions to another section. I would like to give an instance of how I think this is done. We have all heard about the differential railway rate for grain, flour, pollard, chaff, and other agricultural products are carried at a different rate when travelling towards Perth from that charged when the produce is being carried inland or towards the goldfields. The rate for chaff from Perth to Kalgoorlie is 34s. 3d. per ton, but if the chaff were grown at Kalgoorlie and sent to Perth, the rate charged would be 28s. 7d. per ton. The difference is 5s. 8d. per ton, or 20 per cent. I ask members whether they consider it fair that there should be a differential railway rate like that. It hits the goldfields in this way: the Perth merchant can buy chaff along the Great Southern Railway line and can have it carried to Perth at a reduced rate; but if the Kalgoorlie merchant buys chaff along the Great Southern line, so long as it is carried towards Perth the lower rate is charged, but as soon as the produce reaches Spencer Brook and is sent towards Kalgoorlie the higher rate is enforced. This is a question that most people living on the coast have not considered. If the coastal people knew what the differential rate meant if the goldfields they would be in favour of an amendment. Most of the commodities used on the goldfields are carried at very high rates. For instance, galvanised corrugated iron, which is used so largely on the goldfields for building residential places—it is used by every man, both poor and rich—is carried by rail at the enormous rate of £5 per ton. The Commissioner of Railways will tell members that five tons of corrugated iron can be got into one truck, which means a return of £25 per truck from Fremantle to the goldfields. A very handsome profit is made out of that. The rate for iron bedsteads is nearly £7 per ton, which

another heavy item. Five tons can be carried in one truck, which will bring in a revenue of £35 for the haulage from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. Only within the last few weeks the Commissioner has raised the rate for cane furniture by something like 700 per cent. The Railway Department had been in the habit of carrying chairs for 8d. from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, but the charge has been raised to 5s. 6d., which is a difference of something like 700 per cent. The Commissioner will give as a reason for this that five tons of furniture, and goods of a delicate nature, cannot be got into one truck; consequently a higher rate has to be charged to make it pay. This is not treating the railways as a commercial undertaking. A commercial man would certainly not treat his customers in that way: he would adopt a system of give and take, which might well be done by the Railway Commissioner. I do not think it is the new system under which the railways are being run that accounts for the large earnings during the last year, but owing to the vitality of the country the Commissioner has been able to charge high and exorbitant rates to the goldfields. I now come to the mining industry, which is referred to in the Speech. There is no doubt that our mining industry is holding its own at present. The output this year—I am predicting a little bit—will I think be fully eight millions sterling, which will compare favourably with the output for the last year. There has been a decided increase in the dividends paid, which has been brought about by a decrease in the cost of treating the ore by more scientific means. There can be no question that our mineral industry is unlike our agricultural industry in one respect, that every ounce of gold taken out of the ground shortens the life of a mine, whereas agricultural country will grow a crop, and the owner can then fallow it or put some fertiliser in the ground so that it will bring forth as good a crop the next year. We must always be on the alert to make fresh discoveries if we are to keep up the output of gold. For that reason I think that any Government must encourage the prospector—the backbone and the last resort of the mining industry. As a necessary adjunct to that industry, he should be retained in

the country and should receive every consideration; because sooner or later his services will be absolutely essential to the industry's prosperity. One of the best methods of encouraging the prospector is to give him a good water supply in the back blocks, so that he may have a base to start from and to fall back on; and I shall strongly advocate not only the sinking of wells throughout our mineral districts, but the provision of dams and any other practicable means of conserving water. Moreover, the prospector is greatly assisted by the extension of our lines of railway. It is pleasing to state that in this respect the present Government have not been unmindful of the goldfields. The railway to Laverton and Mount Morgans will soon be taken over by the Government; and personally I should like to see a farther extension of such goldfields railways. Another mode of helping the prospector is to grant him a loan on the security of his lease and machinery, when he has located a claim and is prepared to do a certain amount of work to prove it. Often when he gets down to water-level his funds are exhausted, and he has to abandon the claim. Again, the prospector should have liberal labour conditions, and the State battery system should be considerably extended. I am quite prepared to give credit to the Government for their public battery administration. I have here a few figures contrasting the quantity of ore treated by our State batteries in 1901 with that treated in 1904 till the end of June. In 1901, 49,467 tons were treated, and in 1901, 190,000 tons. The output of the State batteries for 1901 was 57,344ozs., and for 1904 226,353ozs. The value of that output in 1901 was £217,888, while in 1904 it reached the enormous total of £848,619. This will give people who have not visited the goldfields an idea of how great a boon our State batteries have been to our prospectors. Probably the large sum of £848,619 would not have been won had not the Government come to the assistance of the prospector and small claimholder in the back blocks. The Speech forecasts Bills to be introduced conditionally on the Government having a sufficient majority in the Lower House. One of the first is the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, specially intended to

broaden the Legislative Council franchise. A similar Bill was, I believe, introduced last session and rejected by this House; and should the proposed measure be brought in, I am prepared to give it considerable support. I believe the Upper House franchise should be broadened; that householders throughout the country should be brought into more direct contact with this Chamber. I cannot say I am at present in accord with the proposed amendment of the liquor laws. Few details are given; and I did not agree with what I understood to be the Premier's views expressed on the hustings. In my opinion this matter will need serious consideration before we can pledge ourselves to either side. I am quite in accord with the proposal to tax large estates with the object of bursting them up; for I think the time has arrived when such estates, which have been held so long by absentees, should be split up among people who will be prepared to utilise them.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Which are the large estates?

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: I am relying on the authority of the Premier, who mentioned them in his speeches. It is rather surprising that we are not promised any amendment of the Electoral Act. Surely there are few members of either House who will not condemn the Act in respect of postal voting. Beyond doubt the privilege of postal voting was considerably abused during the recent elections; and I trust that some effective amendment will be brought in by the Government or by some private member. I regret that the Speech does not mention any new railways. I am one of those who believe that our surplus revenue should be used to assist the natural industries of the State; and one of the best means of assisting them is by building railways. Much money has been spent in Western Australia on ornamental and useless works; and I think the time has arrived when these should be stopped and the surplus revenue better employed. I am very proud of the honour conferred on me by asking me to move the adoption of the Address-in-reply, more particularly as I do so in these new buildings. Certainly it will be highly gratifying to me to refer at any time to the fact that I was the first member of Parliament to

make a speech in this new Council Chamber on such a unique occasion. I may say that had I been in Parliament when the erection of these palatial buildings was authorised, I certainly should not have voted for expending so large a sum on such a project; because I believe that in the old Houses the accommodation was sufficient for many years to come. As I have now taken up sufficient time, I shall conclude by moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply. (General applause.)

Hon. W. OATS (South): It is with great pleasure that I second the adoption of the Address-in-reply so ably moved by the last speaker. We see a number of ladies here, and I understand there is to be a function, so I will cut short my speech. I do not usually make a long speech; and I shall now be very brief, in view of the time that has already been occupied and of the fact that the ladies are waiting for a social gathering. Anyone who compares present conditions in Western Australia with the conditions of 16 or 17 years ago must acknowledge the progress made by this great country. And what has effected that progress? That little word "gold": there is no getting away from that. And I as a mining man say that gold-mining is in its infancy. We are always justified in promoting the exploration of this great country for the precious metals, of which we have an almost inexhaustible store. The discovery of gold was the forerunner of this country's success. Other evidences of wealth have followed. The cultivation of the land—our greatest asset—must in future take its proper position; and that must be achieved by means of gold. It has been truly said that every ounce of gold taken out of the ground makes our gold deposits one ounce the less. That is true; but the gold won will help to build up this country and to make it what it ought to be. I much regret that in this State we have so many unemployed. We all remember the time, not so far distant, when everyone, whatever his calling, could get a well-paid job; and I regret the existing depression, which I fear will become more serious. The only remedy is to foster the industries we have. Do not centralise people. Send them into the back country, and let them dig as