

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

### FOURTH SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT.

*The Parliament was prorogued on the 19th December, 1919, until the 17th February, 1920. It was further prorogued to the 30th March, then to 31st May, 30th June, and 29th July respectively, and finally to the 5th August, 1920, when it met for the despatch of business; and the Fourth Session commenced on that day.*

*Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor.*

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 5th August, 1920.

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### OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Council met at 2.45 p.m. pursuant to proclamation, which was read by the Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. G. F. Hillman).

### SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.

The Clerk announced the return of writs for the election of members showing that Hon. C. F. Baxter (East), Hon. J. Nicholson (Metropolitan), Hon. J. Duffell (Metropolitan-Suburban), Hon. J. J. Holmes (North), Hon. E. M. Clarke (South-West), Hon. J. A. Greig (South-East), Hon. T. Moore (Central), Hon. E. H. Harris (North-East), Hon. F. A. Baglin (West), and Hon. J. W. Kirwan (South) had been duly elected.

Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. J. Nicholson, Hon. J. Duffell, Hon. J. J. Holmes, Hon. J. A. Greig, Hon. T. Moore, Hon. E. H. Harris, and Hon. F. A. Baglin took the oath and subscribed the roll.

### THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

His Excellency the Governor entered the Council Chamber at 3 p.m., and, the members of the Legislative Assembly having also attended in the Chamber obediently to summons, His Excellency was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

In opening the fourth and final session of the Tenth Parliament of Western Australia, I and my Advisers desire to give expression to the pride and pleasure experienced by the people of this State in welcoming His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, whose recent visit was the occasion for great joyfulness amongst all sections of the community, and whose tour of the self-governing Dominions has done much to strengthen and consolidate the bonds of love and loyalty that bind us to the Throne and to the Empire.

You will be asked to pass a resolution for transmission to His Majesty the King expressing the appreciation of the Parliament and people of this State of the kindly thought that prompted the visit of the Prince to the Commonwealth—a visit undertaken in graceful recognition of the services rendered by Australian soldiers throughout the war.

In common with every other country in the civilised world, Western Australia is faced with grave problems of reconstruction following upon the disturbances of trade, commerce, and industry during the war. My Advisers, however, because of the ability of the State to produce in abundance many of the things of which the world is most in need, feel that the prospects are encouraging and that vigour, enterprise, and goodwill amongst the people are alone necessary to replace the material losses of war and to inaugurate a period of expansion.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, 1920, was £5,863,500 15s. 0d. as compared with £4,944,850 10s. 1d. for the previous financial year, showing an increase of £918,650 4s. 11d. The expenditure for the same period was £6,531,725 7s. 7d. as com-

pared with £5,596,865 Os. 0d. for the year ended 30th June, 1919, or an increase of £934,860 7s. 7d. From these figures it will be seen that whilst the revenue has shown considerable expansion—due chiefly to increased activity in the industries of the State—there has been a corresponding increase in expenditure, attributable largely to the increased cost of all commodities and the consequent increase in salaries and wages in all departments of the Public Service. You will be asked to grant temporary supplies, and at an early date the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year will be submitted, and you will be further invited to consider proposals with a view to bringing the annual revenue and expenditure into closer accord.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council,—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,—

The prospects of the coming harvest are exceptionally bright. There has been a very large increase in the area under crop; bountiful rains throughout the agricultural areas give promise of satisfactory yields, whilst the indications are favourable for good prices in the world's markets. Consideration has been given by my Advisers to the important question of bulk handling of wheat, and it is hoped that by hearty co-operation between the Government and the producers themselves this economical method of marketing the harvest may be brought into operation without further delay.

Good progress is being made in the work of settling returned soldiers upon the land. The quota originally allotted to Western Australia was 1,650, but already upwards of 5,500 applications have been received. Of these over 3,000 men have been settled, whilst the balance—as they are approved by the board—are being accommodated with land at the rate of about fifty per week. The advances made under the provisions of the Act passed by Parliament are proving adequate, and the returned soldiers are applying themselves to this new enterprise with the vigour and determination that distinguished them in warfare. Arrangements have been completed with the Commonwealth Government whereby provision can be made for an unlimited number of returned soldiers who may be desirous of settling on the land.

The position of the mining industry—which has played and is playing so big a part in the affairs of the State—is occasioning my Advisers serious consideration. Difficulties have arisen amongst the mines chiefly responsible for the State's large gold production. The exploitation of the lower levels of these mines has been attended by increased costs and lower values, whilst the scarcity of labour and the shortage of and high price of fuel are causing anxiety. The declining premium on gold is a factor that also has to be taken into account. These matters are receiving the attention of the Government with a view to ascertaining what

steps may be taken towards keeping down the costs of the requirements of this and other industries.

At the present time there is unprecedented activity in prospecting throughout the Eastern Goldfields. In this work returned soldiers, aided by the Mines Department and the Repatriation Department, are actively participating. Several promising discoveries have been made, and it is hoped that further development will lead to the opening up of prosperous mining centres.

The development of the north-western and far northern portions of the State is receiving attention. The recent Ministerial and Parliamentary tour of those districts—in which the Federal Government participated—has served to bring prominently before the public the possibilities of this portion of our great heritage, and to make clearer the requirements of those who are engaged in its industries. Steps have been taken towards assuring a satisfactory steamer service for the north and north-western ports, and also to increase the utility of the Wyndham freezing works. The Government feel that the adoption and prosecution of a comprehensive and continuous policy for the North is justified and necessary, and steps are being taken in that direction.

Dislocations resulting from unfavourable exchange have temporarily restricted the markets for pearls and pearlshell, and the Government is prepared, if found necessary, to afford assistance—on lines previously adopted—so that this important industry may be tided over its passing difficulty.

With the close of the war there has been a renewal of activity in our timber industry, although shortage of shipping still restricts exports. The values of our timbers are becoming more widely recognised, and in this connection important results may be expected from the recent conference in London, at which the Conservator of Forests for Western Australia was one of the representatives of the Commonwealth, and also from the passage by the Federal Parliament of the Bill appointing a permanent Council of Science and Industry, the early outcome of which will be the establishment of a forest products laboratory in this State.

Secondary industries are steadily expanding, and the Government will continue to give to these every possible encouragement and assistance in order that wider avenues of employment may be afforded to the people and additional sources of wealth may be exploited. In furtherance of this object it is proposed to establish a State council, with powers to investigate and advise.

A vigorous policy of immigration has been initiated, although shortage of shipping has occasioned much delay. An arrangement has been arrived at with the Commonwealth Government whereby that Government will do much of the propaganda work and will pay the fares of immigrants, the selection of which will remain entirely in the hands of the State authorities.

At the recent conference of Premiers some consideration was given to the question of overlapping of Federal and State activities, but finality was not arrived at. Not only in the Taxation, Electoral, Savings Bank, and Statistical departments, but in many other directions, such as Treasury operations, carriage of mails, Commonwealth and railway telephones, meat inspection, etc., there is unnecessary cost to the taxpayer and inconvenience to the public by the duplication of services. My Advisers are now negotiating direct with the Federal Government, the aim being to secure the utilisation of State agencies wherever possible; to avoid the creation of new Federal or State departments of a duplicating character; and to create that hearty co-operation between the two authorities which is essential to enable the community to obtain the best results from the money expended.

Amongst the measures to be presented for your consideration during the session will be a Bill to amend the Public Service Act in order to provide for a board to deal with Civil Service matters, including appeals against classification and salaries. Teachers under the Education Department will also be brought within the scope of this board. In the meantime the further reorganisation of the Public Service has been receiving attention, and such amending legislation as is necessary to facilitate this work will be submitted.

The amending and consolidating Shops and Factories Bill, introduced last Session, will be proceeded with. A Bill will be presented to continue the operation of the Prices Regulation Act, and amongst other legislative proposals to be submitted will be:—

A Bill to place the State Trading Concerns under a Commissioner;

A Bill to remove the disqualification against women offering themselves as candidates for Parliament;

Bills to amend the Mining Act and the Mining Development Act;

A Bill to assist the Municipality of Perth in dealing with its endowment lands;

A Bill to amend the provisions of the Land Act regarding pastoral leases;

A Bill permitting the appointment of harbour boards;

A Bill arising out of the recommendations of the select committee on lunacy administration.

A Bill relating to the appointment of coroners;

A Bill to continue the provisions of the Wheat Marketing Act;

A Bill permitting the registration of nurses and midwives;

An Architects Bill;

A Bill to amend the Dentists Act;

Bills to continue certain provisions of the Health Act and of the licensing laws; and other measures of minor importance.

I now leave you to your labours, trusting that by the blessing of Divine Providence they will prove of advantage to the people of Western Australia.

#### GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, DISTRIBUTION.

The PRESIDENT: For the sake of greater accuracy I have obtained from His Excellency the Governor a copy of the Speech which he has been pleased to deliver to this honourable House. Copies of the Speech will be distributed amongst hon. members for their information.

#### BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.23]: 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 entitled "An Act to amend the High School Act, 1876."

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

#### MOTION—VISIT OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.25]: I have a very pleasing duty to perform this afternoon, and that is to move, without notice, and to invite hon. members to give their assent to, an address to His Majesty the King, testifying our loyalty and devotion to his throne and person, and also conveying to His Majesty our sincere appreciation of the recent visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. I will now read the address which I propose to submit for the approval of this House, and which I am sure will be accepted unanimously—

To His Most Gracious Majesty the King. May it please Your Majesty: we, your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to approach your Majesty, and to express our sincere appreciation of the recent visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, a visit which was the occasion of great joyfulness amongst all sections of this community. We assure Your Majesty of our continued loyalty to Your Throne and Person, and we fervently hope that Your Majesty may long be spared to rule over the British Empire.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [3.29]: In rising to second the motion which has been submitted by the leader of the House, I feel certain that it is almost superfluous for me to add anything further to it. I think, however, that hon. members would be pleased were we able to place on record

our appreciation of the satisfactory manner in which His Royal Highness carried out the many functions in connection with his tour when he came to Western Australia. We are sending an address to His Majesty the King, thanking him for allowing the Prince to come out, and placing on record our expressions of loyalty. But I think we might place on record our sincere appreciation of the satisfactory manner in which His Royal Highness carried out the functions of his tour. To the ordinary observer that tour would look like a health trip or a pleasure jaunt, but those who were in close communication with him must have known that there was a very great personal physical strain imposed upon him, and anyone who knows anything about other matters will feel that this continued meeting of people from time to time must have meant a considerable tax upon the Prince's powers of endurance. Further than this, there is always coupled with the strain of persons in responsible positions a mental anxiety to give satisfaction. We have all of us at different times had responsible positions, and in carrying out the duties of those responsible positions have felt a certain anxiety to do credit to ourselves. That anxiety would be shared by those, I think, who were born in the purple as well as by those who were not. In these circumstances I should think there was in connection with the visit of His Royal Highness a very great physical strain as well as a mental strain. As a result of the very brief personal conversation I had with His Royal Highness here I am certain that his inclination would have taken him, if possible, into the country, where he could have been amongst the stations, the horses, and cattle hunting, and other matters of this description, and where he could have seen the actual development of the country going on. Instead of this, we have found that, in the most unselfish manner possible, he sank his personal inclinations, and placed himself at the disposal of the people so that he might meet as many as possible of those who belong to the States he came to visit, and so that he could see them and be personally known to them. In these circumstances I am certain that everyone appreciates the excellent manner in which the Prince carried out these functions, and feels that he can subscribe most gratefully to the motion before us. I have, therefore, very great pleasure in seconding the motion proposed by the leader of the House.

The PRESIDENT: In view of the importance of the motion, I will ask hon. members to pass it standing.

Question put and passed, members standing.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.30]: I move—

That an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor requesting him

to communicate by cable message to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for presentation to His Majesty the King, the address to His Majesty which has been agreed to by the Legislative Council of Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister) [3.32]: I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [3.35]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—  
“May it please Your Excellency. We, the members of 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 and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.”

I was pleased to be able to join with others in welcoming His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his recent visit to Western Australia. He is a young man, and his object in visiting the Dominions was to get first-hand knowledge of the conditions as they exist. There is no doubt that the visit paid by His Royal Highness to Western Australia will do much good to the State, and will also have the effect of strengthening the bonds of friendship between ourselves and the great Empire upon which the sun never sets. I endorse much that is contained in His Excellency's Speech, but whilst I do so I reserve to myself the right to criticise any action of this or any other Government in connection with any matter that may come before us, and will exercise my vote on measures that may come before the House in that direction, which, in my judgment, I consider will be calculated to be in the best interests of the State. Reference is made in the Speech to the fact that vigour, enterprise, and goodwill amongst the people are alone necessary to replace the material losses of war, and to inaugurate a period of expansion. During the war period bitter animosities were engendered between various sections of the community, and particularly between employers and employees, and the thought occurred to me that a unique opportunity presented itself when hostilities ceased, or rather when the Armistice was signed, for the Government who represented the whole of the people to make a strong and united effort to bring all parties together with the object of creating goodwill and a better feeling. The adoption of such a course could have no other than a beneficial effect for the whole of the State. Unfortunately the matter was overlooked, but I am still of opinion that it is not too late for the Government to make an effort to bring about more harmonious relations be-

tween employers and employees in the State, and to take advantage of the opportunities presenting themselves for the expansion of trade, so as to establish that better feeling which all desire to see created. I refrain from alluding to the revenue figures which have been quoted. Through circumstances over which we have no control those figures were not available until a late hour, and I will content myself by saying that it must be obvious that the finances of the State are not very buoyant. Having regard to that fact, I am delighted to note the references which have been made to the forthcoming harvest and the prospects which point to a bountiful one resulting. I sincerely hope that that harvest will even exceed the most sanguine expectations of the Government, and more particularly on account of the decline in recent years of one of the State's best assets, namely, the gold production. That asset has an important bearing on the finances of the State. I may be pardoned for referring to the decline in the gold production in recent years. I say unhesitatingly that no industry has done more for Western Australia than has the mining industry. Its history dates back to 1886, when we had a modest production of 270 ounces. The increase was slow until 1892, when the goldfield of Coolgardie was discovered, and from then onwards the increase was very rapid. Soon after that year Hamans, now known as Kalgoorlie, was discovered, and its progress was phenomenal. From 1898 to 1916—18 consecutive years—the production exceeded one million ounces per annum, and in one instance—I think it was 1903—it exceeded two million ounces, which gave us an average value of 6½ million pounds annually for the period covering those years. These are formidable figures, and I quote them to emphasise the immense importance of maintaining the mining industry at a high level. Unfortunately the gold output has been greatly decreasing, and having regard to the further decline which has taken place in the seven months of the current year, it will appear that during 1920 the total will not exceed 600,000 ounces. This important fact, I am pleased to note, has attracted the attention of the Government, who have indicated that the matter is engaging their serious consideration. The production of gold, too, has a bearing on the exchange rates of the world, and on that account also I trust that they will do the best that is possible. Our mineral potentialities are great indeed, and it will necessitate an expenditure of a considerable amount of money in order to develop the resources we have. It is also necessary for the Government to be as generous as possible to the prospectors—those men who have been the pioneers of the State, and who take their lives in their hands when they go out into the wilderness, so to speak, to make new finds. Those pioneers are deserving of the best the State can offer them. Certainly prospecting has been vigorously carried on, particularly on the new goldfields at Hampton Plains and Mt. Monger, and while

we did anticipate some little time ago that we would have another Golden Mile, experience indicates that the new fields will not come quite up to that expectation. However, we are hopeful that in the not too distant future, some of the mines in those districts will so develop that they will be added to the gold producing mines of the State. The Government can ill-afford to permit the industry to decline without making a supreme effort to revive it as much as possible. I notice that the Government's expectations regarding the number of soldiers who have gone in for land settlement have been exceeded. This should prove very beneficial indeed to the State. I hope that when provision is being made for returned soldiers, those returning to the locality from which they enlisted will have opportunities equal to those who settle in other agricultural districts. I refer particularly to the mallee country in the Esperance district. The extent of the Esperance wheat area is very great indeed, and some of our returned soldiers are anxious to return to the vicinity of their former homes and there establish themselves on the land. I note that it is the intention of the Government to bring down Bills to amend the Mining Act and the Mining Development Act. I presume that the latter refers to tributors. This legislation should be hailed with satisfaction by the men who are following the avocation of mining, and particularly by the tributors. These men are suffering under many disabilities and burdens, and as many of the mines now being worked by companies will in future be worked more or less by tributors, this legislation should prove of especial interest to residents of the goldfields. It is the intention of the Government to do their best to develop the North-West and the far north of Western Australia. I am not acquainted with that territory but, when the question is viewed from a strictly national standpoint, we must realise that efforts should be made to bring the thousands of square miles of land in that part of the State under profitable occupation and thus give Western Australia that added strength which is so much desired. How best to develop that territory is a matter which will need thorough investigation before the problem can be solved by the Government. I congratulate the Government on their proposal to co-operate with the Federal authorities and do away with the over-lapping of Federal and State activities in various departments. The public will welcome the introduction of a scheme of co-operation to that end, for it has been amply demonstrated in the past that the taxpayer has quite sufficient to do in meeting the requirements of one department without being saddled with the onus of meeting the requirements of two departments doing practically the same class of work. The Government intend to amend the Public Service Act, a course of which I heartily approve. There is ample justification for the action which the Government

have taken to extend the board to the teachers in the service of the State. In my opinion this reform is long overdue, and I think that when the board begins its operations, it will tend to greater efficiency throughout the service. The watchword of the civil service should be "efficiency." In our many departments there are doubtless numerous civil servants possessed of foresight and initiative such as would enable them to offer suggestions which would be useful to the Government in making for greater efficiency in administration. Such civil servants might readily offer suggestions of a practical nature if they were encouraged to do so. Suggestions should be invited, and if any suggestion offered, on being investigated by a board of say three experts, were considered worthy of adoption, the officer submitting it should be remunerated for it. This would stimulate members of the service to exercise their brains for the betterment of the service. It would be far better to pay them the value for ideas than that they should retain the ideas in their heads. The suggestion to appoint a commissioner to control the State trading concerns is a step in the right direction. The appointment of an independent Commissioner is certainly advisable, as such an officer would prove a safeguard against any attempt to interfere with the fair and impartial administration of these concerns. I welcome the proposal to extend the duration of the Prices Regulation Act. The Prices Regulation Commission really do not meet all the requirements of the public, but they have proved useful as a brake on the tendency to increase prices. Certainly it is most difficult to combat the baleful influences of profiteering and cornering which we know exist. The present and other Governments have tried to do so, and have failed. Therefore, I am pleased that the Prices Regulation Commission will continue their work. Last but not least among the many measures enumerated in the Governor's Speech is one to remove the disqualification of women as candidates for Parliament. Legislation of this description should be hailed with satisfaction by the fair sex. I have never yet met an elector who was prepared to admit that he favoured a monopoly; yet the male section of the community has had an undoubted monopoly in the legislative halls of the State. The subject of proportional representation is exercising the minds of many people at the present time. If this system were adopted, I should think the female section of the community would then be fairly well represented in the halls of the legislature. When this disqualification has been removed, the ladies will with some logic be able to urge the argument so frequently put forward, namely, equal pay for equal work. There are many other matters which might have been dealt with in the Governor's Speech, but I presume that opportunities to deal with them will be afforded me later on. There is one matter to which I

wish briefly to refer—the payment to jurors. Many years ago, the rate of payment to jurors was fixed by statute at 10s. a day. At that time the basic wage throughout Western Australia was somewhere in the vicinity of 7s. 6d. a day. Since that time, wages have increased considerably, but the payment to jurors has remained the same. So long as it is the duty and privilege of citizens to sit in judgment on their fellow men and women, they should be adequately remunerated. Frequent appeals have been made to coroners, magistrates and judges for an increased rate of pay. In my opinion, the chances of getting just verdicts recorded would be considerably enhanced if the jurymen were not smarting under a knowledge that they are not as adequately remunerated as are the witnesses who tender evidence before them.

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [8.55]: I have pleasure in seconding the motion.

On motion by Hon. R. G. Ardagh, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 3.56 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 5th August, 1920.*

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### MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant).

The Speaker took the Chair.

### SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The Speaker and hon. members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening Speech (vide Council report ante), they returned to the Assembly Chamber. The Speaker resumed the Chair.