

that the public have lost confidence in it. I live near the bridge. I have always trusted the engineers, and I am awaiting with interest an announcement from the Department that the bridge was effectively patrolled. I am sorry that up to the present no such announcement has been made. All kinds of wild rumours are afloat to the effect that a man, really outside the Department, was responsible for averting a terrible catastrophe which would have led to great loss of life. I believe that when the truth comes out it will be found that the engineers have effectively looked after the structure. Seeing that the flood was washing bridges away all over the country, I cannot think that our engineering authorities would have been neglectful in that regard. I shall await with interest an announcement on the matter from the Department. The public have lost faith in both bridges, and we must face the question of new structures. I expected to see in the Governor's Speech a reference to the question of bridges, which will involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. I should have been better pleased if I had read in the Speech a definite promise to the effect that the construction of a new bridge would be commenced this year. An announcement has been made by the Minister for Railways, and by the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman), but no such announcement carries as much weight as a statement by the Treasurer, who has to arrange for the requisite loan. The public demand will be for a new bridge. No one will be satisfied with the mere repairing of the present structure. The Government will be required to build a new bridge of modern design that will meet requirements for many years ahead. I am sure this House will do good service to the country during the present session, and I am pleased to have been returned to participate in the work. While I am opposed to the principle of having an Upper House, and to the present constitution and franchise, I agree that we here possess tremendous powers for good as well as for evil which will make for or hinder the progress of the State and its people. I look upon every member, no matter to what party he belongs, as sincere in his desire to assist the country. I hope members will be able to shake off any outside influence, get down to business, and support anything from another place that will be of benefit to Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You might set a good example.

**HON. J. R. BROWN** (North-East) [4.10]: It affords me great pleasure to second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply so ably delivered by His Excellency this afternoon. I expect that many benefits will accrue to the State from that Speech. I merely second the motion formally, as I intend to speak on the subject more fully at a later date.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 29th July, 1926.*

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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.

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.

## MIGRATION AGREEMENT, WORKS SCHEDULE.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle): In presenting a copy of the Migration Scheme as submitted to the Commonwealth Government by the Western Australia Government on the 13th January, 1926, let me explain that some of the works mentioned in the schedule have been constructed. It was necessary for those works to be included as the new agreement was made retrospective to June 1922, and the previous Nationalist-Country Party Government were advanced £750,000 by the Commonwealth on account of migration, which amount was partially expended on such works.

## BILL—SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [3.45]: 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 ratify an agreement between the Commonwealth and the State relating to soldier land settlement.

Leave given; Bill introduced and read a first time.

## GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

**MR. SPEAKER:** In company with hon. members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency the 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 hon. members of this Chamber.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

**MR. CORBOY** (Yilgarn) [3.48]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—  
“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.”

I am grateful to those controlling the business of the House for having given the opportunity to move the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. As a supporter of the Government, I feel it to be indeed a privilege to stand here at the opening of the last session of the present Parliament and say what I can on this motion. When we consider the financial position, we should feel pleased that we have in charge of the State a Government capable of handling its affairs so efficiently. The financial position not only reflects great credit upon the Government, but it places the State in a position of security. The present Government are facing difficulties much greater, I think, than were those which confronted any previous administration, because, while the domestic problems to be grappled with are at least as great as they ever were, the present Government are confronted with a Federal administration which is doing its utmost to tie up the whole of the State Governments of Australia and prevent them from carrying on their work.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** By giving the Government more money than ever in the past!

**The Premier:** And we are making use of it, too.

**Mr. CORBOY:** I shall deal with the aspect mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, the question of the amount of money which the Federal Government are making available to the State, and before I have finished the Leader of the Opposition will be regretting that he introduced the subject. I shall show how little the hon. member did when he had the opportunity. He did not accept the money.

**Hon. Sir James Mitchell:** Anyhow, I kept everybody at work.

**The Premier:** Occasionally.

**Mr. Mann:** And now there are unemployed all the time.

**Mr. Richardson:** Yes, there is no “occasionally” about it now.

**The Premier:** Oh, go on!

**Mr. CORBOY:** I shall leave it to the member for Perth to say whether he has been troubled by unemployed nearly so much in the last two years as in the previous three years. He comes into contact with the unemployed perhaps more than does any other member of the House.

**The Premier:** And he has not been approached this year.

Mr. CORBOY: This year the member for Perth wears a very much more contented look than he has done at any time during the previous three years.

Mr. Latham: Because he is hopeful of a change of Government next year.

Mr. CORBOY: I do not intend to be side-tracked by these little interludes. I shall deal a little later with the aspect mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, because it is worthy of some attention. Labour Governments in the past have usually been told by the opposition Press, even if their opponents in Parliament were too generous to say it, that they lacked business acumen.

Mr. Mann: You have not had much opposition in this Parliament.

Mr. CORBOY: And we shall not have much at the elections next year.

Mr. Marshall: It will be a sorry thing for the State if we lose next year.

Mr. Richardson. It will be a sorry thing for the State if you win.

Mr. CORBOY: When the other 49 members of the House have finished making speeches, I shall proceed with mine. May I congratulate our only lady member upon her silence. Ladies are often charged with speaking out of their turn, but she is about the only member of the House who has not interjected.

Mr. Marshall: She is acting contrary to nature.

Mr. Richardson: And there will be all the more to come.

Mr. CORBOY: The general run of Labour Governments have been accused of lacking business acumen.

Mr. George: But see how we have educated them.

Mr. CORBOY: One could be very unkind in replying to that interjection, but I in my youth shall respect the hon. member's grey hairs and trust that someone will be equally generous to me when I have occupied a seat in this House as long as he has. Other Labour Governments have been charged with lacking ability to administer satisfactorily the affairs of the State, but the present Government, owing to their outstanding ability, have not so far fallen to such a charge. Any comparison of the figures for the last five years would immediately impress an investigator with the outstanding ability of the present Administration as compared with any of its predecessors for many

years. All those people who have the welfare of the State at heart and those who have the welfare of their own businesses at heart—after all, the financial position of the State affects every one of us—will relish the fact that the present Government have practically succeeded in turning the financial corner.

Mr. George: There was no corner to turn.

Mr. Richardson: They have turned back again.

Mr. CORBOY: Then let me quote the amount of the deficits recorded by the Government of which the member for Murray-Wellington was almost the acting-leader for a time.

Mr. George: I meant that if we had remained in office, there would have been no deficit.

The Premier: A wonderful old man, you are!

Mr. CORBOY: Let me quote the deficits for the last five years, and in doing so, I propose to enlarge upon the works carried out by the various Governments.

Mr. Latham: If I were you I would not quote them.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course not, but because I am on this side of the House, I will quote them. The deficit in 1921-22 exceeded £732,000, and in 1922-23 it was more than £405,000.

Mr. Richardson: A reduction of £300,000.

Mr. CORBOY: I admit that it was a big reduction on the figures of the previous year. In 1923-24 the deficit was over £229,000—again a big reduction on the deficit of the preceding year. I give members opposite, and particularly the ex-Premier, all possible credit for having succeeded in materially reducing the annual deficits during the period they were in office, but during the whole of the time they occupied the Treasury benches they budgeted for a figure very different from that which the financial returns disclosed when the year actually ended, showing that they had not that grip upon the financial affairs of the State which would have enabled them to anticipate more closely the probable yearly returns.

Mr. Richardson: We are coming to the profit now.

Mr. CORBOY: It is not a question of either profits or prophets. The present

Premier, having succeeded in finishing each financial year within a few hundred pounds of the figures anticipated, has demonstrated his ability to handle the finances, quite apart from the guidance given by departmental officials which, of course, is available to every Premier.

Mr. Mann: You will admit that the road was cleared a bit for him.

The Premier: The night was dark and we were far from home.

Mr. CORBOY: And there were not only muddy pools to fall into, but stumps to trip over. During the first year of the Labour Government's administration, the amount of the deficit dropped from nearly a quarter of a million to £58,398.

Mr. Latham: Was there any bigger drop in that year than in the three previous years?

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, the drop was much bigger proportionately.

Mr. Mann: What was the difference?

Mr. CORBOY: During the previous year the reduction of the deficit was less than half, but during the first year of the Labour Government the drop represented nearly four-fifths. For the year just concluded the deficit is greater than it was for the previous year.

Mr. Mann: Why?

Mr. CORBOY: I will explain why if the hon. member will give me an opportunity. The deficit for the year had increased to £99,000 approximately. I would draw attention to the fact that the deficit was within approximately £1,000 of the amount anticipated by the Treasurer, which goes to show that the Treasurer's financial statement made at the beginning of the financial year was correct. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) wants to know the reason of the increase. I tell him that 12 months ago the Treasurer told us the reason, and that the Treasurer's words have proved true.

Mr. Mann: But not his calculations.

Mr. Richardson: The reasons are entirely different.

Mr. CORBOY: I will leave the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) to demonstrate wherein the difference consists. During the three years in which the late Government held possession of the Treasury bench, prior to the acceptance of office by the present Government, the average annual deficit was £455,000.

Mr. Richardson: And what was the reduction for the three years?

Mr. Davy: The deficit was on the down grade all the time.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What was the average for the period?

Mr. CORBOY: The Leader of the Opposition challenges me with regard to the average results for the period. In his case the average annual deficit was £455,000, and in the case of the present Government it is £78,000 per annum—a very material difference.

Mr. Richardson: What was the average reduction?

Mr. CORBOY: The average reduction strongly favours my argument, and therefore I would advise the hon. member not to pursue that line.

The Premier: For two years there was no reduction at all. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) knows nothing about the figures.

Mr. Richardson: Yes, I do.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORBOY: May I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the fact that hon. members opposite appear to be working off on the first day of this session all the surplus energy they have accumulated during recess. You, Sir, should have a peaceful time during the remainder of the session. I am prepared to put up with these ebullitions, in the hope that the Speaker will enjoy the remainder of this Parliament without interruption. The member for North Perth (Mr. MacCallum Smith has) interjected something about the bearing of taxation on these matters. That is a point we also have to bear in mind in comparing the relative results of administration during the two periods of office. One must take into account the taxation imposed by a Government, and the manner in which the revenue resulting from that taxation has been expended. Further, one must bear in mind whether there has been an increase or a decrease in necessary expenditure. The member for North Perth himself, as a business man, will agree that it was a great relief not only to him but to every other member of the commercial community of this State when the present Government agreed to do something that the previous Government would not do, namely abolish the super tax in connection with income taxation.

Mr. George: You did not do it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Upper House made you do it.

The Premier: I could have dropped the Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: The Leader of the Opposition, when interjecting that the Upper House made us abolish the super tax, is of course saying something that is quite untrue. It would be utterly futile for the Upper House to attempt to make us do anything. Had it been possible for the Upper House to make us do anything, they would have compelled us, at the Opposition Leader's request, to do various things last session and the session before.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They made you do that.

Mr. CORBOY: No. We did a number of things that the Opposition Leader would have been glad to get the Council to prevent us from doing, had it been possible.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why not abolish the Upper House?

Mr. CORBOY: I will not be drawn off into a side issue. There are such things as reduction of income tax and abolition of the super tax, and other considerations, which have materially affected the present Government's revenue during the period they have been in office. Further, I may remind the House that the present Government have burdened themselves with largely increased expenditure on items that are of benefit to the whole State, items which I personally hold should have been shouldered by the previous Administration had they been able to shoulder them. Not being in the then Treasurer's position, I am unable to say whether he could have carried the burden or not. He said he could not. But immediately he went out of office and the present Treasurer assumed control, the latter was able to say that he could carry the burden which his predecessor had said could not be carried.

Mr. George: It might not have been possible four years ago, and yet might be quite possible to-day.

Mr. CORBOY. The hon. member interjecting probably feels disgruntled.

The Premier: The heaviest burden which the late Treasurer carried was his colleague now alongside him.

Mr. Panton: That is very unkind, but true.

Mr. CORBOY: In this connection I am referring particularly to the expenditure on main roads in conjunction with the Federal

Government. I desire to draw the attention of the House to the relative expenditure for the last three years on this head. After all, practically the whole of the money for main roads is expended on developmental roads in country districts, and is therefore of material benefit to the whole State and to every resident of it. During the Opposition Leader's last year of office an amount of £35,000 was spent by the State under the main roads scheme in conjunction with the Federal Government. During the very first year of the present Government's administration, the year following that in which the Opposition Leader went out of office, that amount of £35,000 was increased to no less than £145,877.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The scheme was only in operation a few months during my term of office.

Mr. CORBOY: Oh no! Let us examine the thing fairly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should be fair.

Mr. CORBOY: In my opinion it is a most material consideration that the present Government were able to spend fully four times as much on roads in their first year of office as had been spent in the previous year by the last Government. During the year just closed the expenditure on roads has decreased slightly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Mr. Bruce gave you the money.

Mr. CORBOY: I shall deal with that aspect in a moment.

The Minister for Lands: Mr. Bruce gives us nothing; he wants it all back again.

Mr. CORBOY: During the following year, which is to say last year, an amount of £93,000 was spent under the scheme by this State. The Opposition Leader says that the expenditure is due to Mr. Bruce, who gives us the money. That is not true. The State has had to find pound for pound with the Commonwealth towards that expenditure. I feel sure that the Opposition Leader's colleague, the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George), will agree with me when I say that he would have been much happier in his Ministerial job had his chief agreed to find money as our chief has done.

Mr. George: I should have felt very much happier if I had had the money to expend that you have had.

The Premier: You did enough damage with the money you had to spend.

Mr. CORBOY: The point is that the State Government have had to find pound for pound with the Federal Government, and that in two years the present Government have found £200,000 for roads alone.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Loan money, of course, and Bruce's money.

Mr. CORBOY: It is not Bruce's money at all. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would be fair. He usually is. Perhaps just now he is a bit collar proud, this being the first day of the session. He may improve later on. In addition, the present Government have during the past 12 months found an amount of over £100,000 for roads in group settlements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Again loan money.

Mr. CORBOY: Perhaps the money spent by the Opposition Leader on the groups was not loan money? Perhaps such money is loan money only when we are in office? The fact is that the money spent on group settlements was loan money all the time. The Opposition Leader tries to damn our Government with faint praise. At any rate, the lenders of the money have sufficient faith in the present Government to lend them up to any amount required. I do not wish to labour these items. The Government have demonstrated definitely their great ability in an administrative sense, especially in the matter of finance. They have carried out the work which the State required, and during the coming year expenditure in this connection will increase. They have done great work. They have straightened out the finances, and nevertheless have increased expenditure on behalf of the State. Their record entitles them to every credit. They are also deserving of every credit for the increase in the number of migrants. More migrants annually have been introduced into Western Australia during the present Government's term of office than under the previous administration. That is a point in respect of which the present Government deserve commendation. The area under crop has gone on increasing year by year under the present Government as under previous Governments, to whom I am also prepared to give credit. The increase in settlement proceeds all the time, showing that the present Government's administrative methods have not destroyed the confidence of people desirous of settling on the land, as our opponents declared would be the case. It is pleasing to know that the Government intend to pursue an active migration policy, and

that they are proceeding with necessary works in the matter of agricultural railways. The Governor's Speech mentions four agricultural railways as about to be constructed, and I am particularly pleased to see included in the list a Bill for the Kalkalling-Bullfinch line, the passing of which will not only link up the existing Bullfinch and Kalkalling dead-ends, but open up a vast area of country, besides providing a more efficient means of working the railways in respect of the circumstance that trucks returning from the goldfields will be run more expeditiously and cheaply in bringing wheat to the coast than has been the case in the past.

Mr. Lindsay: Do you not think that the route proposed is wrong?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not think so. However, I will speak on the Bill; I need not thrash the matter out at this stage. For once I find myself in agreement with the Minister for Lands on a report of the Railways Advisory Board. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) should be fair, and should bear in mind that the reasons actuating the board in their present decision did not exist at the time the previous decision was arrived at.

The Minister for Lands: The land has been classified since.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. The member for Toodyay must be fair.

Mr. Lindsay: I will deal with the matter later on.

Mr. CORBOY: Well, the hon. member should be fair. There is one other question to which I desire to refer. I am grateful to the Government for the intimation that among the matters to be introduced to us this session is that relating to State insurance.

Mr. Sampson: They are looking for trouble.

Mr. CORBOY: On the contrary, the hon. member will look for trouble if he attempts to prove that the action of the Government is not right. Five years ago, I had the pleasure of submitting a motion in this Chamber requesting the then Government—the Ministry at the time was drawn from the ranks of the parties now sitting in Opposition—to establish a State insurance office to cover all forms of insurance. That motion was carried by 23 votes to 17.

Mr. Sampson: Yes, on a party vote.

Mr. CORBOY: Not at all.

Mr. Marshall: How could it have been on a party vote?

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it was not carried on a party vote, because the Labour Party were then sitting in Opposition. Quite a number who supported the then Government voted in favour of the motion. Apparently it must have been the death knell of some of them, because they are not now members of this Chamber.

Mr. George: There were some who are still here.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. The Whip of the Opposition, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Richardson) was one who voted for the motion. The Government of the day should have taken notice of the decision of the House at the time, but that was not done. The House determined that the time was ripe for the establishment of a State insurance office and although nothing was done at that time, I am grateful that at long last the present Labour Government have seen fit to move in that direction. I would have preferred to have had the question dealt with at the original session of the present Parliament, but it is better late than never. I hope that, having turned their attention to this question, the Government will not confine the activities of the State insurance office to those at present covered by them, such as workers' compensation and so on, but will enlarge the scope of the proposal to enable the State insurance office to compete with other offices in all forms of insurance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a pity they did not wait until the Bill came before us.

Mr. Panton: And let miners die like sheep in the meantime!

Mr. CORBOY: It is easy to see that the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) does not represent a mining constituency. If he did so, he would know that insurance companies will not cover men who are sacrificing their lives in the mining industry. Nor yet would he be so callous as to suggest that the Government should wait. On the contrary, he would desire the Government to go ahead and cover the miners.

The Minister for Mines: It should have been done years ago.

Mr. CORBOY: I believe that not only the Government here, but every State Government as well have the sympathy of the people of Australia as a whole in the contest now being waged with the Federal Government on several points. These in-

clude the per capita payment, the petrol tax and so on. Certainly I am convinced that the people of Western Australia, with, perhaps, one exception, are behind the Government and will support them in the attitude they are adopting regarding the Federal Government. I have much pleasure in submitting the motion I have moved.

**MR. PANTON (Menzies) [4.18]:** I formally second the motion.

On motion by Mr. George, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 4.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 3rd August, 1926.*

Address-in-reply ... .. PAGE 15

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Second Day.*

Debate resumed from 29th July.

**HON. J. EWING (South-West) [4.50]:** Since we adjourned some seven months ago there have been some changes in the membership of this House. Of those who occupied seats in the Chamber, three have been defeated. The electors in their wisdom decided that those gentlemen should fall by the way, and they have done so. I cannot help expressing regret that such has been the case. I think the new members will understand the spirit in which this is said, and what these words are meant to imply. When they have become old members themselves, should they chance to fall by the