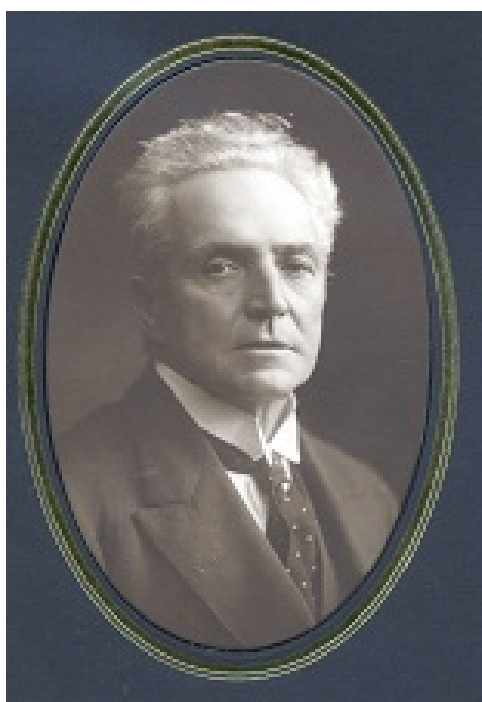




**PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**



**MR JAMES GARDINER, MLA**  
(Member for Irwin)

**Legislative Assembly**

**Thursday, 23 December 1920**



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throughout the session. This is not quite like the close of an ordinary session, for it marks the close of the life of this Parliament. In the course of the next eight or ten weeks we shall have to face our masters, and I suppose, as in every other battle, at the battle of the polls there will be casualties. While I can say that on personal grounds I shall very much regret losing the close association of any one who has occupied a seat in this House, yet the Premier will scarcely expect me to join with him in the wish that there shall be no alteration. I hope rather that as a result of the elections we shall redress the balance somewhat. Notwithstanding that, I can say I wish every member such luck and fortune as one political opponent may offer to another. I regret that a number of members, some of whom have been with us for many years, have decided to retire from political life. There is the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner) who 20 years ago occupied a prominent position in the councils of the State. I am sure the loss of his services will be a State loss. More particularly will his kindly and genial presence be missed from this Chamber. There are others also whose absence from the Chamber will be a distinct loss. I understand it is the intention of the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) not to seek re-election. Whilst we may not all agree with the views expressed by that hon. member, yet we readily admit that his contributions to our deliberations have been illuminating and of very great assistance indeed. I am informed it is the intention of the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) not to seek re-election. I regret that very much, although the party to which I belong would be endeavouring to unseat him if he did seek re-election. Nevertheless he has attached himself to everybody who has enjoyed his personal friendship. I am sure that, had he cared to devote himself exclusively to a political career, he would have attained a very high place in the councils of his party. The member for Claremont (Mr. Duff), I understand is not seeking re-election. Although he has not been so long in the House as the other members to whom I have referred, yet because of his courtesy and kindness and the prominent part he has played in the social side of our life, as well as in the more important discussions in the House, we regret that he will not be amongst us in the new Parliament. Then there is the member for Leederville (Mr. Voryard), a very old member of this House. He too, I understand will voluntarily retire. These are the members who we know will not be here next session. There may be others. However, it is not a subject upon which one wishes to dwell. I can only say that the session we have just closed has been freer from acrimonious debate than some of the sessions of which older members have had knowledge in the years gone by. We have managed to get along and to differ strenuously, perhaps, but agreeing always to differ without importing into our discussions anything in the nature of personal recrimination or abuse. I say that as one with 15 years experience. When I recall the Parliaments of my earlier political days I realise that there is a marked contrast in the manner in which we have got along during this Parliament and particularly this session. I think we can do the work we are sent here to

do without too violently striving with each other. I hope every member of the House may have a very enjoyable Christmas and may, whether friend or opponent, enter the political fray in good health. I trust that when the elections are over we shall all be able to say we fought the fight fairly.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.20 a.m.]: I should like to endorse the good wishes expressed by the Premier and by the leader of the Opposition to yourself, Mr. Speaker. Both in the Chair and elsewhere, Sir, you have rendered members very important assistance in carrying on the business of the country. At all times you have been ready to help members who found themselves in any difficulty. I desire also to endorse the observations of the Premier and of the leader of the Opposition with respect to the officers of the House and the "Hansard" staff, all of whom have shown a constant readiness to give of their best to every individual member of the Chamber. It is a matter of great regret to me that several hon. members are voluntarily retiring from the service of the House; and this is an observation I wish to stress as applying to the member for Irwin (Mr. Gardiner), who was the first leader I had in politics. There are very many things told me by him during my first few weeks here which I shall ever remember. Then there is also the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) retiring. Both these hon. members are adherents of our party, and I feel that in losing them the party will lose some portion of its main strength. I should like, further, to pay to the leader of the Opposition (Hon. P. Collier) and the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) the tribute of acknowledging that alike in their criticisms and their actions they have been guided by complete honesty and sincerity. I especially learned to value the member for North-East Fremantle during the proceedings of the Royal Commission on the Wheat Marketing Scheme, on which body I had the pleasure of being associated with him. It was then the hon. member's worth was specially borne in on me. If it is my good fortune to come back after March next and to renew my acquaintance with these gentlemen, I trust all our deliberations will tend towards the benefit of Western Australia. Allow me to conclude, by wishing you, Sir, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [5.24 a.m.]: I thank the leader of the Opposition and the Premier for their kindly references to those of us who are leaving political life. One might almost express oneself in the ancient phrase of the Roman gladiators, "We who are about to die, salute ye." It is pretty hard when we are compelled conscientiously to admit to ourselves that we have lost our usefulness in public life. It is sad indeed. But it is sadder still to look back over the last 12 months and mark how puerile have been the efforts of the world to meet the problems of peace. I was one of those who thought that when the armistice had been signed, there had been signed a new Magna Charta for the freedom, happiness, and peace of our people—a Magna Charta worthy of the terrible sacrifices that had been made. But what do we find? Cupidity and stupidity in the

place of generosity and humanity. To those of us who love our land it almost looks as if the river of blood and tears which flowed for five years has failed to wash the sordidness from the soul of our nature. On both sides we see representatives with lowering brow and clenched fist, using the sternest words, whereas they should meet together with considerateness and with the outstretched hand of friendship. That position becomes still harder to understand when one calls to mind the composition of a House such as this. Here are 50 of us differing in mental outlook, 50 of us differing in political outlook; and yet on those very problems we can take rational counsel together in order to devise ways out of our difficulties. If only those representatives abroad could meet in that spirit! That would mean the consummation of those wishes which have been so well expressed—that the new year may be full of peace, happiness, and prosperity for all our people. I shall carry out of this House the recollection that I found in it, and that I tried to find in it, the fine gold that is in the heart of every one of my brothers. When I pass from this Chamber and, in later days, glance through the leaves of the book of my life here, those leaves will, I know, smell as sweet to me as they smell even now.

MR. SPEAKER [5.28 a.m.]: Before putting the motion, I desire to thank the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, and also Mr. Harrison and Mr. Gardiner, for the kind references they have been good enough to make to myself and to those who have been associated with me in this House. I think we may say, without being egotistical, that we have conducted the business of the country in this House of Assembly on such lines as the people would desire. This could not have been achieved by any efforts on my part had I not had the co-operation of the House. I want to thank the House—using that term. I make no distinction—for the kindness and generosity shown to me during my term of office. I want, too, to say that I have been very ably assisted by the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant, and by the officers of the House

generally, including the "Hansard" staff. If I had not received the co-operation and good feeling of the officers, as well as that of hon. members, I do not think that in closing this session we would be able to show such a good record. I feel that I am losing some of my old friends, especially the member for Irwin, Mr. Gardiner, who entered this Parliament when I entered it, in 1901—20 years ago early next year. Mr. Gardiner was indeed an acquisition to the first Parliament in which he sat; and, after some respite from public life, he decided to come back to this Legislative Assembly. Members who have known him as long as I have, will have been able to judge him while he has been in the Chamber. He has decided not to come back to public life. Many members will endeavour to come back, but, of course, the electors will have all to say on that question, Mr. Gardiner has decided not to contest that point. Parliament will be the poorer by reason of the absence of that gentleman after the next elections. Whatever we may think, and no matter how we may differ in politics, we must all recognise the ability he has displayed. The member for Irwin has given ample evidence of that ability which is so necessary in the best interests of the State. I will not say anything further beyond thanking members generally for the kindly expression of good feeling. I hope after the elections not to see too many strange faces, notwithstanding the remarks of the leader of the Opposition. I think we have got on very well during the past few years. If the electors knew us as well as we know ourselves, they would not hesitate to send us back again. They would not hesitate to send us back to carry on the affairs of the country, because I think we have done it with credit to ourselves in a way the electors should admire. We will have an opportunity of adjourning to the refreshment room, and I will not go any further at the present juncture beyond thanking members for their remarks.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.32 a.m. (Friday).*

Parliament was prorogued to 24th January, 1921 by proclamation published in the "Government Gazette," issued on Friday, 7th January, 1921. By further proclamation published in the "Government Gazette" on 21st January, 1921, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved as from and after the 24th January, 1921.