

Ireland, which shall be followed as far as they can be applied to the proceedings of this House.

Amongst those forms are the carrying of the mace, the reading of prayers at the opening of Parliament, and the wearing of gown and wig. I have to remember that in this position I am to carry out the orders of the House, and therefore to carry out this first Standing Order until otherwise provided for. I must respect the views of all sections of this Chamber. I have no right to overlook even the prejudices of hon. members. There are some who believe it adds to the dignity of the position, or at all events to the appearance, to wear the prescribed form of adornment, if it be adornment, attaching to the office of the Speaker.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear!

Mr. SPEAKER: There are those who believe the contrary, but it is not for me to wound the feelings of any member on either side of the House by assuming the position that I am the sole master and dictator of its ceremonies. These are the peculiar possessions and rights of hon. members themselves. If, therefore, alterations in the procedure of the House, or in the circumstances attendant on the office of Speaker, be desired, the matter should go through the usual course of being remitted to the Standing Orders Committee, and then of the House being allowed a voice in the determination of the procedure to be followed. I have explained so much to the House because I feel it is necessary. I wish to offend none. I shall endeavour to make myself the ideal, not being able, I know, to reach it, as reflected in the speeches of congratulation, of an impartial occupant of this Chair.

Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER-ELECT.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [12.58]: I have to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that His Excellency the Administrator will be pleased to receive you forthwith, together with hon. members who may desire to accompany you.

Mr. SPEAKER [12.59]: I suspend the sitting until I return from visiting His Excellency, the Administrator.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 1.22 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER said: I have to report that I have submitted myself to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and that His Excellency has been pleased to express his satisfaction at the choice of the Assembly in the following terms:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.—It is with much pleasure that I learn that you have been elected by the

members of the Legislative Assembly to the high and honourable office of Speaker of that House. I have every confidence that you will fill the office in a worthy and dignified manner, and I have the honour to affirm the constitutional rights and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the Legislative Assembly of this State. (Signed) Robert Furse McMillan, Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator.

His Excellency has also been pleased to give me a commission to swear in members of this House.

Sitting suspended from 1.26 to 2.55 p.m.

SUMMONS FROM THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

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

BILL—UNCLAIMED MONEYS ACT AMENDMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) by leave, without notice (by way of asserting privilege) introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Unclaimed Moneys Act Amendment Act, 1924.

Bill read a first time.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Mr. PANTON (Menzies) [3.27]: I move—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—“May it please Your Excellency. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament”

It is with some diffidence that I move this motion, because I realise that it will open a flood of oratory in this House lasting for the next fortnight or three weeks.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why for three weeks?

Mr. PANTON: Because my hon. friend is here. I am of opinion that the eloquence we shall hear will not be of very much service to the State generally, and consequently I will endeavour to set an example, which I hope other members will follow, by making my speech as brief as possible. At the outset I wish to tender my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the Speakership of the Assembly. Members will agree that it is a fitting tribute to your long and honoured career in the Parliament of the State. I also wish to tender my congratulations to the Premier and his colleagues on their elevation to Cabinet rank. More particularly do I wish to tender my congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition and his two sub-leaders—for I understand that he has two sub-leaders—and I think I am safe in saying that the Leader of the Opposition and his sub-leaders will be an acquisition to the Opposition benches. I trust they will live long and occupy their present positions for many years to come.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you are in for a disappointment.

Mr. PANTON: It will not be my first. Turning to the Speech, it will be gratifying to the electors to find, by way of a change, that a party have taken over the reins of government who are prepared, judging by the important Bills foreshadowed in the Speech, to put on the statute-book what they have been advocating on the hustings. Members on both sides will welcome the proposed amendment to the land tax, and the Closer Settlement Bill.

Mr. Latham: I notice that the side introducing it are the least likely to pay the tax.

The Minister for Lands: You do not pay any.

Mr. Latham: Yes, I do—a pretty big one.

Mr. Lambert: It is not your fault, if you do.

Mr. PANTON: I am rather surprised to have drawn an interjection of that sort from one of the sub-leaders of the Opposition.

Mr. Lambert: Which party does he lead?

Mr. PANTON: Don't ask me, there are too many of them on that side.

Sir James Mitchell: There are no socialists nor communists, nor Bolsheviks, on this side.

Mr. PANTON: As I say, the proposed amendment of the land tax will be welcomed by members on both sides. If one is to take the Press as a gauge of public opinion, the reform has been advocated for some time. The "Westralian Worker," the "West Australian," and particularly the "Leader," have advocated this measure, and so I think it will be welcomed by all parties. If Parliament believes in an immi-

gration scheme and a land settlement policy, it is obvious that we must have the most essential commodity, namely, the land.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Adam thought that.

Mr. PANTON: Adam thought a lot that, I hope, the Leader of the Opposition does not think. The proposed land tax will be the means of bringing into full use much unused land adjacent to railways. As a representative of a mining electorate, I am particularly pleased to note that the mining industry is to receive special attention. An industry that has produced £150,000,000 worth of gold and has paid over £28,000,000 in dividends, certainly ought to be encouraged. Unfortunately of late years successive Governments have been unable to see over a wheat field, and consequently the mining industry has not been sighted by them. If a Royal Commission is to be appointed, I hope it will inquire into the many leases held idle at present. Another section of leases that, I trust, the Government will take into consideration even before obtaining a report from the proposed Royal Commission is that embracing leases on which the Government have advanced money, and which are now lying idle. Some of those leases have never had a trial. Take the Riverina South. The whole of the money subscribed by the shareholders in that mine, some thousands of pounds, and £5,000 advanced by the Government, was practically all spent on the surface. I am told that at one time there were 40 men on the surface and nine men underground, with two machines. Consequently, the mine has never had a fair deal. To-day there is a mortgage of £5,000 held by the Government. Of course no syndicate is prepared to accept that responsibility, although there are syndicates who, but for that responsibility, would readily give the mine a fair trial. All that the Government have for the £5,000 advanced are the poppet heads and the shafts. The Government should take into consideration the advisability of lifting that mortgage and giving somebody an opportunity to try out the mine. Then there is the question of the treatment meted out to the old prospectors. All will agree that we owe much to the prospectors. If it were not for the prospectors in the back blocks, there would be very little hope of finding new fields. Most of those prospectors have been able to carry on only through obtaining sustenance by pulling a few tons of sandalwood. Notwithstanding all that was promised during last session of Parliament to accrue from the sandalwood monopoly, we find there is grave danger of the bulk of the prospectors having to come into the towns in search of work; for, owing to the monopoly set up by the late Government, and the unique distribution of sandalwood, the prospector has been left without means of sustenance. There were 750 tons of sandalwood earmarked for genuine prospectors. But the number of approved applications for parcels

of that 750 tons will work it out at about 11½ tons per annum per man. The vaunted boom of the £16 per ton for the pullers has not by any means been realised. I spent a good deal of time reading in "Hansard" the debates on the sandalwood question last session. It was very noticeable that the speakers, particularly those behind the then Government, appeared to be much concerned about the puller. The then Premier, now the Leader of the Opposition, was much concerned.

Mr. Marshall: He was only pulling the leg of the puller.

Mr. PANTON: I am not a thought reader, so I cannot say what was in the mind of the then Premier. However, I do know that the bulk of the pullers are now receiving as low as £13 per ton for sandalwood.

Mr. Marshall: It would not average that much.

Mr. PANTON: No, I do not think it would. However, a lot of them in my constituency have been receiving £13 and upwards.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why not report it to the Minister for Forests? He would set that straight.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member does not know what has been done. The regulation dealing with the £16 per ton provides that, in the event of the puller having the price of his timber reduced, he has the right of appeal to the Conservator of Forests. But on making inquiries at the department, I found that the system in vogue is this: The company at Fremantle, on receiving a truck of wood and desiring a reduction in the price, applies to the department. The Conservator thereupon sends an inspector to Fremantle, and the inspector decides what price the puller shall get, puts up a recommendation to the Conservator, and the thing is approved. Consequently when, some days later, the puller gets a return intimating that the price of his wood is only £13 or £14, it is no use appealing to the Conservator, because the Conservator has already given his approval and the puller can proceed no further. According to the agreement 6,000 tons of sandalwood have to be hauled every year. The position I do not like is this: if it is possible for the four companies enjoying the monopoly to effect an average reduction of £2 or £3 per ton in the value of the wood it will mean hanging up an amount of £12,000 to £18,000 per annum for someone to make a profit out of.

Mr. Richardson: Has not the Minister power to deal with that?

Mr. PANTON: The Minister may have power to cancel the regulation. That is what I am appealing to him to do, so that this monopoly may be broken down. I have every respect for our departmental officers, but I say that we as a Parliament have no right to allow from £12,000 to

£18,000 to dangle in the air for someone to get hold of.

Mr. George: The £16 per ton was to have been the minimum.

Mr. PANTON: That is not what I find is the minimum. The hon. member may recollect that the previous Government proposed there should be a £16 minimum per ton for fair average quality sandalwood. The remarkable part of the matter is that there has been no fair average quality wood coming down, especially since the elections were over. Apparently it had all been below that standard. The sandalwood is taken out of the trucks and is then stacked. It would be interesting to know whether it is consigned to China as fair average quality timber. I venture to say that every truck of wood, whether it is paid for on the basis of £16 a ton or £13 a ton, is eventually sold to the Chinese buyers for the same price. I trust the Government will immediately take up this question. If they fail to do so we may find a lot of prospectors coming to town asking for financial assistance to enable them to carry on their ordinary avocation, which they may otherwise be prevented from doing. These men have been independent for years, and we as a Parliament ought to be the last to do anything to undermine that independence, and prevent them from obtaining the sustenance to which they have been accustomed for so long a time.

Mr. Mann: Would you like to see them go back to the old position?

Mr. PANTON: No, but I want to see them get their £16 a ton. The hon. member knows that if the monopoly had not been created the Government could have taken other steps that would have ensured the puller receiving not less than this amount. As the regulations are at present a cart and horse can be driven through them, and the cutters do not receive the minimum of £16 a ton. The hon. member must know that quite well.

Mr. Hughes: There will be an increase in the Chinese balance sheet next year.

Mr. PANTON: I know the Government fully realise the position, and I am prepared to leave the matter in their hands. Reference is made in the Speech to the metropolitan water supply. For as long as I can remember this subject has found a place in the Governor's Speech. The electors of the metropolitan area can congratulate themselves that the Government of the day are going to push on this service as quickly as possible.

Mr. Richardson: What are they doing in regard to that?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member had better ask a question of the Minister for Works.

Mr. Richardson: But what are they going to do?

Mr. PANTON: If I had been a member representing a metropolitan district I should have found that out long ago.

Mr. Richardson: I think I know, but would like you to tell us.

Mr. PANTON: I do not intend to go into a lot of details.

Mr. Richardson: Tell the House what you know.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member may listen to me if he likes, or go outside.

Mr. Richardson: I am not going outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PANTON: All will welcome the proposal for State insurance. I do not propose to discuss in detail the various Bills that are to be brought forward, for an opportunity will be afforded us all to deal with them at the proper time. The Arbitration Act Amendment Bill will, I think, also be welcome. The party supporting the present Government is pledged to arbitration, and all members of the Opposition are also pledged to it. Many of those who sent members opposite to their places in this House have invariably suggested the Arbitration Court when they have attended industrial conferences.

Mr. Latham: We do not believe in the employer fixing the hours of work.

Mr. PANTON: Imagine the hon. member saying he does not believe in farmers fixing the hours of the worker! The only thing that worries him is that there is not enough daylight in which work can be done. It is not much use having an Arbitration Act or a court of arbitration to administer it if the court itself is unable to function. Industrialists in this State have, during the last few years, found that the court has become congested and out of date, and that its methods are obsolete. I am not referring to members of the court. I am referring principally to the facilities of the court to hear and try the many cases that come before it. Governments have in the past overlooked the fact that the industrial trade union movement has grown to such an extent that if arbitration is to be the method by which industrial disputes are settled, we must give the court proper facilities for hearing the disputes. Union after union has lodged its plaint with the court, and some of them have had to wait for years to be heard. In some cases the unions have become so exasperated that they have taken the only action possible, namely, strike.

Mr. Marshall: The Chamber of Mines soon got its case before the court.

Mr. PANTON: Of late years it has become somewhat popular to go on strike in order that one party might force itself into the court over the heads of others. I know that the Minister for Labour, with his long association with industrial movements, fully realises the position, and I trust this House

will give him all the assistance possible to enable him to secure an amendment of the Act that will facilitate the work of the court and make it easier for the unions to have their cases heard. The cost of arbitration should not be taken into account. A strike lasting a few weeks, and involving a few hundred men, would soon represent a loss that would more than cover the cost of arbitration for many years ahead. Prior to entering upon the electioneering campaign, I looked into the question of railway freights and fares, and noted several interesting comparisons that could be made concerning them. I also found that some astounding anomalies existed in this State undertaking. From Perth to the terminus in my electorate the distance is 455 miles.

Mr. Mann: Does anyone live out there?

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member had better not go there, for if he does he may find someone who is looking for him. I find on investigation that a farmer can freight his super, which is an essential commodity for his particular industry, a distance of 455 miles, for 11s. 6d. per ton. After he produces his wheat, he can have the grain brought back that distance for 25s. 6d. per ton.

Mr. Latham: If he had any out there!

Mr. PANTON: I know the hon. member would not go out as far as that to grow wheat. He would get lost. I am talking about farmers, but not St. George's-terrace farmers. On the other hand the miner, who requires explosives as an essential commodity for his particular industry, has to pay 233s. to freight them a similar distance over the railways, as against 11s. 6d. that is paid by the farmer for super.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the freight on ores; is it the same as on super?

Mr. PANTON: I am not here to answer questions. It may be said that explosives are regarded as a dangerous freight, and that therefore they have to be charged at special rates. That, however, is not so, for the same rate applies also to tea, drapery and tobacco.

Mr. Mann: Is the rate on tea and tobacco not the same for the agricultural districts? What is the analogy?

Mr. PANTON: Immediately one compares the rates upon explosives with those upon super, one is told that explosives are dangerous, and must be carried at a special rate. As a matter of fact, this rate is not charged because explosives are dangerous, for the rate for tea, drapery and tobacco, which cannot be said to be dangerous, is exactly the same. The argument that explosives are dangerous, does not, therefore, apply.

Mr. Marshall: Explosives are as essential to the mining industry as super is to the agricultural industry.

Mr. PANTON: Quite so. I do not ask the Government to increase the rate upon super, but I do want them to bring down

the rates upon mining requisites. I discovered an astounding anomaly in connection with excursion fares. When I arrived in Menzies I found that a pamphlet had been issued by the Railway Department, in which it showed the trains by which the women and children of the goldfields could travel on excursion tickets to Fremantle, Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton and the other ports. It appears that the wives and children of the men who reside in the never-never parts of the mining areas may obtain excursion fares along the Leonora-Menzies line on certain specified dates, namely, December 11th and 25th, January 8th and 22nd, and February 5th. On those days only may they enjoy excursion fares to any of the seaport towns. If members will turn to the rate book, and look at the regulations on page 54, they will find that the women and children of the farmers can obtain an excursion fare to a sea port on any day they like for 51 weeks in the year. The only exception is Christmas week, when the railways are usually busy. I cannot see the reason for this differentiation between the women and children on the goldfields, and those in the agricultural areas.

Mr. Latham: You have not read the regulation correctly. It cannot be true.

Mr. PANTON: The hon. member will find it is correct if he will look at the rate book.

Mr. Latham: It applies in exactly the same way to the agricultural areas.

Mr. PANTON: That is so, but the people in the agricultural areas can get a trip and back on any day they like during the 52 weeks of the year. The hon. member may shake his head, but I have seen the regulations and a station-master who ought to know his business told me that I was correct.

Mr. Hughes: Don't shout so loudly, or you will wake the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. PANTON: I am very sorry that the Leader of the Opposition was disturbed from his slumbers by my voice, but if he does not wish to be awakened he will have to tell his sub-leaders not to interject. I trust that the Minister for Railways will look into this very important question. I am convinced that he will find that my interpretation of the regulations, and that of the station-master, are correct. There should be no differentiation. I do not propose to keep the House any longer; I have already spoken for a quarter of an hour longer than I intended doing. I have much pleasure in submitting the motion.

Mr. LAMOND (Pilbara) [3.58]: I have much pleasure in seconding the motion so ably submitted by the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton). I am glad to see, according to the Governor's Speech, that it is proposed to give special attention to the mining industry. We have a wonderful field in

the Pilbara electorate to prospect and develop. We have there not only gold, but other minerals of considerable value such as asbestos, tantalite, vanadium, scheelite, and tin, and no special assistance has ever been given to develop any of them. I trust also that consideration will be given to this electorate on account of its inaccessibility. In the past, the absence of Government assistance has been very conspicuous. I wish to draw the attention of the House to another serious disadvantage under which the Pilbara district labours—I refer to the high cost of living, which is a serious bar to advancement there. To that must be attributed the fact that many people have been compelled to abandon their vocations in that part of the State; they have been forced to seek their livelihood elsewhere and in other walks of life. This has been brought about largely by the exploitation tactics of the local business firms. While people who reside in distant parts of the State—places like the Pilbara electorate—are compelled to pay exorbitant prices for their stores, we cannot expect them to remain there. Therefore, it is needless to hope for a revival in mining industry under existing conditions. In support of my contention I may be permitted to quote for the benefit of members some of the prices ruling at Marble Bar for necessary commodities, and compare them with existing prices in the metropolis. A 50lb. bag of flour at Marble Bar costs 15s.; in Perth the price is 7s. Wheat costs 18s. a bushel at Marble Bar; in Perth the price is 5s. 9d. Onions cost 6d. a lb. at Marble Bar and 2½d. in Perth. Sugar costs 8d. at Marble Bar and 5d. in Perth. Jam costs 22s. per dozen at Marble Bar and 10s. 9d. in Perth. Milk costs 20s. per dozen tins at Marble Bar and 11s. 6d. in Perth. Matches cost 4s. 9d. at Marble Bar and 2s. 3d. in Perth. Patent medicines—I refer to pain killer, which is very largely used in the distant parts of the State—costs 4s. 3d. a bottle in Marble Bar and 3s. in Perth. Gelnignite at Marble Bar costs £5 6s. 6d. per case, and in Perth £2 19s. 6d. I could quote many other instances of disparity in prices, but these will do for my purpose at present. I consider that the best assistance that can be given to the people in that part of the State is to establish a Government store. Such an institution would help not only those already there, but it would be an inducement to others who have left the district to return to it. There is plenty of room in that part of the State for everybody. It is very sparsely populated. I know many who would go there to-morrow if they were certain of being able to secure their stores at reasonable rates. My sole desire in making the request for the establishment of a Government store at Marble Bar is to reduce the high cost of living that has prevailed there for so long. There is no reason why people who go out to districts like Pilbara should be obliged to submit to pro-